

John-20
“The Truth Will Set You Free”
John 8:31-59 (NIV)

Hey Newsong!

I want to take a moment and welcome our first-time guests as well as those who are watching online!

This is Memorial Day weekend here in the United States, and if you're watching from another country, Memorial Day is a holiday where we celebrate those Men and Women who have given their lives, so that we can live in freedom!

Freedom is a big deal here in America...

We will celebrate it again on July 4th...

We will celebrate it again on June 19th...

We celebrate Martin Luther King Day...

We celebrate Presidents Day...

We celebrate Veterans Day...

Flag Day...

All of these holidays are rooted in the idea of Freedom...

Now here in John chapter eight, It's the day after a major Jewish holiday called "The Feast of Tabernacles"

It commemorates a time when God's people were not free...they were actually slaves in Egypt...and God supernaturally freed them from their bondage...leading them to the promised land where they were now free to worship God...

As a result they created this holiday, where every year, everyone gets the day off, and they come together to celebrate their freedom...

Jesus is sitting and teaching at the Temple where there's still a lot of holiday travelers and religious teachers...He starts telling them...

Hey just like God led our ancestors through the wilderness by a pillar of fire so that they could see where they were going...

I am the Light of the World...if you follow Me you will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life!

Now some of the people love what Jesus is saying...and they begin to believe in Him...

While others are actually offended by what Jesus is saying...and they're starting to argue with Him...even insult Him...

As we finish this chapter, we see that Jesus stays calm even though the insults keep coming, and the tempers are flaring...It doesn't stop Jesus from speaking and teaching the truth in love...

We're going to see Jesus lovingly confront false faith, and expose the spiritual bondage that is keeping them from true freedom...

31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."-Jn 8:31-32 (NIV)

Notice that Jesus is talking to those who believed in Him...John mentions them in verse 30...

30 Even as he spoke, many believed in him-Jn 8:30 (NIV)

So these people are just starting to believe...their faith is genuine but needs to be developed...We would say they need to take their next step...

Why? Because we're called to not just believe in Jesus...we're called to be His disciples! So Jesus is speaking to these new believers and He says...

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Real disciples **HOLD** to the Word

Jesus is saying if you want to be His disciple you must hold to...abide in...live in...His Word!

The NLT says "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings"

This means that if we consider ourselves to be His disciples, we should

Read God's Word...

Meditate on God's Word...

Obey God's Word...

Build our life according to God's Word...

God's Word should shape our thoughts...

God's Word should shape my words...

God's Word should determine how I live my life...

God's Word should determine who I live my life with...

How I should treat other people...

How I should spend my money...

How I should spend my time...

God's Word should be the deciding factor in what things I support...In other words...What policies am I voting for when I vote for a particular candidate?

How do those policies align with God's Word?

Jesus said we are His disciples if we hold to His Word...

We said last week that believing is the starting line, but we have to follow Jesus to the finish line...

How do we “follow” Jesus to the finish line?

We hold on too...live by...abide in...build our life upon...His Word!

Jesus is saying if you don't hold to My Word...you're not really My disciple...

Some people consider themselves to be a “Christian” and yet stand for, represent, support, practice and participate in things that are against the Word of God...

Think about all of the horrible things that have been done throughout history up to this day in the name of Jesus...Are they really Christians?

Well, that's beyond my pay grade...but again Jesus says...

“If key word...If **you** it's conditional...**if you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.**

Jesus isn't saying that His disciples will perfectly obey God's Word...all the time...there's no one who is perfect except Jesus...

What He's saying is that His disciples will have a lifestyle that is continually centered in...rooted in...the Word of God...

I like to get PC fresh flowers...and she does love them...she cuts them and feeds them...and they last for a week or so...but you know what eventually happens? They eventually wither...

Do you know why? They're disconnected from the roots...God's Word is our root...if we're disconnected from God's Word for any length of time...we start to wither...we lose our spiritual strength...

I heard someone say "seven days without reading your Bible makes one weak!"

So...disciple of Jesus...are you reading your Bible?
Is Scripture shaping your world-view?

Is God's Word shaping your opinions, your relationships and your decisions?

1 Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. 2 But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. 3 They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do-Ps 1:1-3 (NLT)

Now you may be here thinking...I'm so bad...I don't read the Bible...Listen to me...you haven't committed the unpardonable sin...

If you are saved, the Holy Spirit of God lives inside of you...He is your Helper, He is your Teacher, He guides you into all truth...

And if you cooperate with Him...He will help you hunger for, understand, and obey God's Word to your life!

The beautiful part of this is that you can start asking The Holy Spirit to help you with all of this right now!

When we do this, we start to see consistency...we start to bear the fruit of holding on to...abiding in... God's Word...In other words we start to know God and find true freedom...

That's what Jesus says...

32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Notice that Jesus doesn't say "you will know your truth, and your truth will set you free"

Jesus says you will know THE TRUTH and THE TRUTH will set you free...

Now this swims against the flow of our culture...this idea that some things are true and some things are not true...

In fact, Jesus would be canceled in our world today...He would lose His sponsors, He would lose His followers, He would be called narrow minded...

All for saying that when it comes to moral and spiritual things there's no such thing as your truth and my truth...there's only The Truth!

And how do we know the truth? By holding on to God's Word and the benefit is that the Truth will make us free!

If you want to experience freedom...you don't need more opinions...you need more truth...Where do I get that? The Word of God!

Real disciples hold to the Word...

Real **FREEDOM** comes through Jesus

33 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?” 34 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. 37 I know that you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word. 38 I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father.”-Jn 8:33–38 (NIV)

Now here’s what I want you to notice...

Jesus is literally saying if you’re My disciple...you will find freedom when you hold to My teaching...The truth is going to set you free...

You would think they would be saying something like...

Wow that sounds amazing...I want to be free...Would you please tell me more?

No! Their response is “We’re good...”

“What are you talking about Jesus? You’re talking about being free...we’re not slaves...We’re sons of Abraham... “We’re good...you live your truth, we’ll live ours”

Isn’t that what people do today?

We share the Gospel with someone and they say...I’m glad that works for you...but I’m good!

I’m not lost so I don’t need to be found...

I’m not dead so I don’t need to be raised to life...

I’m not a sinner so I don’t need to be forgiven...

I’m not in bondage so I don’t need to be set free...

I love how Pastor and author Mark Driscoll describes this...

He talks about freedom having three dimensions...

Internal...

External...

Eternal...

The religious leaders had a measure of external freedom...so do we...

We were free to come to church today...
Nobody forced you to come to church (well it's possible your parents said you're going to church...and if so...that's good parenting)

We are free to openly worship and proclaim Jesus today...We're free to open our Bibles...We're free to preach and teach God's Word...

The myth is that because people have a little external freedom they assume they're free...

The reality is that you can be externally free, but internally you can be in bondage...Maybe you're here today and you're holding a grudge against someone...

As a result you're stuck in a prison of bitterness and unforgiveness instead of walking in the freedom of forgiveness!

Maybe you're here today and you're far away from God...you're physically free, but spiritually you're not free...

You have a false concept of God...

You don't understand His love...

You don't understand His grace...

You don't understand His forgiveness...

As a result, you carry burdens that you were never meant to carry...Guilt, Shame, Regret...These are things that Jesus carried to the cross for us, so that we don't have too!

We live in a world that celebrates its physical freedom but is internally and spiritually in bondage...

This is the "land of the free"

And yet we see more and more people who are angry, frustrated, hurting, depressed, suicidal, addicted...broken both internally and spiritually

Maybe you're here today and you're thinking...I'm good externally and internally...

Well that's awesome...but the bad news is eventually you're going to die...and if you're not eternally free all of your living was in vain because forever is a really long time!

So these religious leaders are celebrating their external freedom...and they say

33 ... "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone."

Now, about that statement...is that true?

Why were they all celebrating The Feast of Tabernacles? Because they were slaves in Egypt for 400 years!

They've never been slaves?

What about the Babylonians...

What about the Assyrians?

What about Rome?

They're not free...They're under Roman occupation...they are slaves to Rome!

Talk about living in denial! Jesus doesn't address any of this...Instead He talks about their eternal freedom, because there's nothing more important than where you will spend eternity!

“Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Now Jesus isn't saying if you occasionally sin then you're a slave of sin...He's saying if you live in continual, habitual, sin...you're actually a slave to that sin...it doesn't matter what the sin is...

BTW What was their sin? These are religious leaders...Bible teachers...What was the sin that they were a slave too? Their sin was their pride...they wouldn't stop rejecting Jesus...they wouldn't stop pushing Him away!

The bottom line is that sin makes us slaves...
But Jesus makes us sons!

Sin keeps us in bondage...

It deceives...

It controls...

It hardens...

It isolates...

It destroys...

You may be here today and you think you're free but
you're not...you're a slave to

Addiction...

Anger...

Lust...

Bitterness...

Pride...

Fear...

Approval...

But Jesus sets us free!

Self-help won't set you free...

Behavior modification won't set you free...

Religious activity won't set you free...

Being ignorant of your slavery won't set you free...

Denying your slavery won't set you free...

The only way to be set free is through Jesus!
Jesus does not merely expose bondage...He breaks
it...

The good news is that Jesus is willing to set you free
right now! You just have to come to Him!**36 So if the
Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**

What has become normal in your life that Jesus calls
bondage?

Real disciples hold to the Word...
Real freedom comes through Jesus...

Real faith recognizes **WHO** Jesus is
**39 "Abraham is our father," they answered. "If
you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then
you would do what Abraham did. 40 As it is, you
are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has
told you the truth that I heard from God.
Abraham did not do such things. 41 You are
doing the works of your own father."-Jn 8:39-41
(NIV)**

Let's unpack this a little bit...

Jesus is saying I know that Abraham shows up in your 23 & Me...

In other words...you're Abraham's Children genetically...but Abraham's not your father spiritually!

Abraham was a man of faith...Remember back in Genesis 15? God tells Abram that he is going to be the Father of many nations

***6 And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith.
-Ge 15:6 (NLT)***

These guys didn't have any faith in Jesus...

In Genesis 18 Abraham welcomed and served the Lord Himself and the two angels when they appeared in human form...God sent them on a mission

In contrast...the religious leaders did not welcome and serve the Lord Jesus who was sent on a rescue mission from God!

They had Abraham's blood...but they didn't have his heart!

They're not acting in faith like their Father Abraham...If they were they would welcome and accept Jesus by faith!

Jesus is like Abraham welcomed Me...you're nothing like him...you want to kill me!

41 You are doing the works of your own father.”
“We are not illegitimate children,” they
protested. “The only Father we have is God
himself.”

Things are really heating up now...
Who are the religious leaders talking about?
Jesus' parents...

They're saying...Hey at least we know who our Father is... No one really knows who your Father is...your mother doesn't even know...

Yeah sure...an "an angel came to visit her"...I can't believe Joseph was dumb enough to fall for that one...

Like I said last week...you know the argument has gotten dirty when someone starts talking about the others Momma...

They're like our Father is God...
They don't realize their talking to...God!

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me.

43 Why is my language not clear to you?

Because you are unable to hear what I say.-Jn

8:40-43 (NIV)

Jesus is saying if God was your Father (Which He isn't) but if He was...you would love Me...

He's saying that He and His Father have such a close relationship that if you truly loved the Father, you will love the Son too!

You know what this means?

It means that you can't say "I love God, but I reject Jesus"

You can't say that, because Jesus is the perfect representation of God the Father. So if you love God...you will accept the Son! If you reject the Son you are rejecting the God Father...

Here's the thing...

Jesus wishes that God was really their Father...He wants them to get it...He wants them to understand all of this...

Now a couple of weeks ago Sammy said that sometimes the truth stings...we're about to see one of those times...Jesus is like sorry guys...God's not your father, in fact...

44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

And people think Jesus never offended anyone with His words...

Here's Jesus, at the temple, speaking and teaching to the holiday crowd, and He says to the religious leaders...

Look guys, I know that you guys think your religion can save you...I know that you think that because you're priests and teachers that you know it all...and everyone loves to kiss your rings...

But guess what...Your father is the devil and all you really want to do is be like him, and do what he does! You want to bring up My parents?

That's fine let me bring up yours...spiritually speaking you are just like your father the devil!

Some people don't believe in an actual devil...Well Jesus did!

The devil is real...

I'm not talking about a guy wearing red tights...has a goatee and is carrying around a pitch fork...

I'm talking about an evil, malicious, spiteful, hostile spiritual being who is not only smart but is also very powerful...

He hates God and hates us because we're made in the likeness and image of God...and he wants to do everything he can to destroy us!

There is a real devil and Jesus says he's a murderer and a liar who is incapable of telling the truth...and Jesus is saying to the religious leaders... that dude is your daddy!

Now maybe you're thinking that Jesus should take some sensitivity training...it's unloving to say that someone is doing the work of the devil...

Here's the thing to remember...

They didn't have to stay on the devils team! That's the beautiful thing about Jesus...

All of us at one time were living our life for the devil...And we chose to switch teams! Jesus always gives us an opportunity to join His family!

It's one thing to say to people that you think you're free but you're really a slave...it's another thing that you come to Jesus and be free!

The bottom line is that there is a family of the devil and there is a family of God...If you want to stay in the devil's family all you have to do is reject Jesus and stay a slave...

If you want to come into God's family all you have to do is reject the devil...and become a son! Jesus was offering the religious leaders this invitation...

45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! They rejected Jesus because He told them something that they didn't want to hear...the truth!

Some people can't handle the truth! Now watch...Jesus makes a crazy statement...

46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? He's saying who here can point out any sin in my life? How many of you would not make this statement? I wouldn't...all you have to do is ride in the car with me for a few minutes...

Jesus is saying I've never done anything wrong...only God can say that He is perfect right? This is one of the great statements that prove that Jesus said He was God...

Let me say this...

No other major religion or spiritual movement has as its founder a person who not only said that He was sinless, but said that He was God...Only Jesus said that!

If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? 47 Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."-Jn 8:44-47 (NIV)

The religious leaders are so angry at this point that they just start name calling...they went from your momma's a prostitute to

48 The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan (meaning that he comes from a mixed race and a false religion) **and demon-possessed?"** **49 "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me.** (The devil will never do anything that brings honor or glory to God)**50 I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. 51 Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death."** Stop right there for a second...Here's Jessu making another claim to be God...look if anyone keeps MY Word...they will never see death!

Again...all through the Book of John we see the simple truth that Jesus claimed to be God in the flesh!

Now you can disagree and say that Jesus wasn't God...but here's what you can't say...

You can't say that Jesus didn't claim to be God! He obviously believed He was God! Here He is making His word equal with God's Word!

52 At this they exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?" 54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. 55 Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. Jesus is saying hey I'm secure in my relationship with God...but let me get back to that question about whether or not I am greater than Abraham...

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." 57 "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"

58 “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” What’s Jesus saying? He’s saying I was around long before Abraham in fact, before Abraham was born...I am

In the Greek it’s “Ego Eimi” “I AM”

Why did Jesus say “I Am?” Because these are the same words that God said to Moses in Exodus 3... God was sending Moses to Egypt to deliver them from slavery...and Moses asks God who should I say is sending me to them?

14 God replied to Moses, “I Am Who I Am. Say this to the people of Israel: I Am has sent me to you.”-Ex 3:14 (NLT)

Jesus is using the personal name of God...Again...can it be any more clear?

So far in the book of John Jesus has said He’s the quencher of human thirst...He’s the satisfier of hunger...He is the light of the world...

He came from Heaven...That if you believe in Him you will never see death...that His word is equal to God...That He has always existed...That He is God

Now if I heard you say that your crazy...your elevator doesn't go to the top floor...you're a couple nuggets short of a Happy Meal...You would say the same about me if I said these things...If anybody makes these claims they would be nuts...

Unless they're God...The eternal Creator.

Now you may not believe that Jesus was making this claim but the religious leaders sure did...

59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.-Jn 8:48–59.

They wanted to stone Jesus for blasphemy...now they would be right to stone Him if Jesus wasn't God...But He is God...

Which means that their refusal to accept Him and their continual rejection of Him means that they are the ones who are committing blasphemy...not Jesus

Let's apply this to us...If Jesus is Who He says He is what should our response be? We should give Him all of our worship and adoration...We should put Him in the first place of our hearts...

Listen to how the Apostle Paul describes who Jesus is...

15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, 16 for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. 17 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. 18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from

***the dead. So he is first in everything-Col 1:15–18
(NLT)***

Paul is saying that because Jesus is Who He said He was and did what He did, He deserves first place...

Question as we close...

Does Jesus have first place in your heart?

Does Jesus have first place in your marriage?

Does Jesus have first place in your relationships?

Does Jesus have first place in your finances?

Does Jesus have first place in your life?

Jesus didn't come to improve your life...

Jesus came to reveal God and set you free!

What's the Holy Spirit saying to you?

"Maybe you know church, but you don't truly know Jesus... Today He is calling you to freedom

"Maybe you're here today and you've been dealing with internal, or emotional chains..."

Jesus wants to break those chains...Today can be your day of freedom.”

Maybe you've drifted from God...Today you've got an opportunity to come back into the family...come back to intimacy with Jesus...

“You've drifted from abiding in the Word. Come back to intimacy with Christ.”

Let's put Jesus back in first place! The truth will set you free!

Altar Time