

Read: John 8:31-36

God Calls You His Child

John 8:34,35

Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A preschool student asked his teacher, "What is slavery?" "It is when you are considered someone's property and are forced to work, but do not get paid," the teacher said. "That doesn't sound like fun," the preschooler replied.

One day, that preschooler will grow up and learn more about the history of slavery in our country and around the world. He will learn that slavery is way worse than "not fun." Slavery has led to some of the most horrible things that have ever been done to human beings. When that preschooler learns more about slavery, he will no doubt say what many of us believe: slavery is evil.

In our Bible reading, Jesus connects sin to slavery. If you sin, you are a slave to sin. If you try to obey God's law to earn heaven, you will only see the many times you fail. God's law shows us our sin. You can try your best and follow as many of the laws as you can. But because you are sinful, you will not receive any payment or reward. No, the law shows us that by ourselves we are slaves to sin. It shows us the evil that lives in our hearts and lives. Jesus is clear: living in sin is terrifying and leads only to death.

But Jesus is also clear about something else. He has made us children of God. He has bought us out of slavery to sin to make us free children. This is the gospel message that shows Jesus as our Savior. No longer do you have to follow the law as a slave, with no hope of reward. You are a child of God. You get to live in his household forever.

And what do children of God do? They follow Jesus. They listen to his teachings. They follow his commands. And most of all, they trust his freeing work. They live in the comfort and confidence of knowing that Jesus loves them more than anyone else. You are free indeed!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- List the people in your family. How does it make you feel to know that God wants you in his family but not as a slave?
- Jesus tells us to hold to his teachings. Where do we hear Jesus' teachings?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- *Agree or Disagree:* Now that Jesus has set us free from sin, we won't ever sin again.
- "If you hold to my teachings, you are really my disciples." As a child of God, are you also a disciple? What do disciples of Jesus do?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Why is slavery an appropriate comparison to our spiritual condition apart from God's grace?
- Why do we need to hear both law and gospel? What would happen if we only heard the law? The gospel?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for freeing me to live confidently as a child of God each day. Amen.