



March 8, 2026 | Matt Magee

Series: Fully Equipped: Pursuing Christian Maturity (2 Peter)

Sermon Title: The Mirage of Freedom

Main Scripture: 2 Peter 2:17-22

ANNOUNCEMENTS/CHURCH BODY HIGHLIGHTS

1. [Past Newsletters](#) - **Be sure to check out last week's newsletter . . . there's a lot here.**
Also, would you take a few minutes to pray for the featured missionary each week?
2. **Mandatory safety training for most people** (Elders, Deacons, Greeters, Ministry leaders, Safety Team, Coffee Servers and Kids/Youth Ministry Workers). Click "Safety Training" on the homepage of the app to sign up for April 19 at 11:45 a.m. or April 25 at 8:00 a.m. (or here on a browser - <https://ogc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1165667>)

Principle: False teachers promise a freedom that leads to slavery; true freedom is found only in submission to Christ.

I. Introduction: The Mirage - The Deadly Illusion

- **The Concept:** Pastor Matt opened with the image of a thirsty traveler in a desert running toward what looks like a pool of water, only to find dry sand. (Imagine that for a moment - needing water to live, but only finding dry sand!) **He noted that false teaching does the exact same thing: it promises life but delivers dust.**
- **Discuss:** Have you ever purchased a product or bought into a cultural promise that looked amazing on the outside but left you completely empty once you experienced it? Describe your expectation and hope and then what was delivered. How does the world's version of "the good life" often function like a mirage?

II. The False Promise: Thirsty Souls and Dry Wells (Verse 17)

- **Read:** 2 Peter 2:17
- **The Metaphor:** Peter calls false teachers "waterless springs". Matt explained that they have all the *structure* of ministry (the lights, the podcasts, the music) but completely lack the *substance* of the Holy Spirit.
- **Discuss:** Why is it so easy for us to confuse excellent production value (structure) with the genuine presence of God (substance)?
 - When your soul is truly suffering, why do platitudes and hype fail to refresh you?
 - What are some platitudes people tend to give to one another?

III. Their Prey: Targeting the Vulnerable (Verse 18)

- **Read:** 2 Peter 2:18
- **The Prey:** False teachers don't generally attack mature believers; they target the stragglers—the new believers who are "barely escaping" their old lives and are still wobbly.
- **Discuss:** What makes a new believer so vulnerable to a message that validates their fleshly desires? Or what about believers who are "comfy" in their faith...no longer vigilant (consider Revelation 3:15–16).
 - **Practical Application:** As a community group, what are practical ways we can surround, protect, and disciple the "unsteady souls" in our church so they aren't picked off by deceptive teachings? **Who might we pray for and pursue to join our CG?**

IV. The Paradox: The Slavery of Freedom (Verse 19)

- **Read:** 2 Peter 2:19
- **The Paradox:** Culture says that freedom means doing whatever you want without rules or judgment. However, Peter points out that whatever overcomes a person is exactly what enslaves them.
- **Discuss:** John MacArthur said, *"True freedom is not the right to do what you want, but the power to do what you ought."* How does this biblical definition of freedom challenge the cultural narrative?
 - Where do you see people in our culture claiming to be "liberated" but actually being enslaved by their own passions?

V. The Diagnosis: The Dog and The Hog (Verses 20-22)

- **Read:** 2 Peter 2:20-22
- **The Parable:** Peter highlighted the difference between washing a pig (Moral Reformation; moralism) and getting a new heart (Spiritual Regeneration; salvation). Because a washed pig's nature hasn't changed, it will always run back to the mud.
- **Discuss:** Christians still struggle with sin, but the reaction is different. When a sheep falls in the mud, it hates the filth and cries for the Shepherd. When a pig falls in, it loves it and stays.
- **Check Your Nature:** How do you react to your own sin? Does it break your heart (sheep), or do you defend and enjoy it (pig)?
- **Deeper Dive** (Time-permitting). **Read John 8:31-36**
 - Jesus tells the crowds that "everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin," but "if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

- **Discuss:** The people Jesus was speaking to were highly religious, yet He called them slaves. How does this passage prove that true spiritual freedom can only come through submission to Jesus, rather than just keeping religious rules or following our flesh?

Prayer Focus

- **Praise:** Thank Jesus that He is the true living water, capable of satisfying our thirsty souls. (Take time to word this in your own ways and expand on it in adoration of who God is.)
- **Confess** any areas where you have sought "moral reformation" (just trying to clean up your habits) rather than submitting to God for "spiritual regeneration" (a changed heart).
- **Ask:** Pray for the new believers in our church, that God would protect them from false teachings, that we would invite them in and our community group would be a safe harbor for them to grow.