"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: IF THE SON MAKE YOU FREE

Scripture: John 8:31-36

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

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Thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

In the days preceding the Civil War Abraham Lincoln uttered the unforgettable truism that no nation can exist half slave and half free. It is even more true that no man can exist half slave and half free. Freedom is not a relative term. A man is either free, or he is not. If he wears only one fetter, he is a slave. That is something which many of us have not come to realize or appreciate. think that we are free because we are living in the United States of America, under its Constitution, under the protection of its government. But there are still slaves in America too -- slaves who are slaves in spite of the Constitution, or the army, or the navy, or the Supreme Court, or the President, or any of the agencies established by the Constitution to safeguard our freedom.

Are you free? Few of us are. All of us are slaves of habit. This may not be an altogether bad thing. Habit is useful in many ways in enabling us to perform routine actions without conscious thought. It sounds like a contradiction of terms. by making ourselves slaves to goodhabits, deliberately practicing certain habits over and over again for a period of years, we become truly free -free to tie a shoe string, to handle a knife and fork, to play a musical instrument, to use a typewriter, to play a game without conscious mental effort. We can renounce this kind of slavery any time we like. It does not unset your whole physical and mental equilibrium if some morning you wear a pair of slippers instead of a shoe that

has to be tied, or if some day you eat a picnic lunch without a knife and fork, or if for one day you neglect to play your musical instrument.

Some other kinds of habit are more troublesome, though perhaps still relatively harmless or inocuous. What happens when you miss your morning cup of coffee? What happens when the doctor says, "No cigarettes?" Do you find that you are free, or that you are a slave? Far more serious and deadly is the slavery to alcohol, or to narcotic drugs. We can be slaves to excitement and thrills; to passion, to hatred, to greed, to envy, to prejudice, to fear and worry. Few men are free from all of these enslaving, freedomdestroying things. And some of us are most enslaved when we think we are expressing ourselves, doing as we please, and showing that we don't have to obey anybody. In the words of Robert Browning "So free we seem; so fettered fast we are."

Paul felt and expressed for all men the despair of a man who knows he is a slave --not necessarily one with a slave's collar around his neck or fetters on his hands and feet, but one who nevertheless is not his own master. Read the latter part of the 7th chapter of Romans, and you will find yourself echoing the cry of Paul: "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do ... O wretched man

that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Yet in spite of this seeming pessimism, no writer in the Mew Testament has more to say than Paul about the freedom which he has found in Christ. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and "But now being made free sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the everlasting life." "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." In the 8th chapter of Romans Paul speaks of the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry "Abba, Father," -- the Spirit which we know that we are children of God and heirs with Christ of eternal life.

In all this Paul is carrying forward the illustration used by Jesus. He has pointed out previously in the Roman letter, that "to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." You can tell who a man's master or his employer is by watching to see from whom he takes orders. We cannot profess to be the children or the servants of God, and at the same time take orders from our old sinful habits, or from that Spirit which entices to do a little sin and assures us that if it is only a little, we can still be children of God and heirs with Jesus We are the servants of the one Christ. whom we obey, not of the one we disobey.

Jesus said, "The servants abideth not in the house for ever: but the son abideth ever." To understand this saying, one has to project himself back to the time when slavery was an established and accepted custom. The word "servant" as it usually used in the scriptures does not mean a hired man. It means a bond-servant or slave. The slave has no claim on his master. He cannot collect wages. Even a hired servant can be discharged and expelled from the house at his master's will, with no claim on the master's inheritance. The slave is absolutely at the mercy of his master. He can be sold to another. Under many societies, he can be cruelly punished, or even killed at his master's whim for some real or fancied offense. Weither the slave nor the servant has any guarantee of a permanent place in his master's house, or any valid claim on his master's wealth.

The son, however, has a place in his father's house which is his as long as he remains a son. He has a rightful claim on his father's wealth by way of inheritance. In the fourth chapter of Galatiars Paul points out that both servant and son are liable to discipline and chastisement from the father or master of the household; but that the motives of such discipline are different. When the servant or slave has been perfected by discipline, he is still a slave. But when the son arrives at maturity and perfection, he is then fitted to enjoy the fellowship and love of his father, to share his father's work, his father's purposes, mind, and will, and to share also in the joys and pleasures and physical possessions of his father. Jesus said, "And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Many a man who has been a slave to sin, a slave to habit, a slave to appetite, a slave to hatreds, resentments, envies, fears, worries, prejudices, passions, and greeds, has found that in his own strength he is helpless. The more he struggles, the more tightly enmeshed he seems to become, and in spite of his desire for freedom, he is still a slave. Other men do not even seem to be aware of their slavery. Others seem to enjoy it, and to fear to be anything else than a slave, like those men of ancient Israel who had their ears pierced with an awl as a sign of perpetual slavery rather than take the responsibility of making their own decisions and providing for their own needs. But there are untold thousands of other men who have come to realize their slavery, and have turned to the one power that can free them - the power of Jesus Christ, as it is manifested through faith and obedience to the laws and ordinances and principles of his gospel. They have found with Paul, that "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

A man cannot exist half slave and half free. "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness?" "But if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed, and you will be no more a servant or slave, but a son; and if a Son, then an heir of God through Christ, with claim on all your Father's possessions."