

# ABIDE - The Word Sets Us Free

Pastor Simon Bardone

## John 8:23-36

But he continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins.”

“Who are you?” they asked.

“Just what I have been telling you from the beginning,” Jesus replied. “I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.”

They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” Even as he spoke, many believed in him.

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?”

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. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

*The New International Version (Jn 8:23–36). (2011). Zondervan.*

## The Problem

According to Jesus, The problem is the separation between heaven and earth.

There is a separation between heaven and earth. No matter how hard humanity tries, there will always be something about the human being itself that keeps going wrong in the world. And the problem isn't out there, it's an intrinsic problem with humanity.

Jesus elicits that problem: "You are from below, I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."

It's not about a lack of technology or a lack of the right leaders (important as those are), it's a separation between heaven and earth.

## The Solution

Jesus' Solution. The solution is presented after the problem is compounded: the problem as a result of the separation is that humanity will die in their sins, and then presenting a controversial solution: if we do not believe that Jesus is the Son of Man (Daniel 7), humanity will indeed die in their sins.

This may be the point in John's Gospel where John unveils Jesus' identity. In the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), there is a point where Jesus asks the disciples who they think Jesus is. Then reveals himself afterward.

But here in John's gospel, the reveal is foreshadowed in the line, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me."



Unless we believe that Jesus is the Son who ascended to bring Heaven back to earth, you will be stuck in a self-perpetuating cycle of sin and death. We are the problem, not the solution. But Jesus invites us to become part of the solution.

Humans have always tried to "ascend the mountain of the Lord" using our own schemes. Surely we can fix it this time. But we still drop bombs, burn down cities,

divorce our partners, and cancel anyone who disagrees with us. We are not the solution, but the problem. As long as we think we can fix the problem, we will continue to be the problem.

## Abide

What does it really mean, look like, feel like, to believe? Does it mean attending church at least once a month? Does it mean to offer a prayer every now and then? Not murdering people?

To believe true things about someone has deeper implications than that.

Like those in verse 30, what did it mean for those who say, "I believe?"

What would Jesus say to you?

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

"If you **abide** in my **word**, then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

- Rest
- Live
- Dwell
- Do life

If we rest in his word, live in his word, dwell in his word, do life in his word, then we will know the truth, and the truth will set us free. Spend the night in the word, stay up late with the word, have breakfast with the word.



The experiential knowledge of God's word (Jesus + teaching) will allow us to know the truth, and the truth will set us free.

“Come and rest with Jesus while he tells you the story of recreation. This is the stuff of freedom — to experience the kind of freedom that transcends trying to get all the religious stuff right. He will recreate our identity, so that we don't have to piece together a broken identity from the shambles of broken humanity.”

## The Process

Jesus' first days on earth were in the initiation of the reunification of heaven and earth

Pastor Simon shared a story (with permission) of how every day ont he drive to school, his son Isaac asks, “Papa do I look good today?” And the question behind the question being, “Am I loved today? Am I worth your time and attention today? Who am I?”

Pastor Simon every day reminds his son of who he really is. The process of abiding in God's word is a process of being reminded every day that we are loved today, that we are worth time and attention today, and being reminded of who we are by God the Father.

That is the stuff of freedom.