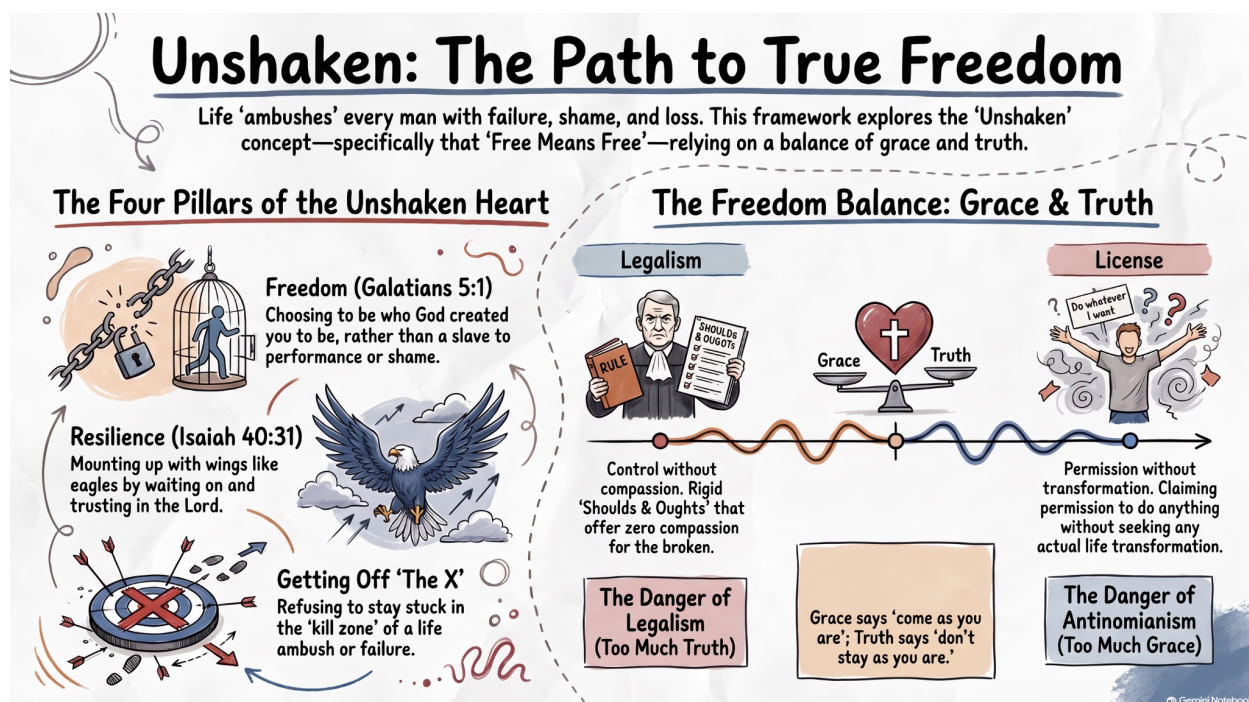




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Resilient

Thank you, everybody. Well, let me know what you are next. Good morning. Welcome to the round table. My name is Joe Barlow. I'm glad you're here. We're in a new series, but before we get that kicked off, David is not here, and I'm sure he would appreciate me saying the reminder. First weekend in October, I believe it's the fourth... 4th or maybe 3rd or 4th the first saturday in october uh i got a work weekend but these are the dates of deer camp in this fall october 9th through 11th november 6th through 8th guys if you hadn't been to one of these um i i don't know how to encourage

you more to go to it It can be a life-changing weekend. And when I say can be, it has a lot to do with your willingness to share, your willingness to put the backpack down, and have the opportunity to hear men share their stories about life events that make you think, well, maybe I'm not the only one that's experienced this. Maybe I'm not the only one going through this. Maybe I'm not the only one dealing with this. for me um this chair with phil this morning this is an anniversary for me 16 years ago my wife served me with divorce papers 16 years ago saturday my mother passed away being served with divorce papers while your mother's on her deathbed is not an easy thing where do you go in a time like that? Go off a deep end or you can call some brothers and kind of gather some guys around you and seek some help and walk through that. And that's what I've done. That's the only way I know to do it. So when you fail, As I have again recently. And you feel like, man, I'm just not worthy. I don't deserve this. I shouldn't be here. I'm not the right guy. The enemy speaks everything he can to me to tell me that I'm not deserving. And this morning, it's funny how God just puts things out there. Just a second. The enemy doesn't want me to share this. When you don't think you're qualified or you think you have disqualified yourself, let me remind you of this. Peter promised he would die before ever denying Jesus. By sunrise, he had denied him three times. three days later an angel gave the woman a message for the disciples and then added two words the message was go tell the disciples the two words that were added and Peter Peter was a disciple he didn't need to be named unless he no longer believed he was one. Wow. Welcome to Men's Roundtable. Heavenly Father, humbly come before you this morning with the men of this group and this community. Lord, life is hard. Life is a struggle. faith can be hard to see and be hard to feel. It can be hard to touch at times, but I know with my brothers around me and with us around each other, we see you in each other's eyes. May you continue to walk with us. May you continue to strengthen us, strengthen our faith, Lord guide us. May we do everything in your will in your name. I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you, Joe. Dude, I'm excited about this morning. And this session is dedicated to you. Absolutely dedicated to you because this whole series, Unshaken, as I mentioned last week, is on the idea of helping you face those situations that seem insurmountable. and to be unshaken. And as I

said last week, many of us, many of you are going through the hardest time of your life. Many of you have gone through the hardest time of your life, and many of you will soon face the hardest time of your life. So either this session is about encouraging you to continue or equipping you for the future. So Joe, this is dedicated to you this morning. Guys, I am trying to do my best to offer you the best that I can offer you in terms of your journey. I love doing this and I work hard to offer you the best that I can offer. And I'm learning how to use AI. Okay. With no apologies. You can tell by the handout. Marty acknowledged that. Dude, I can't do this, you know. But it's amazing if you just speak into AI what AI will generate. So these are my notes graphically pleasing to the eye. And I do not apologize for that. I've said forever that my spiritual gift is plagiarism and personalization. I'm very good at it. And so I'm learning how to use AI. So welcome to Men's Roundtable. and along that line, Walter Wofford, many of you know Walter, Walter's been a good friend ever since I got to Jackson. I love my brother Walter and Walter has introduced me and is offering us a new AI tool and what Walter listens online, he has a little bit of a health issue that keeps him from being in the room, and I assume that Walter's listening this morning. Hey, Walter. But Walter has discovered a new AI tool, and he is taking our session, putting it into this AI tool, and then it comes out with a 20-minute summary. I did not know I was so good. I mean, it is hard to be humble. It's so hard to stay humble. But if you want to re-listen to a better presentation than what you're experiencing this morning, it's on our website now. It'll be on our website. And thanks to Walter, we have a summary of our teaching. And it's dynamic. It's incredible. I've never sounded so good. So it's really good. So how about that one? All right. So, gentlemen, let's dig in this morning. Unshaken. I want to offer you a song by that great gospel group, Zach Brown Band. And this is a song that I would have sung back in the 70s, back during my hippie days. Scott, you know, you may have this on your playlist now, you know. You're an old hippie just like I am. But there's a beauty to this song, and there's a kind of longing for more about this song. I want you to see the words there. So pull up your notes there. Let me just kind of prime the pump to what you're going to see and hear. Free. So we live out in our old van. As soon as I read that, I think of Chris Farley skits on Saturday night. I'm going to live in a van down by the way. And then he

jumps on the coffee table, you know? All right, so I'm not going to jump on the podium here. So we live out in our old van, travel all across this land, me and you. And we'll end up hand in hand somewhere down on the sand, just me and you. Just as free, free as we'll ever be. Just as free, free as we'll ever be. Now, I'm offering you this song this morning a little bit with tongue in cheek. that this is all what we want, you know, just to be with my girl, just to be free, do whatever I want, and live in a van down by the river. But there's so much more. There's so much more. So I want you to listen to this song and understand that this is what everybody wants. But guys, we're here this morning because there's so much more. May God open your heart to what he has for us this morning. Free by Zach Brown Band. I was up on post, took a couple shots, got down, never seen a white flash, and then back back up, and I took a first, rounded my shoulder, tied my lung, clashed my lung, and I took some traffic on my hand, just solid blood and everything. I'm doing much better now. Up, moving around, sitting down and stuff, so it's much better. So we'll live out in our old van Travel along across this land Me and you And we'll end up hand in hand Somewhere down on the sand, just me and you Just as free Free as we'll ever be Just as free Free as we'll ever be We'll travel till the city lights Dissolve into a country sky Just me and you Lay underneath the harvest moon Do all the things that lovers do Just me and you Just as free Free as we'll ever be Just as free Free as we'll never be And never be guitar solo No, we don't have a lot of money All we need is love We're free as we'll ever be Just as free Free as we'll ever be So we live out in our van, travel along across this land, me and me. Amen. Amen. Powerful visual. Thank you, those that are in this room that have given up your time and service so that we can be free in our country. So grateful. And again, you know, that song expresses so much of what we all want. You know, we want to be free. We want to be loved. It's simple. And guys, it is available to us through the gospel. That's what the gospel is. It's not just about a van. It's not just about a girl, and it's not just doing whatever you want to do. It's something much, much deeper than that, and that's why we're here this morning. Be on the alert. Stand firm in your faith. Act like men and be strong. And everything that you do, do in love. Thank you, Colin. Colin is back in the house this morning, and we are glad to have Colin. Gentlemen, focus on

your notes there, and let's read our introductory paragraph. Unshaken. And today's session is entitled, Free Means Free. That's very profound. It took me a while to come up with that. Freedom is where the journey begins. Courage is how you fight the battle, and resilience is how you finish the race. Every man gets hit. Life ambushes us with failure, fear, shame, disappointment, loss, and exhaustion. This roundtable is a call to get off the X, live as free men in Christ, and build the resilient heart that can stand back up, move forward, and finish strong. Our mission, Set free, get off the X, stay resilient, finish strong. Guys, as I begin this morning and I said, Joe, I want to dedicate this session to you. Because even as I was praying about our time together, I knew that there's men in this room that are going through a really hard time. And in our brief conversation, I know you are facing some very specific challenges right now. So I want you to hear the voice of God this morning. And, you know, I'm a counselor. And I feel so honored to sit with the many that God brings my way, Carla and I's way. And again, we don't have people come into our office that come to tell us how good they're doing. I've never had that happen. You know, I often think of dentists, you know, unless you're going to get your teeth cleaned, you know, you don't want to go see the dentist. And, you know, dentists, it's well documented that dentists have one of the highest rates of suicide of any profession. And it's so sad because nobody wants to go to the dentist. It's like you've got a job as a dentist that nobody wants to see you. That's not very life-giving. And I don't feel that degree. I'm not suicidal this morning. I'm just saying that I know that when somebody comes into my office, they're hurting. They're hurting. And I feel very honored. And I am praying that silent prayer. God, help me. Help me be you with skin on it. And that's what this series is about, guys. What you're facing, have faced, or will face. I want you to be equipped. So this whole series, as you can see from this first slide, is kind of built on four pillars. This idea of freedom, Galatians 5.1. Again, all these passages, I would encourage you in this series, memorize these verses, meditate on these verses, rewrite them in your journal. Galatians 5.1 is the idea of don't be a slave any longer. Be free. And this idea of free is not do whatever you want to do, you know. But be free is the idea that you have the freedom to choose and you have the freedom to be loved and to love. That's what freedom is. to be who God created you to

be. And then this idea of courage, Joshua 1.9, no fear. Do not be fearful. Be courageous. And then this idea of resilience, man, you've got to be ready. And those who wait on the Lord will mount up with wings as eagles. And then this idea of perseverance. difference. Hebrews 12 just summed up in that verse in Hebrews 12, 1 and 2. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Keep your eyes on Jesus. So this idea of freedom, free means free. Turn over to John chapter 8, 31 and 32. John 8, 31 and 32 just simply says this. Then Jesus returned to the Jews who had claimed to believe in him. If you stick with this, living out what I tell you, you are my disciples for sure. And then you will experience, you will experience. That idea of experience is so important. Then your life will be different. It won't be a head game. It'll be a heart game. You will experience for yourselves the truth, and the truth will free you. Now, the Greek word there for truth literally means reality. So what Jesus is saying there is if you know reality, what's really going on, and you understand reality, you will be set free. So here's the point, guys, of this. Before a man can fight courageously, stay resilient, or finish strong, he has to know that he is free. That it's like, you know, he's loose enough. He's relaxed enough. Phil Dixon's an old baseball player. An old baseball player with emphasis on old, you know. and Phil, you cannot hit a baseball if you're not relaxed. Swing away. A line in a movie, you know, swing away, swing away. How do you swing away? You're free. You're relaxed. Even if a guy's throwing a 90 mile an hour fastball at you, you've got to relax and you've got to be free in the batter's box. that's a picture I think of this idea of being able to fight courageously, stay resilient and finish strong and you know free means being able to be who God created you to be it does not mean behave correctly, it does not mean be nice It does not mean just go to church. It does not mean keep the rules. It does not mean don't embarrass God. It does not mean don't embarrass your family and don't let anybody see what's really going on. That's not free. That's not free. You know, that's stifling. It's the idea of really being able to understand that we are actually free to sin. Now, that's an important phrase. I'm not free if I'm not free to sin. And God gives us that ability to sin. You know, one of the funniest phrases that I've heard and you hear, oh, well, he's a Christian. He would never do that. That's hilarious. Dude, I am fully capable of doing anything that a non-believer is doing, right? I mean, no. Look over at

Romans chapter 14. We're going to dig into the scripture here and try to tease it out as best we know how. Romans 14 says this. Forget, I'm starting with verse 13. Forget about deciding what's right for each other. How about that? Quit trying to take care of each other. Quit trying to judge each other. here's what you need to be concerned about, that you don't get in the way of someone else making life more difficult than it already is. I'm convinced, Jesus convinced me, that everything as it is in itself is holy. Now guys, chew on that for a minute. That everything as it is in itself is holy. That there's nothing evil in and of itself. What makes it evil is how we use it, how we handle it. You know, so many things we know that we could make a list of could be used for good and it could be used for bad. And then it's real easy because it could be used for both. to make sure that you don't do that because it could be bad. Well, yeah, it could be bad, but that doesn't mean that you don't do it unless you're rigid, unless you're leaning toward legalism. Well, we don't do that because that can be bad. You know, I love cheese pizza. Anybody love cheese pizza? You know, if I eat a cheese pizza every night at 2 a.m. in the morning, that wouldn't be good. Okay, so I'm never going to allow cheese pizza in my house. Do not allow cheese pizzas in your house. Cheese pizza is evil, Jeff said. I didn't say that. Jeff said that. It's evil. No. But we, of course, by the way we treat it or talk about it, can contaminate it. We can make it evil. We can make it evil by eating cheese pizzas every day, all day, any day, 2 a.m. in the morning, over and over and over. If we don't have freedom not to do what God wants, we have redefined the word freedom. We've lost our choice. We have choices. Therefore, freedom means God is not manipulating me into obedience. He's inviting me into intimate relationship. And he gives me the choice to be stupid. Don't be stupid. Stupid. Don't do that. But it's a relationship. It's not behavioral Christianity. Our behavior matters, but it's like I often say, you know, quit allowing yourself to be a circus animal. You know, it's like a circus animal for Jesus. You know, teach me how to bounce a ball on my nose, do a backflip and jump through a hoop. Just behave. God doesn't want circus animals. He wants men who are free, free to choose, free to sin, free to live holy, free to be broken, and free to be holy. Beware, beware, beware of legalism. Look over at 2 Corinthians chapter 3. 2 Corinthians chapter 3. And by the way, again, I know that any presentation that I'm

doing, I'm just scratching the surface on this. I told Joe, I said, these 30 minutes that I get on Thursday morning are the fastest 30 minutes of my life. I love this. I wish I could talk faster. But my East Tennessee dialect would be even more hard, more difficult, more hard to understand about that. But again, I just alert you to the resource that I'm using, A Scandalous Freedom by Steve Brown, The Radical Nature of the Gospel. Really fantastic. It goes into these principles that we're talking about much deeper. 2 Corinthians chapter 3, listen to this, And I'll start with verse 16, 16 through 18. Whenever, though, they turn to face God as Moses did, God removes the veil and they are face to face. They suddenly recognize that God is a living personal presence, not a piece of chiseled stone. And again, it's this idea of an intimate relationship rather than being a circus animal. Just figure out what to do and do that and then get rewarded for that. No, it's face to face with God. And when God is personally present, a living spirit, that old constricting legislation is recognized as obsolete. We're free of it. All of us, nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we become like him, becoming brighter and more beautiful every day. Joe, I love you, my brother. And you're a broken man. And you have failed many times. But dude, I love you more today. than I did yesterday, because me too. Me too. Me too. Guys, I don't believe that we need more law. I believe we need more grace. I believe that you are not as far along as you want to be or need to be, not because you don't know what to do, but because your shame for what you have done or haven't done to honor God. It's your shame, not your knowledge, for most of us in this room. Look over at Galatians chapter 5, verse 13. Galatians 5, 13. says this. It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Okay? So that's what we're trying to figure out, what it really looks like. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love. That's how freedom grows. For everything we know about God's word is summed up in a single sentence. Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom. If you bite and ravage each other, watch out. In no time at all, you will be annihilating each other. And where will your

precious freedom be? then. Man, there is so much in that passage. But what I want to highlight, guys, is this idea, again, of stop worrying about what everybody else is doing. Judgment kills intimacy, and God has invited us into an intimate relationship, and we're too quick to judge others. You know, I'm free to choose, and so are you. And there's definitely boundaries. Scripture offers us boundaries, and that is called the law. So we don't want to throw out the law, and I'm going to speak to that in just a minute, but it's the idea that we can get so law-oriented that we make life miserable for ourselves and everybody else around us. Turn over to one other passage. 1 Corinthians chapter 8. 1 Corinthians chapter 8 says this, verse 13. And I'll start with verse 11, read through 13. Christ gave up his life for that person. Wouldn't you at least be willing to give up going to dinner for him? Because as you say, it doesn't really make any difference. But it does make a difference if you hurt your friend terribly, risking his eternal ruin. When you hurt your friend, you hurt Christ. A free meal here and there isn't worth it at the cost of even one of these weak ones. So never go to these idle, tainted meals. If there's any chance it will trip one up of your brothers or sisters. Now guys, this is a tricky passage, I believe. It's tricky in that we can get so bound up by being afraid that we're going to offend a brother that we become circus animals. You know, it's like we become tied and bound to the law. But it is inviting us into respecting one another. And in this passage, there's one word that stands out to me that I want to highlight this morning that's implied in this passage. And it's this word right here. And I want you to pick up your pen and I want you to write it down just so you're listening with your pen this morning. And this word right here, I believe, is to be feared. And the word is pretense. Guys, there is a lot of things that I fear. But one of the things that I fear is being called a pretentious Christian. I don't want to be that. I want to be like my brother Joe that's real about his brokenness. You know, if you found out something about me today that you didn't know, that would make you say, and Phil calls himself a Christian, you know what I would say to that? Dude, buy me a cup of coffee. I'll tell you the rest of the story. No matter what you've heard, I'm worse, sir. I'm worse, sir. I mean, I'm glad you found that out. I mean, that's what deer camp's about, is part of what we do is share the parts of us that nobody knows. And by the way, I want you to sign up. If you haven't come, you

need to come. It's an environment that's very unique. I mean, where do we as men get an opportunity to be unpretentious and be loved by a group of other men that call themselves Jesus followers in the midst of our brokenness? We don't confess our sins silently. We tell our stories publicly in that environment. That's what makes it so powerful, so powerful. Please come. You know, the gospel grace does not invite us into image management. I don't want to manage my image, you know? It's like if you find out something about my story that you didn't know before, great. You know, again, I'm a broken man, but you know what I am? I am free in Jesus. I have been forgiven, and I believe that with all my heart. And I want to live that out with great, great passion and energy. Don't you? So I'm going to show you this chart. This is a powerful chart here on your handout. And I'll just draw it just simply. I like working with continuums. And on the continuum, X marks the positive middle. And you've got it there on your handout. So the positive middle is this idea of the gospel is given in grace, and truth. And so when we're looking at a healthy Christian and a healthy man, we're looking at this idea of John chapter 1 verse 14 when Jesus said, I came in grace and truth. Now guys, that is one of the most amazing concepts, and that's the gospel, grace and truth. In just everyday language, we would say acceptance and structure. I need to be accepted. And if you were more accepted, if you had more grace, I believe you would be more of who God designed you to be. But you need lime on the playing field. Some of us live life like five-year-olds playing soccer. Have you ever watched five-year-olds play soccer? They don't even know what the net is. and they sure don't know what the white lines mean. They're just like little amoebas running around, you know, but there is structure and that's the truth. But here's the two negative poles on this diagram that can happen. One is on this side is we're too, there's too much truth. And, you know, the term that we use for that is legalism. Shoulds and oughts. Shoulds and oughts. Shoulds and oughts. Too much truth. No, you shouldn't be doing that. Don't do that. Don't do that. And then on this side is too much grace. And what we call too much grace is antinomianism. I know that's one of those big seminary words, you know, antinomian, you know, you're not going to be judged in heaven. Yeah, only God can judge you. You won't be judged because you don't know what that means. But what this side of the

equation here, too much truth means, is control without compassion. control. I want control. You need to, no, don't do that. And so I'm trying to control my life or somebody else's life with no compassion. Oh, you did that? I'm out. And dude, in my counseling practice, I see that all the time. I've got one particular situation right now that I'm deeply grieved by because this husband blew it and his wife wants no part. I mean, no, I mean, it's like one day they're good, next day gone. Now what he did was bad, but it's like no process, no working it through, no forgiveness, no healing, no process. It's sad to me. Control without compassion. And then over here, what you have over here in a negative way is permission without transformation. Permission. I'm free. You know, I can do whatever I want to. But there's no change. There's no life change. Really? You really do believe that Jesus lives in your heart? Yeah. He's forgiven my sins. I can do whatever I want to. No. No, no. Again, come back to the middle, grace and truth. Grace and truth. Got to have both. Grace restores and truth forms me. Truth is like a mold. Grace brings life. Grace says, come as you are. And truth says, don't stay as you are. How about that? Let me say that again. Grace says, come as you are. And then truth says, don't stay as you are. So guys, I want us to be free, but I want us to be free in the gospel. I want to just close our time and show you again just a minute and a half clip out of Jason Redmond's testimony or TED Talk. Before we show that clip, Jeff, show the picture there. I showed this last week, and this is Ernie's sign. I'm calling it Ernie's sign at this point. And this is the Jason Redmond sign on the door that he wrote in his hospital bed as a Navy seal that was shut up and was facing 40 surgeries. He wrote, if you're coming into this room with sorrow or to feel sorry for my wounds, go elsewhere. The wounds I received, I got in a job I love, doing it for people I love, supporting the freedom of a country I deeply love. I am incredibly tough and will make a full recovery. What is full, that is the utmost physically my body has the ability to recover, then I will push about 20% further through sheer mental tenacity. This room you're about to enter is a room of fun, optimism, and intense rapid regrowth. If you're not prepared for that, go elsewhere. Jason Redman, little section about overcoming. Watch this. It is amazing the power of positivity over negativity. It is amazing what in the face of massive adversity, when we choose to drive forward, what it can do for us. Because

most people are unwilling to do this. We're so focused on the pain and the misery and on what we lost, we focus on the end. And we get stuck on the X. Failing to realize one of the greatest gifts you have when life ambushes come, that it can become a new beginning. Some of the hardest moments in your life will become some of the greatest opportunities. You will be reborn like a phoenix from the ashes. And as I wrote that sign out and we hung it, I thought to myself, okay, you've set the benchmark. You've said where you're going to go. How do we go? And it comes down to two key principles I had learned in my special operations career. The first one is you have to be willing to overcome. You have to build this relentless overcome mindset because, you see, life ambushes are coming for all of us. Life is unfair. It doesn't go according to plan. But if you already have it in your mind that no matter what obstacles or adversity I come up against, I'm going to overcome, you're already well on your way. Overcome. Guys, there's nothing that you're facing that is a surprise to God. What if, what if, what you're facing today, what you have faced and what you will face was God's plan A all along? what you thought was plan B the biggest mistake of your life is God's plan A all along freedom identify where you are guys that's part of it don't be enslaved to approval seeking, shame, performance your own anger stop living like a prisoner Jesus has set you free. Father, we are grateful that we can sit in this room as free men and hear your word. Father, grow the roots deep in our heart. Help us to understand what being free really means. and especially as we face those very, very, very difficult circumstances and relationships in our life. Thank you for bringing those in our life to grow us. We love you. Thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Have a great week.