

The Truth

John 8:23-36

²¹Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. ²²Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. ²³And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. ²⁵Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. ²⁶I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. ²⁷They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. ²⁸Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. ²⁹And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. ³⁰As he spake these words, many believed on him. ³¹Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; ³²And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. ³³They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? ³⁴Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin. ³⁵And the servant abides not in the house for ever: but the Son abides ever. ³⁶If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Beloved, men need to know of the Grace of God... I simply cannot stress the importance of that enough. The only hope of mankind, is for them to come to know, and experience, the Grace of God! You must hear what I'm saying beloved, because there is nothing, and I mean nothing... more important, more needful, than for those all around us, to see, to hear, to experience... than the Grace of God. It is Man's only hope... And it is the whole reason we the church exist today. Listen to me, I don't care what we are doing, the activities, our stance on social issues, our beliefs, our traditions and customs... all of it... nothing else matters, if we are not doing the one thing God has called us to do... and that is to put on display, the beautiful, matchless, glorious Grace of almighty God! Listen, we can run around here and proclaim all our beliefs, and declare to the world how wrong they are, even condemning them in their sin, but listen to me, if we are not out here, manifesting the "Grace of God" in our lives to sinners... I want to suggest to you, that we have missed it, and have ceased to be the Church of Jesus Christ! Our sole purpose in life, is to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, so that we may go out and be "Christ to the world," showing the world the Grace of God... so that sinners can be set free... I'm going to tell you the truth of this passage up front tonight, because we must get this! Sinners are saved by Grace, nothing else... It is Grace that sets sinners free, and thus why we must manifest this "Grace" in our lives!

Having said that, let's look at this... I want us to look at a statement Jesus makes here, that has always intrigued me... It's what He says to the Jews who professed to believe in Him. *³¹Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; ... and then He says this, ³²And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* Jesus says, "*If you continue in my word, you shall come to the knowledge of the truth, and the truth shall make you free*"... What does He mean by that?

Now the last part of that statement, "...the truth shall set you free," is not completely foreign to us, it's something we often hear in our day. It's often used in reference to someone who's done something wrong, and has tried to cover it up for some time, only to finally "come clean" and tell the truth. In that sense, we use that statement, "...the truth shall set you free," to describe the weight of guilt that is lifted, after having carried it around for so long. The individual may still suffer severe consequences, they may even go to jail for what they've done, and be physically incarcerated, but spiritually and mentally speaking, they are "Free!" Free from the heavy weight of guilt, and the secrets, and so on, that weighed heavily on them.

So we are not completely foreign to the principle Jesus is talking about here, but what Jesus is saying here is different in the sense, that it's not the truth we share or confess that sets us free, but rather, it's coming to the knowledge of the truth of God, that sets us free. It speaks to the fact, that it is our "ignorance" of this truth concerning God, is what holds us captive. *If ye continue in my word, ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* Do you see that? By continuing in His word, we shall come to the knowledge of the truth... and that truth will set us free! The question here becomes, "**Free from what?**" That's what the Jews said, right? Upon making that statement to the Jews, they responded by asking Him what He meant by that, saying, "*What do you mean, we shall be made free?*" "*We're not in bondage to anyone...*" It's obvious, they didn't feel they were in bondage! But Jesus cuts to the chase, and makes it clear as to what He's talking about, SIN... ³⁴Jesus

answered them, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin.* ³⁵ *And the servant abides not in the house for ever: but the Son abides ever.* ³⁶ *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

Jesus makes it clear, the “bondage” He’s referring to here, is that of “our bondage to SIN.” He describes us as being “Slaves of Sin”...that we are captives, held in bondage under the rule of a “Wicked Taskmaster,” who lords over us, and dominates us... (The picture of Israel, under the rule of Pharaoh comes to mind here...they were slaves in bondage, and God sent Moses to deliver them out of bondage. Which is a “foreshadow” of Christ, and how He would deliver us from our bondage...our bondage to SIN, and this world, and the wicked taskmaster of this world...right?)

Now what amazes me here with these men Jesus is talking to, (and it is the key to understanding this passage) is the fact, **that they have no clue to their true condition.** Their response revealed that they had no clue as to the hopeless and helpless condition they were in! Matter of fact, even worse, when you read on here, they actually thought they were “Ok” with God, they saw themselves as the children of God, as faithful to God, and felt that they were going to inherit the kingdom of God. When “The TRUTH” was...nothing could be farther from the Truth. These men were in bondage to Sin, slaves to sin, like everyone else, they just didn’t know it. Listen, they didn’t “See it” that way, but all that meant was, they were “Blind” to it, they were “Blind” to the true reality of their own spiritual condition. It’s what Jesus was speaking of in Matthew, when He said, ²² *The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.* ²³ *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. **If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*** Simply put, if what you think “Is LIGHT,” (Truth/Good/Right) is actually “DARKNESS,” (the exact opposite, Error/Wrong)...how great is that darkness! Reason that is, is because you “believe it to be true, and you are clinging to it, and trusting in it”. Listen, there’s no worse condition a man can be in, than to “Think he’s alright with God,” when he’s not...right? No worse condition!

Jesus actually says that in Matthew’s gospel, using the analogy of a man who’s cleaned up his house! ⁴³ *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.* ⁴⁴ *Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished.* ⁴⁵ *Then goes he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.*

Jesus is referring to the nation Israel here...and simply put, He’s talking about how they’ve “Cleaned up their lives” as it were (reference to the clean house), and the fact that they are now worse off than they were before! The nation thought they were “clean” and right with God, based on their supposed “obedience to God’s Laws,” leading them to believe they were “just” before Him. When the truth was, they were now worse off than they were before, because they still just as sinful, still just as unrighteous as the vilest of sinners around them, but didn’t know it! They felt they were “right with God” and thus, they saw no need for Christ! Which is the point of that analogy, they had “cleaned up the house as it were,” they had “gotten their house in order” you might say, but the problem was it was still empty! They may have “Looked better,” and appeared “Better before men,” but the truth was, they were now worse off than they were before! Again, reason being, they “saw no need of Christ,” and thus, by their rejection of Him, they would be powerless against the enemy, who would come in and destroy them, leaving their lives in ruins. (Spiritual truth of the soul without Christ)...

Someone may say, “How in the world could the whole nation of Israel be so blind to their own spiritual condition, and so blind, that they wouldn’t know who Christ was?” Well, the answer lies in their understanding of God’s Law, in what they “believed to be TRUE” concerning God’s Law. You see, they, and like many in our day, were ignorant to the TRUTH concerning the purpose and role of God’s Law. Like many in our day, they thought that they were “Just before God,” on the basis of their obedience to it. They felt they were righteous before God, on the basis of their so called faithfulness to God’s Laws! Thus they were oblivious to their true condition. You see, their blindness was due to their ignorance to the truth about God’s Law... God never gave the law to justify men, so they could be righteous before Him by keeping it. But rather, God gave the Law to condemn men, to declare them guilty before Him. The Holy and Righteous Law of God was to act like a mirror, revealing the SIN that is in us all! Far from serving to justify us before Him, its sole purpose was to condemn us, to declare us all guilty before God! We are all totally depraved sinners, in bondage to sin, and there’s

nothing we can do. And the purpose of the Law was to merely reveal that to us... It was given to "Open our eyes" to "Who we are," and "What we are"...condemned sinners before a Holy and righteous God...

Listen, these guys here in our passage, they were just as vile and sinful as their neighboring Samaritans and Gentiles they condemned, they were not the slightest bit better off, even though they thought they were! It's the truth that Paul speaks to in Romans 3, when he poses the question to the Jews, are we any better than they, (speaking of the Gentiles). And his point there was, are the Jews any better off than the Gentiles, because they keep and honor God's commandments, God's Laws, whereas the Gentiles don't? His answer was, "*No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; ¹⁰As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.*" Paul says the Jews haven't the slightest advantage over the Gentiles, even though they "keep" God's Laws! Reason being Paul says, as we've already proved, "ALL men are sinners! ALL men are totally depraved! There is none righteous, no not one!" Paul goes on there to make a statement that really puts it in perspective, Ro. 3:22-23, "*for there is no difference: ²³For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*" Paul says "There is NO DIFFERENCE...between the Jew and Gentile! That word better translates to "no distinction!" Paul says there's not the slightest bit a difference between the Jew and the Gentile as it pertains to being righteous before God. Someone may ask, "How can that be, they were faithful to God's Laws." They just thought they were faithful, but it just revealed their blindness to the truth. Paul had just explained, that the Law wasn't given to "justify men," but rather to condemn men, to declare them guilty before God! Beloved, you've got to hear me here, there's many in our day who are in the same condition, they feel they are "just before God," because they "live right," and they are "faithful to God's commandments, and Laws." But all that means is, they too are blind! Like these men here in our passage, they too are blind to the truth of their spiritual condition! Beloved we are SINNERS...through and through, in bondage to sin. The Law of God is HOLY and RIGHTEOUS. It was given to open our eyes to who we are and what we are...helpless and hopeless sinners in bondage to Sin! Like the children of Israel, in bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt, we too are slaves in bondage, and we need a Savior!

So now, that we know the truth about our true spiritual condition, that of our being in bondage to sin, the question becomes, how do we get free? Well, Jesus says here, that the TRUTH shall set you free... What TRUTH? What truth will set us free from sin? I believe the answer is found in John 18...

Here we read of an encounter Jesus had with Pilate, that will help us understand our passage for this evening... It takes place on the very day of Jesus' crucifixion, when He's brought before Pilate to stand trial...

³³Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? ³⁴Jesus answered him, *Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?* ³⁵Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? ³⁶Jesus answered, *My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.* ³⁷Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, *Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice.* ³⁸Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

This is a most interesting passage... Here we read of the final hours of Jesus on this earth. He has just been arrested, and brought before Pilate to stand trial for the allegations He's been accused of by the Jews. Pilate starts questioning Him concerning the charges, and the answers Jesus gives him, are fascinating... At the heart of the charges facing Him, was the claim that He declared Himself to be the "King of the Jews." The religious leaders were charging that He was trying to incite an insurrection against Rome, against Caesar the King. So Pilate asks Him about it, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" ...and the responses Jesus gives are amazing... ³⁶Jesus answered, *My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.* I love that, notice He doesn't deny that He's a King, matter of fact His answer makes it clear that He is, "*My kingdom is not of this world:*" right? He is a King, He makes that clear...it's just not the kind of King or Kingdom they were thinking of. Jesus says, if my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight, they would wage war against you that I shouldn't be delivered to you...but my kingdom is not from here. Pilate says, "*So you are a King then?*" Jesus says, "*You say I'm a king*"...and then Jesus gives us one of the most fascinating statements found in scripture,

To *this end* was I born...for *this cause* came I into the world...that *I should bear witness unto the truth.*

Jesus tells Pilate, that the sole purpose of Him coming into the world...the whole reason He was sent here, was to bear witness to the truth! Notice Pilate's response, ³⁸*Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?* And then turns and walks out of the room... That's a great question, right...*What is Truth?* In our day, the answer to that depends on who you ask.

But the Truth Jesus is referring to here, is that of the "*Truth concerning God*"... When He says, the whole reason He came into the world was to bear witness of the Truth, He's referring to bearing witness to the "*Truth about God,*" in that of declaring to us "*Who He is*" and "*What He is like*"...and the Truth concerning "*His Kingdom*"... Now I want you to think about that for a moment, because that is an amazing declaration. Since the beginning of time as we know it, throughout every generation, every nation of people...there have been all kinds of different beliefs about "GOD" concerning Who He is, and What He's like, and How He is to be worshipped. There are literally too many different beliefs, too many different denominations, too many different sects of religious groups in the world, to count... There are literally thousands of them. But according to what Jesus is saying here, He was sent by God Himself, to declare to the whole world, the Truth about God...

To *this end* was I born...for *this cause* came I into the world...that *I should bear witness unto the truth.*

Now, I want you to stop and think about that for a moment, I want you to grasp the fullness of that statement. Keep in mind, He's standing on trial before Pilate, He's is literally now just a minutes away from being judged and executed, by being crucified on a tree! (Look at 19:1...the process begins) And it is in light of that, He says, "**To *this end* was I born, and *for this cause* came I into the world...**(again both a clear reference to His impending death on the Cross, right?) *...that I should bear witness unto the truth.*"

Understood, you realize that what He's saying here is, that the whole reason He came into the world, His sole purpose, His whole mission, was to this end...to be rejected by the nation Israel, and crucified on that cross! "**To *this end* was I born, and *for this cause* came I into the world...**" With that in mind, knowing He's talking about His impending death on the Cross, read the very next thing He says...*that I should bear witness unto the truth.*" Don't miss this...this "Truth" that Jesus is referring to here, is declared, or made known, through His crucifixion and death on that Cross! The things that happened that day, on that hill...would declare to the whole world, the TRUTH of God! **To *this end* was I born, for *this cause* came I into the world, that *I should bear witness unto the truth.***

Beloved hear what I'm saying...this is the "*absolute Truth*" about God, because it's not the teaching and doctrines of men, concerning who He is...*but rather this is God's own revelation of Himself!* We have literally thousands of different beliefs in this world, about God and the worship of God...and all of them are nothing more than the "*opinions of men, and their ideologies*"...but there is only "*One Truth of God,*" and it is the "*Truth*" that Jesus came into this world to declare. Jesus came into our world, as a humble servant, to carry out the Father's will, and in doing so, His life became a testimony to the life and will of God Himself. He tells us the He only speaks those things, and does those things that He has seen and heard of the Father. Like He said in our passage, I always do those things that please Him... In short, the entire life of Jesus here on this earth, was a manifestation of the Father's will and desires, it was literally a manifestation of God Himself in His life! (Listen, Jesus never came into the world to die for us, out of love for us, even though He did love us, that was not the reason He went to the cross. Jesus went to the cross, out of obedience to the Father's will. It was to reveal God's will and desires to the world!) When you understand that, you realize that the cross was God's revelation of Himself! The crucifixion of Christ, was God's way of expressing His love for the world! "*For God so loved the world...right?*"

Given that, beloved it is in the cross, that we "*come to know the Truth about God,*" in the cross, we come to know who He is, and what He's really like... In the cross, we learn that the GOD of heaven and earth is a humble, meek, merciful, loving God, who deeply loves sinners! The resounding message of the cross to sinners is, "I love you, I love you, I love you!"

And listen, it is this "*Truth,*" this revelation of God seen in the cross that "*sets men free!*"

The “Truth that sets you free” that Jesus was speaking of to the Jews, was speaking of the truth about God that we come to know, through the events that transpired on the cross! It’s when you understand Who He is, and What He’s truly like...that your soul finds peace and rest! You are set free from the guilt and the weight of sin! The more you know of Him...and His grace, and His mercy, and His longsuffering, and His kindness...the more you realize, you are LOVED beloved, you are LOVED! You don’t have to “*measure up*” to men’s standards, you don’t have to perform, or be something you’re not...the more you know of Him, the more you realize He loves you the way you are, and desires to walk with you, and fellowship with you. It is this revelation of His beauty and the glory of God, and the great love He has for us...that ultimately overwhelms our soul, consuming us, causing us to repent, and turn from everything else we know...to follow Him!

That is the truth of the gospel, that is how it works, and that is why we preachers are to preach Christ and Him crucified! For that is how the captives are set free! That’s what Jesus meant when He said, “*You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free*”... The hearts of men are in bondage to sin, in bondage to this world and the things of this world, they are captives to the ruler of this world...and there’s only one hope for man, and that is to hear the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ! To hear the truth of God, in the message of Christ and Him crucified, so that their eyes can be opened to the truth of God, and see the Glory of God in the cross... It is then and only then can the sinner truly be set free...when they realize the truth about God, and how much He loves them, just like they are, with all their faults, with all their inadequacies, with all their shortcomings... The guilt, and the dread, and the fear and the shame of all the guilt of their sin, all melts away in the glory of His Grace!

I’ve always said, if a man could only get a glimpse of God, and see Him for who He is, see Him in all of His glory, see how Good He is, and the love He has towards us...that man would abandon everything he has, and run to Him! So beloved...we must be faithful to preach the cross, preach Christ and Him crucified! That’s why Jesus said, “*if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.*” It is by the preaching of Christ and Him crucified, that men see the goodness and the Grace of God...and are drawn to Him!

That’s why beloved, in my opening statements, I stressed the importance of our walking in love, of our showing this world, and the lost in this world, the “Grace of God.” That is the only hope of man, to see and experience the grace of God, through us! That is what Christianity is all about, walking in love towards sinners... Sadly, in our day, it’s not much different than it was in Jesus’ day. Sadly in our day, there are many who feel they are right with God, on the basis of how they live...while they judge and condemn the sinner, distancing themselves from them, wanting nothing to do with them... Beloved, listen to me, such a man or woman, is “Blind to the Truth of God”...they know nothing of God. For if they did, their lives would speak of grace and mercy, for that is Who He is! If you don’t believe me...just look to the cross, and listen to what it has to say about God and sinners!

The Law was given to “*Open our eyes*” to the truth of who we are, and what we are”...

And the Cross was given to “*Open our eyes*” to the truth of Who HE is, and What HE’s like”

And it is the combination of those two that “Sets the captive free”...when the Sinner, standing guilty and condemned before God...looks to the Cross of Christ, and sees the glory of God, having his eyes opened to the grace and mercy of God revealed there towards sinners...his heart is overwhelmed, and overcome by the grace of God, breaking the chains of his sin and guilt, setting the captive free... It’s what Paul meant when he said, “By Grace are you saved”... Men are delivered by having their eyes opened to the Truth about God, of the Grace He has towards sinners...

That’s why beloved, we must always preach the cross, preaching Christ and Him crucified! ***To this end was I born, for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth...*** the “*Truth that sets men free!*”