

Before it, He is.

EXEGETICAL THOUGHT: Really the entire section of this scripture is saying.... If you know God, then you honor what He honors. You recognize and rejoice at His revelation. Can I contend to be the type of person that focuses on knowing God and rejoicing at what He is doing.

Will you contend at just the sight of Him... Will you contend to be CONTENT IN HIM BEFORE HE COMPLETES HIS PROMISES TO YOU.

The pharisees in John 8 are trying to control the narrative, the crowd, the interpretation, and eventually even Jesus Himself... **They couldn't have faith because they were trying to FORCE.**

It is difficult to contend when you have to control... Nothing will rob your joy more than having to control everything in life. Control tries to force where contending learns to rest in. Control robs us of our ability to rest in God's revelation because we are fixated on our situation.

Force is how control works... I remember in college.... Ya boy was getting worried. I was a junior in college and I hadn't had a girlfriend. I had never dated anyone. I was assessing reality and was thinking this isn't good. That assessment of reality stirred up fear, and that fear stirred up the idea that I could not trust God... I had to force something... So my fearful force led to me being manipulated and tormented and deceived.

This is what control will do.. Control will lead us down a path led by our own assessment of reality, stirred up by fear, and trying to seize what God has promised us we can receive if we continue in His word. If we continue to rest in Him.

Do you remember King Saul from scripture.. King Saul was handsome. King Saul was picked by God. King Saul was given the gift of leadership and at some point He fought to keep His kingdom instead of to keep God's presence. At some point instead of surrender.. He kept trying to seize. He manipulated. He lied. He set his eyes on eliminating his threats instead of surrendering to God's truths.. At some point God's gift to Him became a greater inheritance than God Himself.. So he fought restlessly to control a gift and he failed to rest in God Himself. This is the pharisees problem....

Be careful when the GIFTS in life consume your mind more than the GIVER OF THE GIFTS. Because when the gifts consume your mind more than the giver we no longer call them gifts we call them rights.. And we serve a savior who surrendered His rights in order to set His eyes beyond His privileges. Birthday thought of pursuit potentially

In the wilderness // He surrendered to the timing of the Father
In His ministry // He surrendered to the will of the Father
In Gethsemane // He surrendered to the pain of purpose
On the cross // He surrendered to trust the plan

He showed us that the kingdom is not "I deserve, so I control"
But "The Father is good, so I trust."

Exhort // You can trust the father!

So Jesus knows this is the problem of the Pharisees... They are trying to seize the kingdom. The way that plays out here is they are trying to lay claim to Abraham. Abraham, according to their assessment of reality, gives them the right to have control...

So Jesus here is reclaiming Abraham.

They think Abraham belongs to them, but they only belong to Abraham if they share in what God has established in Abraham. What do you assume from your assessment of reality that belongs to you? Joy will be a fleeting feeling... Here sometimes... Gone sometimes... Contentment in God will be a fleeting feeling.... Here sometimes... Gone sometimes... Our spiritual portion will feel like a fleeting feeling... Here sometimes... Gone sometimes... If we do not let God, they claim to our life...

If it belongs to us instead of us belonging to Him because of His generosity... We will control instead of contend to find our contentment in Him.

It is like when Jack came over that one day. He assumed that He belonged, but instead of choosing to honor everything that belonged to me... He chose to honor one while denying the other... His partial honor was proof of the posture of his heart. He was not there to share in our house... He was there to seize from our house....

- The provision of Abraham is a gift through submission to the authority of God.

We turn things that are supposed to be witnesses of the goodness of God into our worship! Their mind was fixated on something that was supposed to point them to rejoice in God. To receive more from God. To look for Him.

Exhort / the gifts are glimpses

Abraham was a glimpse of what was to come... And so Jesus is RECLAIMING THE NARRATIVE. He is reclaiming reality. Let him reclaim reality!

Jesus is saying! If you really were who you said you were! If you really believed like you say you believe. If you really were of the kingdom like you say you are! You would live like Abraham! You would rejoice at the sight of me.

For Abraham rejoiced to see my day... I love that its past tense because it tells me that you can rejoice in expectation.. You can have joy before the day arrives that you desire. You can worship before the promise fully comes to pass! Because you have caught a glimpse of the giver...

That is who Abraham was! He had gotten a glimpse of the giver!

Genesis 22

Set up// Abraham had learned to contend past the current challenge... He wasn't perfect.. He didn't have a perfect life.. But He had learned to contend again because He had learned that the presence of God always met Him again. Rip current analogy.

Abraham had learned to see past his story to HISSTORY.

And the culmination is in Genesis 22

Abraham was able to look past the provision to the provider....

Jesus says you'd rejoice at a glimpse of me just like Abraham...

What you rejoice in reveals what you really run after. Baseball metaphor.

Exhort // presence over provision... IF I CAN GLIMPSE AGAIN!

The Pharisees cannot receive His reality for as we have spoken their hands are too full with their own fear, insecurity, entitlement... They are too full to be free.

Rose color glasses

God is in your story... If you will just embrace, His story.

How do you embrace His story.. Well Jesus makes this incredible claim... Before Abraham... I am.

58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

- Before... I AM
 - Traveling in Tulsa... Before you ever came to this place... I had some experiences. Before you ever came to this place... I was here... But Jesus isn't just I was.... He is I AM... I am beyond time... I was here. I am here. I will be here.

- So before it is fixed... I can worship the fixer
- Before it is redeemed... I can worship the redeemer...
 - Because He has been here before
 - He is here now
 - AND HE ALWAYS WILL BE HERE
 - ?In the beginning was the word?

PAUL I HAVE LEARNED IN ALL THINGS... What are you learning in all things?

He is good, before it is good.

He is kind, before it is kind.

He is right, before it is right.

He is redeemer, before it is redeemed.

It all flows from Him... It all flows back to him.

For from Him and by Him and through Him were all things made!

Will you contend against Him or will you contend to find contentment IN HIM?

Will you reject or will you rejoice?

Will you contend with stones or will you contend with songs

Will you contend with arguments or will you lift up alms

Will you contend as a pragmatic who wants to philosophically debate the truth of God's word or will you contend through prayer and petitions and praise!