

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 22ND - 23RD, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

### FREEDOM (JOHN 8:30-41A)

#### SAVING FAITH

We have already learned that head knowledge of Jesus is not enough to save us. **Saving faith is rooted in knowing God and is evident in one's relationship with Jesus.**

- The second half of chapter 8 tells us how to be set free from nominal and religious false faith and to be truly people of faith.

#### "IF YOU CONTINUE IN MY WORD..."

As Jesus was arguing with the Pharisees, many Jews heard Him and believed. Jesus says a **disciple of His is identifiable if they continue in His Word, and the Word "sets them free."**

- So, what does it tell us if one claims Christianity but lives in the bondage of sin and doesn't follow the Bible?

#### NEVER BEEN SLAVES?

The Jewish crowd tells Jesus that because of their connection to Abraham, they've always been free (forgetting Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome).

- Not only was their history distorted, but their theology was as well. They thought their lineage assured their salvation.

#### SLAVES TO SIN

Jesus assures the crowd that living in sin enslaves us. He also assures us that a life of deliberate sin bars us from adoption (v35).

- Culture promotes "freedom" that, in reality, leads to spiritual, psychological, and even physical slavery. The truth not only sets us free, but it protects us from costly errors.

#### "IF YOU WERE ABRAHAM'S CHILDREN..."

As the people kept using their religious pedigree as an excuse to live how they please, Jesus tells them that if they were "children of Abraham" they would live like it.

- Abraham had true faith in God that led to righteousness and action (Genesis 15)! We must not just say who we are, we must live it.

#### THEY BROUGHT JESUS' MOM INTO THIS!

V41 is bold. The argumentative crowd says they "weren't born of sexual immorality...We have one Father—God." This is a shot at the rumor that Jesus was born out of wedlock.

- Jesus tells them their mouths and actions don't align. **They claim to be people of God, but they're acting like children of Satan.**

### NOT FROM GOD (JOHN 8:41B-47)

#### "IF GOD WERE YOUR FATHER, YOU WOULD LOVE ME"

In v42, Jesus switches back to the religious leaders and tells them that if they truly loved God, they would've followed God's Word and welcomed the Messiah.

- True followers of God read the Bible, obey it, and learn to follow the promptings of the Spirit.

#### WE ARE ALSO TO RESIST EVIL

True Christians know and obey the teachings and principles of Jesus and **intentionally distance themselves from evil and sin.**

- Our problem often lies in our willing ignorance of the teachings of God. **If we do not know the true standard, we will easily fall for counterfeit faiths and lifestyles.**

#### MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO HEAR

Jesus tells the religious leaders that they are unable to hear Him and the truth because they "carry out" the desires of Satan through their selfishness and evil thoughts.

- **If we ingest or live out things antithetical to Jesus, it will cloud our minds and prohibit us from hearing and responding to truth.**

#### "THE ONE WHO IS FROM GOD LISTENS..."

V47 goes back to the conversation of evidence. If we claim to be "from God," we will be listening and responding to His words.

- The logical deduction from Jesus is this: **If we are not listening and responding to the His Word, we "are not from God" according to Christ.**

### I AM (JOHN 8:48-59)

#### NOW IT HAS GOTTEN VERY UGLY

The conversation with the Pharisees reaches a fervor when they essentially make a racial slur and say Jesus is demon-possessed. Jesus ignores the petty insults and calmly points out that they are the ones acting dishonorable.

- He also restates His offer for eternal life, showing His mercy and grace.

#### "NEVER TASTE DEATH"

The topic of life after death was a mystery of Jewish theologians for centuries. Now, Jesus is on the scene telling His followers that they will "never taste death."

- Notice the question has moved from "Who are You?" in v25 to essentially "Who do You think You are?" in v53.

### KNOW VS. KNOW

The Pharisees had an intellectual knowledge of God, but no relationship. Jesus not only has a relationship with God, but He has one with Abe as well, and Abe "rejoiced to see [His] day."

- This could be Abe's understanding of the coming Messiah in the OT or his witnessing Jesus' birth from Sheol.

#### WAIT, YOU'RE NOT THAT OLD

Jesus was around 30 when He said He knew Abraham, who had been dead for about 1,950 years. Of course, the Pharisees were perplexed by this, so Jesus clarified by saying, "...before Abraham was, I am."

- The Exodus 3:14 reference was seen as blasphemy and was the final straw.

#### CLAIMING TO BE GOD

Jesus had been telling everyone who He is, but the claim of being God was even more clear when quoted what He said to Moses 13 centuries earlier.

- **Jesus as God is the cornerstone of biblical theology, but to those who choose self over sacrifice, He's an inconvenient obstacle.**
- 1 Peter 2:7-8

### WE WERE DESIGNED TO BE FREE

- Sin temporarily resembles freedom, but actually enslaves us over time. **God didn't design us to be slaves** but to live in the freedom He provides through the Cross.
- We are also able to avoid future pitfalls by **intentionally distancing ourselves from evil and relying on the Spirit's help.**

### TRUE BELIEF WILL HAVE EVIDENCE

- True **faith** not only saves us, but it also shapes us into **righteous** people who take **action** in our relationship with God and others.
- The real Christian will be evident because they "continue in [His] Word." This means we are **praying, learning, and living out the Word of God.**

### REACTING WHEN WE ENCOUNTER GOD

- It is sometimes blatant and other times subtle, but **all people cross paths with God.** The question is, **how will we respond?**
- Are we even listening and looking for God? Will we be too distracted or focused on self to even notice He's there? **Do we desire to see anything beyond our "truth"?**
- Will we see the sacrifice and think Jesus inhibits and restricts our life? Will we try to bend and twist Jesus to conform to our image and, in turn, still miss Him?
- Or **will we acknowledge our sin and rebellion to God and repent and submit and experience true freedom and fulfillment?**

### AN ENCOUNTER FORCES A DECISION

- What will we do with this moment? **Will we choose, not just now but daily, to build our life on the Cornerstone?** Or will Jesus become a stumbling block to us because we are selfishly pursuing our "truth" and "freedom"?