

Sermon Title: Freedom Through Growth
Happy Independence Day!

I am truly grateful on a day like today to have the freedoms afforded to us in this country, and the sacrifices of those that have come before me to make those freedoms my reality. **But like the call to worship prayer said, I am so much more grateful for the freedoms that I have in Jesus Christ.**

What is your greatest freedom that you have in Christ?

How do we know about those freedoms that we have in Christ, and how do we know about anything in our faith, **the answer is in Scripture**

- The God that created the universe has decided to reveal himself to his creations over time through a book.
- For centuries mankind has been trying to know God and to figure out this life that is placed before us, but we can only do that if we read His Word

Psalm 1 & Hebrews 4:12-13

In Psalm 1 David sets up a comparison of 2 men:

1. Delights in the law of the Lord, like a tree planted by streams, yields fruit, strong and sturdy.
2. Walks in the counsel of the wicked, stands with sinners, and sits in the seat of scoffers. Like chaff

Which one of these people do you want to be?

David is clearly trying to tell all of us in this Psalm that eternal strength comes from following God's word, and the weak ways of this world will pass away and just be temporary.

- Jesus says the same thing in Matthew 7:24-27

The rains and floods were the same for both men, as life is for all of us, but the difference is the foundation that each one was built upon.

The Hebrews passage takes us in a different direction, it describes God's word as both alive and powerful.

God's word is sharper than a two-edged sword, meaning that everyone that reads it will be cut to their very core, slicing up our pre-conceived notions and other "truths" that we have learned over the years.

Ultimately, we need to change the way we think, so that we can change the way we act, and so we can change the way we represent Jesus Christ as his ambassador.

God's Word is instrumental in every step of our journey.

- God's Word is present and life changing in our conversion. (Rom 10:17)
- But God's Word doesn't stop being influential in our lives once we become a Christian, it is critical to our spiritual growth as well.
- **2 Timothy 3:14-17**
- Verse 16 said that all Scripture is breathed out by God
- **This is a particularly important thing for everyone to hear and know, the Bible isn't wrong just because we don't like it or believe what it has to say.**
- This passage ends with Paul giving us the reason for studying the Bible, so that everyone may be complete and equipped by God for every good work

Some practical tips for how to study the Bible:

1. If you want to study the Bible but feel overwhelmed trying to read it cover to cover, there is a list of books to read in the Bible, in order, on pages 27-28 of our 5 things book.
2. Read the Bible in a translation that you understand and that you want to keep reading.
3. Read a Bible that has study notes.
4. **Set a time amount for reading the Bible, not a verse amount or chapter amount, and pick a time that is best for you.**
 - a. Whatever time you pick, make it a daily routine.

Challenges:

1. If you currently are not reading the Bible, take the first step to start today.
2. If you are currently reading the Bible, but not every day, I challenge you to make Bible reading a daily activity in your life.
3. For everyone here today, I challenge you to find someone that you can trust to be an accountability partner in your Bible reading.
4. If you don't currently believe that all Scripture is breathed out by God, I challenge you to think and pray about that this week.

We are blessed that the God that sets us free decided to reveal Himself to us in Scripture, we just need to take the time and be disciplined enough to read it every day.

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Scripture passages to go up on the Screen:

Psalm 1 - Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ²but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. ⁴The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. ⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; ⁶ for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Hebrews 4:12-13 - ¹²For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. ¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 - ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.