

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

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

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE (JOHN 8:30-41A)

Jesus is with the Pharisees and scribes in the Temple, speaking to them about His identity and work (vs. 12-29).

- Even as Jesus' words were angering the religious leaders, others believed in Him (vs. 30).
- To those who had believed in Him, Jesus speaks to them on the necessity of discipleship—continuing in (or abiding in) His Word (vs. 31).

"IF YOU CONTINUE IN MY WORD, YOU REALLY ARE MY DISCIPLES..." (VS. 31)

The proof Jesus provides of authentic salvation is not a particular prayer, rite, or ceremony—it's continuing (or abiding) in His Word.

- To "abide" or "continue" means to continually live in, dwell in, and make our home in Jesus' commands and teachings.
- We do this first through learning His Word.

When we believe in Jesus and He regenerates our hearts and our lives, He changes our appetite so that we want to know Him and His truth.

- Our appetite to know God and His truth can only be satisfied by reading and studying His Word: the Bible.
- But we must seek to obey His Word: We can be guilty of just hearing but never applying or doing anything with what we hear (James 1:22).

Continuing in God's Word is learning it and obeying it, which in turn leads to freedom (vs. 32).

- Freedom from what? Falsehood and lies can be the worst kind of enslavement possible.
- The freedom Jesus promised us through His truth is freedom from sin (vs. 34).
- True freedom is not the liberty to do whatever we please, but the liberty to do what's right; it's true freedom because now doing what's right pleases us.

But as Jesus is talking about being set free through truth, the religious leaders reacted with a remarkably stupid statement (vs. 33).

- The Jewish people had been in bondage under Egypt, the Philistines, Babylon, Persia, Syria, and Rome.
- Yet, they stubbornly insisted that they didn't need the freedom Jesus promised because they'd never been enslaved by anyone.

"THE POWER OF SELF-DECEPTION IN THE UNCONVERTED MAN IS INFINITE." -J.C. RYLE

The worst kind of bondage is the kind the prisoner doesn't even recognize.

- There is a bondage in the myth that "happiness" is found in unrestrained, self-centered narcissism with no real fear of God, no responsibilities, no boundaries, and no tasks done out of obedience to God, but only out of selfish desire.

That kind of life is enslaving because it becomes very difficult to consider God, eternity, and others when you've been seduced into worshipping self.

- Ultimately this is a life of no significance, no meaning, no purpose, and it will eventually leave you empty, alone, unsatisfied, and in a place of destruction.
- Jesus explains that the difference between true spiritual freedom and bondage to sin is a matter of whether one is a slave or a son (vs. 34-35).

The slave may live in the house, but he's not part of the family;

- The enemies of Jesus may have been "in the house" of Abraham, but they weren't really "children of Abraham"—they weren't sons, they were slaves to their sin (vs. 35).
- Those whose lifestyle is defined by the practice of regularly committing sin are just slaves to that sin (vs. 34).

A Son must set us free, and the Son of God sets us free and brings us into the household of God (vs. 36).

- Even though these religious leaders were descendants of Abraham, they were slaves to their murderous hatred against Jesus (vs. 37-38).
- Their actions were all because of who their father was.

Just as our natural parentage determines our nature and our destiny, our spiritual parentage determines our nature and our destiny.

- These leaders insisted that their father was Abraham, but they didn't look anything like their father (vs. 39-41a).
- Pride and self-deception kept them from seeing the true nature of their bondage to their sin and murderous hatred.

TRUTH AND LIES (JOHN 8:41B-47)

"WE WEREN'T BORN OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY..." (VS. 41B)

In response to Jesus claiming that Abraham wasn't the father of these Jewish religious leaders, they insulted the parentage of Jesus.

- They were essentially claiming that Jesus was an illegitimate child who didn't even know His father.
- Even though they're threatening to murder Jesus, they still stubbornly insist that God is their father (vs. 41b).

If God were their Father, they would love Jesus because He came from God (vs. 42).

- If God were their Father, they would be able to listen and understand what Jesus was speaking through His Word (vs. 43).
- If God is your Father...

There should be a love for Christ in your life.

There should be a desire to and an ability to listen and understand God's Word.

These men couldn't comprehend what Jesus was saying because they belonged to a different father: the devil (vs. 44).

- According to Jesus, the devil is first and foremost a murderer—he seeks to kill and destroy.
- Second, he's a liar. Because God speaks the language of truth, those who are the devil's children can't understand truth because their native tongue is lies.

Not every unsaved and unconverted sinner is called a "child of the devil" by Scripture ("children of wrath and disobedience," Eph. 2:1-3).

- Counterfeit believers/religious teachers and those who rely on false righteousness are given the title "children of the devil" (Mt. 13:24-30; 36-43).
- Satan's primary sin was pride—he wanted glory for himself and didn't want to humble himself under God's glory.

Satan always brings counterfeit beliefs, philosophies, mindsets, and religion(s) that downplay the glory of God and the darkness of our sin and depravity.

- These counterfeit beliefs also exaggerate our own righteousness, goodness, and glory.
- "Man is not that bad, God is not that great, and we don't need Jesus to be saved" (counterfeit anthropology, theology, and soteriology).

Jesus gave His enemies—those who hated Him so badly they wanted to kill Him—an opportunity to point out sin in Him (vs. 46).

- But they couldn't find any sin in Jesus at all.
- They rejected Jesus simply because He told them truth, and that was something they didn't want to hear because their native tongue was lies, just like their father the devil.

Jesus again provides another proof for those who truly are from God—they will listen to God's words (vs. 47).

- Those who truly listen to God will prove their attentiveness through obedience.
- A lack of obedience to God means a lack of listening to God, and a lack of listening to God means that someone is not of God.

TRUTH AND LIFE (JOHN 8:48-59)

Now the enemies of Jesus resort to name-calling: Jesus has a demon, and Jesus is a Samaritan (racial slur/heretic) (vs. 48).

- Jesus' desire is simply to honor God and not seek His own glory: that's the exact opposite of the character of the devil (vs. 49-50).
- Jesus responds that if anyone keeps His word, he will never see death (vs. 51).

The Greek word for "see" in vs. 51 is that of a long, steady, exhaustive vision, where someone becomes slowly acquainted with the nature of the object of the gaze.

- Jesus is saying that anyone who believes in Him and keeps His word will not stay dead: the grave is not their final destination.
- Jesus is promising eternal life to those who are His.

Now the crowd repeats their charge of demonic possession! Abraham and the prophets all died.

- Jesus is claiming to be something greater than them (vs. 53).
- Jesus responds by saying that He's not trying to glorify Himself—God is the one who does that (vs. 54).
- Jesus is just speaking the truth of who He is (vs. 55).

Speaking of Abraham, Father Abraham looked forward joyfully to seeing Jesus' day, and when he saw it, he was glad (vs. 56).

- "How do you know that Abraham rejoiced in you? You're not even 50 years old, and you've seen Abraham?"
- Some scholars suggest that Abraham "saw" Jesus' day by faith and rejoiced in it; others say he "saw" it in the symbols of sacrifice.

In the Old Testament, characters were often confronted by an individual simply referred to as the "Angel of the Lord."

- Whenever this angel appears, He speaks in the first person for God (Gen. 16; 22; 33:20; Ex. 3:2; Judges 13).
- In Genesis 22, the Angel of the Lord says to Abraham, "You have not withheld your only son from me."

In Exodus 3:2, the Angel of the Lord appears in the flame of a burning bush and declares to Moses the name of "I AM"—the covenant God of Israel.

- Many have understood the Angel of the Lord as a Christophany: a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.
- How did Jesus know Abraham? How did He know that Abraham rejoiced to see His day?

"BEFORE ABRAHAM EVER WAS, I AM" (VS. 58)

Before Abraham came into existence, Jesus was because He is eternally existent.

- Jesus is using a clear divine title that belonged to Yahweh alone.
- Upon these words, the religious leaders picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus again slipped away because His hour had not yet come (vs. 59).

"YOU WILL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE."

- The truth of Jesus reveals the truth of our own condition.
- The truth of Jesus shows us our only Savior.
- The truth of Jesus directs us to the path of eternal life.
- The truth of Jesus empowers us through the Holy Spirit to walk in freedom over sin.

LIE #1: "I'M NOT A SLAVE TO SIN; I'M FREE TO DO WHATEVER I WANT."

- The worst kind of bondage is the kind the prisoner doesn't even recognize.
- If your lifestyle is marked by regularly committing sin, you're not free: you're a slave.
- Truth: Real freedom is the ability and THE DESIRE to do what's right. Only Jesus can give this freedom!

LIE #2: "I DON'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO OR OBEY JESUS TO BE GOD'S CHILD AND GO TO HEAVEN."

- If God truly is your Father, you'll love Jesus (which will be shown in obedience, Jn. 14:15), and you'll have a desire to listen, understand, and obey God's Word (vs. 42-43).
- Truth: Those who truly belong to God hear and obey Jesus and continue in His word.

"YOU WILL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE."

- Christianity is full of many glorious paradoxes: to live, you must first die; to find life, you must lose yours; to be first, you must be last; to be the greatest, you must be the least.
- To find true freedom in Christ, we must surrender ourselves to Jesus as our Master as we willingly become His servant.