

Ranch Hand Trainings 2020

Day 1

36 So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free. John 8:36

When I think of this verse, I begin to reflect on my life and all the areas that I don't have freedom. Then often my next thought is, why? Why do you not have freedom? I believe there are really three main areas in our lives we need freedom from to receive the true joy of living in Christ. All circumstances we are thrown into connect back to four core emotions; anger, sadness, fear and joy. When we have joy, we are living in freedom, life still might not be easy but we have an understanding of who Christ is in our lives. When we get freedom from the first three core emotions; anger, sadness, and fear; we get to rest in the last core emotion, joy, which is true freedom.

The next several days we will dive into each of the emotions and see when we have freedom from anger, sadness, and fear then we GET to sit in the freedom and joy Christ has promised us.

Now please don't misunderstand me, IT IS OK to feel all these feelings, it is not a sin. What we want you to understand is how we take every feeling, thought, or emotion and make it obedient to Christ as in 2 Corinthians 10:5.

Let's talk about anger. For me it is SO easy to become angry when things don't go my way, when a person says things about me, or when I think about things in my past that I regret. I am selfish to the core, and typically from that emotion I act on my anger in a negative way that does not honor God. Often when I think about my anger or when I become angry I am remind of these verses in **Jame 1** that read:

19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and **slow to get angry. 20 Human anger does not produce** the righteousness God desires.

This verse is heavy when I understand that my anger does not produce the righteousness God desires from me. When I let anger control me, I am becoming the determining factor in my righteousness, but when I let God control me, I'm allowing my freedom in him to factor my righteousness.

Righteousness is a big word. What does that even mean? It is defined as, the quality of being morally right. The coolest part about this is when we are believers in Christ he has found us righteous. So, then the even cooler part is when our flesh and sinful prideful nature comes in and we get angry and act, we can immediately go back to righteousness because God has given this to us when we accepted him. **Immediate redemption!** Immediate forgiveness, all we have to do is ask.

Freedom is so much more than a word, freedom is an identity. When we are in Christ, we are free, the verse is clear. We now get to step into that freedom in every part of our lives including anger. Remember, being angry is not a bad thing, it is what we do with our anger that becomes sin. Romans 14:23 states, "...and everything that does not come from faith is sin."

I hope this encourages you to look at your anger deeper and understand to take that angry thought captive and make it obedient to Christ and experience the freedom. The freedom that recognizes anger and can turn it into **Proverbs 18:15**:

18 A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict,
but the one who is patient calms a quarrel.

Questions

What causes you the most anger?

What would it look like if you gave up anger and turned it into freedom?

Day 2

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Sadness is a human feeling that we have probably all encountered at some point in our life. Feeling sad is a natural reaction to situations that cause emotional upset or pain. Often times when I feel sad I don't talk to others, or I just go off by myself and sulk in my emotion ignoring everything around me. In this story, Mary Magdalene is obviously sad because she is found weeping after finding out that Jesus' murdered body wasn't where it was supposed to be. We pick the story up in **John 20:11-18**:

11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb **12** and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." **14** At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

In this story I can definitely understand why Mary was sad and crying. I'm not saying that sadness or crying is wrong or a sin, I am saying though, if we let our sadness dictate how we see everyone and everything around us then we can miss the freedom from our sadness that only comes from Jesus.

In Mary's case she was weeping over the missing body of Jesus, but because she was so caught up in her sadness she missed that Jesus was actually alive and right behind her. In her sadness she was blinded to the fact that Jesus was there all along, and He was ready to free her from her sadness because **He was ALIVE!**

Questions

How do you react when you become sad/discouraged?

How have you let your sadness affect your relationships with others?

How do you turn your sadness into freedom?

Day 3

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You know, as I think about sadness and anger my mind really goes to the fact that these two emotions are often driven by fear. Fear is a pain staking word that we are, well, fearful of. I also believe we don't have true freedom because we are in fear of what it cost to receive. That's right we are scared of freedom, because it is too good to be true, or so we think.

Why do we live in such misery? Why do we torture ourselves with knowing we can have the surpassing freedom from all things, yet we choose to be scared? I mean think about it, the reason I get mad at someone and let them offend me, really dives deep into the fact they may let someone in on my weaknesses or insecurities. If people truly know me, then they may not like me or want to be my friend. This is fear.

What about sadness? How can that be fear? Now again I am not saying it is not ok to feel these feelings, I just want you to dive deeper into them. When we are sad, it sometimes comes from a place of being scared or anxious about the outcome of the circumstance happening to us, right? The sadness is really the anxiousness of the outcome of the situation we are in. This is fear.

A pastor, Craig Groeschl, said, **“What we fear the most, is where we trust God least.”** Our fears are driven out of not trusting God with who he says we are. This is huge to understand. When we start to understand fear comes from mistrust, then we can place truths in place of the fear lies.

Philippians 4:6-7 says:

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is a promise. This is freedom. If we submit our request to God the peace he gives will guard us. If we submit our fears, he will guard us. Sometimes we may have to submit the same fear 100 times a day, but that doesn't mean we need to stop and that doesn't mean he is not working. When we understand he is our first call on everything then we truly start to understand freedom in our lives. We don't have to be anxious anymore. We don't have to be scared anymore. We get to live under his protection and have peace, but it takes us giving him those things in our lives.

This gets me pumped up and reminds of a verse in **2 Timothy 1:7**:

7 For God has not given us a **spirit of fear** and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

God doesn't give us fear! Fear is a lie from the enemy, the one who wants to kill, steal and destroy us. God says I have given you power, love and self discipline to overcome all fears.

My encouragement to you today would be to lean into God and lean out of your fears. Just remember though, it is like eating cake; you have to do it one bite at a time, or in your case one fear at a time.

Questions

What is your greatest fear?

Why haven't you surrendered it to God?

Is today your day to gain the peace and protection God offers?

Day 4

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Finally we made it to JOY!!! We have talked all week about fear, sadness, and anger. Now, we finally get to talk about Joy. Hopefully this week you have had a front row seat to discovering the emotions that control our daily lives. Today we get to talk about the outcome. The “what happens when,” we give our anger, sadness, and fear over to Jesus. Then we let Him give us the joy only he can offer, so we can walk in freedom.

You’ve probably heard this story before, but today we are going to talk about a miracle that Jesus performed for his buddy named Lazarus. Long story short, Lazarus and Jesus were friends and Lazarus became sick. When Jesus heard about it, he didn’t immediately go and cure Lazarus because He knew that Lazarus would be okay in the end. Once Jesus and the disciples felt it was good timing to go back and see Lazarus in his town, Jesus was instead met by one of Lazarus’ sister Martha, His other sister Mary, stayed home.

Martha told Jesus that Lazarus was dead, and he had been dead for 4 days. But again, Jesus knew that Lazarus would be okay. Mary, the other sister, seemed to be angry at Jesus for not coming right away and healing Lazarus, and because of her Jesus wept. We will read the rest of the story from here **John 11: 38-43**:

38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. **39** “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

40 Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. **42** I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” **44** The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

How powerful is that! Jesus, even after Lazarus being dead for 4 Days, was able to raise him from the dead. But did you know that Jesus can and does do that for you too.

See we are all like Lazarus, dead, stinky, and covered in grave clothes. Covered and carrying things that represent death and decay, but Jesus tells us to, **“Take off those grave clothes and live!!!”**

Fear, sadness, and anger can all restrict us from living and walking in the freedom that God has given to us as a gift. Jesus died on the cross so that you and I wouldn't have to walk around carrying our grave clothes, so that we wouldn't have to walk around carrying our fear, our shame, our anger, and our sadness. Jesus tells us to **Get up and Live!!**

Get up! Give Him your grave clothes!

Receive true joy from the only one that can turn death into life and walk in the freedom Jesus offers!!

Because, **If the Son sets you free, you are truly free!! And that should give you Joy!**

Questions

Have you ever thought you are too far gone in sin for Jesus to care about you?

What is Jesus telling you to leave in the grave so you can walk in freedom?

How are you going to walk in freedom now knowing that you have the Joy that only comes from Jesus?