



"Worship Till The Chains Fall Off" | Shawn Johnson | 2.18.18
LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

If you could go anywhere in the world on vacation, where would you go?

SHARE

As we set sail into the new year, we all have hopes and dreams for how this year is going to be different than the last. Some of us start this year apprehensive of what is to come since last year was full of difficulty and trouble, while others are optimistic and driven to make the most of what's next. What do you think God thinks of your plans, aspirations and resolutions? What do you think His hopes and plans are for your life?

At Red Rocks Church, each year we seriously pray that God would give us a very specific verse which would encourage every person towards living a more full, rich and surrendered life to God; a timely word that would spark a fire and ignite the body of Christ to live to its fullest potential.

The apostle Paul challenged and encouraged the church in Galatia with this, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." Galatians 5:1

Red Rocks Church, we need to stand firm and not allow ourselves to go back to what once enslaved us. Jesus set us free to live in freedom with him. The boundaries God has put in our lives through God's word is for the sake of our freedom. Though it seems counter-intuitive, God puts boundaries in our lives to keep us free. He is not trying to hold something back from us, but wants to give us abundant life here in the present!

We all desire freedom and we all need it. God promises freedom and wants all of us to experience it in and through Him. Freedom from addiction. Freedom from selfishness. Freedom from fear. Freedom from anxiety. Freedom from comparison. But it will take courage to trust God at his word and in the leading of our lives. It will take self-discipline and accountability to take on that which wants to enslave us. It will take a willingness to trust God who perfectly provides all we need to live a holy life through him.

We can live free through Christ who set us free!

This week, Shawn talked about the power of worship, especially when we are in difficult situations. At the very beginning of this teaching series, we asked all of you to write on cards what you desired to be set free from. Thousands of cards were read through and prayed over by the church. Topping the list were, anxiety, depression, fear of man, addiction and relational issues. As we read through them, so many stories a result of abandonment, someone's addictive behavior, abuse, loss of employment, a spouse walking out or a parent leaving. Whether we were the cause of our own pain, someone else or just simply trouble we are walking through because of living in this broken world, we can be overcomers and not victims.

Let's read Acts 16:16-24

In this story, Paul and Silas set a female slave girl free from her affliction. She was being used by her owner's to make money through demonic means of fortune telling. This girl was a pawn and the power of God set her free. Sounds like a great story...but it was just beginning. Because Paul and Silas upset the ability of the slave owners to profit off of this girl, they were stripped and beaten and thrown in prison. If anyone could play the 'victim card' it was Paul and Silas. Instead of playing the victims, they were victorious through Jesus Christ. They were part of a bigger story and a bigger stage than they could have imagined.

There are times in life where we are the victim, completely powerless to have stopped it, but that doesn't need to define us. What defines us is what we do with it going forward. What are some of the reasons people get stuck and continue to play the 'victim card'?

On the other hand, there are times we willfully made the wrong choice, where the consequences have now caught up to us. We forget the original wrong choice we made and now need someone to blame, so sometimes we make God the scapegoat. Can you name some examples of how we can make God the scapegoat?

How can playing the 'victim card' ultimately be destructive in our lives?

GROW

This week Shawn talked about breaking the chains and being set free! He said this statement, "when we worship, we can be set free." We see this with Paul and Silas who were almost beaten to death, imprisoned, and chained to the prison guard. We would think, or perhaps expect, that they would have been discouraged and defeated by their suffering yet, their faith moved them to respond in worship. They chose to worship because they had full confidence in God regardless of the outcome. God moved and his glory fell and the chains were broke, they were set free! We too, can choose to worship in the midst of our trials. We too, can experience freedom and joy because we have a personal relationship with God, the one who frees us and strengthens us with his joy.

Paul writes, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Really? Rejoice always? Pray continually? Give thanks in all circumstances? Seems impossible right? Yet, this is not a suggestion, it is a command. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling truth of the God's word, we can choose to thank God for what He has done, what He is doing and what He will do, regardless of our circumstance and situation, because He is a faithful Father and has our best interest at heart.

Paul gives us his secret to rejoicing in times of trial, "Rejoice in hope" (Romans 6:26). The reason why we as Christ-followers are commanded to rejoice in the midst of trials, suffering,

and persecution now becomes clearer. As we look to the future, we have confidence that our trials, however difficult, are temporary, and that when all is said and done, God promises that every trial is for our good and His glory here on earth as well as in eternity (Romans 8:28).

In our own power, we are not strong enough or smart enough to bear our own burdens while living stuck in bondage. Both Paul and Silas knew this about themselves and understood God was their only hope. Because of their confidence in Him and complete reliance on the Holy spirit, they could burst out in worship while their chains fell to the ground. Not only did they find freedom, but so did those around them. Their situation created an opportunity for God to demonstrate his power and love.

Have you ever witnessed someone able to find joy and strength in the middle of a difficult trial? How did it affect you?

Why do most of us find it difficult to worship God when we are in the middle of our own pain or problems?

M O V E

True joy is not grounded in our emotions, rather, it is grounded in the truth of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection and that all of his promises are true. This is why we can have true joy and rejoice with confidence in temporary trials. Because the troubles we occasionally face is not our forever. Our forever is found in Jesus Christ and that is our great hope.

As we continue to understand God's character and his deep love for us, we will know and believe that God only has our good in mind. He wants his children to live in complete freedom. God has come to 'set us free' from the chains of depression, anxiety, anger, etc. to no longer hold us captive. For many of us, that is a process and a life-long struggle, yet, we can experience more and more of God's power to walk through it with more and more freedom.

May our chains fall off as we submit our wills and raise our hands in worship! Let us remember there is joy and power to be found in worship. As Shawn stated, “our situation won’t dictate our freedom...our worship will!” So, may we worship till the chains off!

Since listening to this weekend’s message, how do you think you have been challenged to worship?

Within your group, does anyone have some good practical ideas on how we can find times to worship each day? (Journaling, reading, worship music in the car, etc.)

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women’s groups to share more freely.

TO GO

Hebrews 10: 19-22

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings.”

