

John 8:32-47

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 Abrahams descendants and I've never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we should be set free?"

Jesus replied, ***"I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but his son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father."***

Light, Life, and Freedom

It is important that certain truths run very deep into our lives so that not only do we understand them but they really direct our lives, and also keep us steady during the difficult times in our lives. This is one of those truths.

There are three things that Jesus refers to very often in his teachings in the Gospel of John:

- light,
- life,
- and freedom.

Small words, simple words, but when Jesus talks about them they are very deep concepts. Jesus starts this afternoon's teaching by saying, ***"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."***

Here he talks about two of those concepts: light, and life. "Light" being illumination or understanding. "Life" being more than just biological life, but life that has a greater quality. This is life that has such high-quality that it will last forever. It is eternal life.

And then a little while later Jesus is still talking to the Jews who "believed in him," at least enough to still be with him an hour or two later. And Jesus says to them, **"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 hold to my teaching," refers to endurance, grabbing hold of, letting our life be influenced by and shaped by this teaching. Other translations use the phrase, "if you continue in my word," or "if you continue in my teaching, you are my disciples indeed."

So Jesus points out that this relationship with him is not something to be taken lightly, or to be temporary, or to be on the surface only. This relationship with him, this following of his teachings, this being his disciple, involves something at a much deeper level. Picture the roots from an oak tree. These roots go deep.

This relationship is incredibly significant. As mentioned earlier when Jesus started this conversation he said, **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."**

How incredible is, "the light of life."? To have illumination at that level is a remarkable thing. And he says that of those people who have this illumination that they will never "walk in darkness," or will never walk in ignorance. They will never be spiritually ignorant.

And in verse 32 he says that if we are his disciples, really his disciples, then **"he will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

What is this freedom that he is talking about? Freedom from what?

"We are Abraham's descendants!" "We have never been slaves to anyone!" It seems so strange that this is their first response. They had to skip 1,000 years of their national history, and also overlook the reality of their current situation with Roman soldiers everywhere in their nation.

And the listeners do nothing to appeal to their own righteousness, their own religion or personal religious practices, or anything else that they might appeal to where they could call themselves "free men" in any emotional, psychological, or spiritual sense. They know they are not "free" in any sense of the word.

They don't talk about her own lives, I don't talk about what is happening right now in their streets, or their cities, or in their nation. Their entire nation has been occupied by the Romans. Their own lives are very difficult. There is nothing here but, "we are Abraham's descendants."

"We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves to anyone." On the very surface of this this is ridiculous. The Jewish people had been slaves several times through their history. One time for 400 years. A big event called the Exodus brought them out of that slavery, and they celebrated that Exodus all the time. But here they say that they have never been slaves to anyone.

But Jesus is not talking to them about political freedom, freedom from the Romans, freedom from the Egyptians in the past, or any other kind of slavery that the people of Israel had to suffer or endure. He is talking about freedom from sin. And this is the best freedom of all.

Remember the three words that seem to go together:

- light,
- life,
- and freedom.

Light gives us freedom from darkness, or ignorance. Life gives us freedom from the power of death. And truth gives us freedom from the power of sin to enslave us, to drive us like cattle, to hold on to us.

"I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is as a slave to sin." And skipping over his next sentence, Jesus says, ***"so if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."***

So Jesus came to give us **light**, or illumination in the world. This illumination is so that we would never walk in darkness. And this light is the light of life.

And He has come to give us **life**, like from the father. This life is such incredible quality that it is eternal life.

And he is come to give us the truth that will set us **free**. This truth will give us freedom from the bondage of slavery to sin. It will set us free from the bondage from the lies of the evil one.

Lies Are Powerful Too

And many people carry lies very deeply within themselves. Obviously a “lie” is the opposite of the “truth.” The “truth” comes from God, who is the Holy One. “Lies” come from the Devil, who is the Evil One.

Lies that we believe about ourselves are just as powerful at shaping our beliefs, our choices, our lives, as the truth that we believe about ourselves. Jesus offers us freedom from bondage to sin, and offers us freedom from bondage from lies that we believe.

The most common lies that people bring into my counseling office to talk about and be set free from are:

- “I can’t do anything right,” “Nobody loves me,”
- “God doesn’t love me... I am not good enough for God,”
- “Nobody would care if I die,” “I am no good, useless, worthless,”
- “People would be better off without me,”
- “Don’t trust anyone,” “Everyone is out to hurt you,”
- “I am a burden to others,” “I don’t deserve to live.”

Your own particular set of lies that you have believed through the years might be different from this list, but it is very important that we learn to identify what lies have stuck to us – and that we have believed about ourselves – and now need to be set free from. Jesus came to set us free.

Slave vs. Son

The verse that we skipped is verse 35. ***"Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever."*** Older translations would render it this way, ***"the servant abide not in the house, but the Son abideth forever."***

Here is one of the differences between a slave, and a free man. The slave does not have authority in the house, the slave cannot give gifts, the slave cannot make bargains for the owner of the property. At the end of the day the slave leaves the house. The slave has very little authority within the household.

But the Son of the Master of the house has the same authority in the house that the Master does. The Son is the master of the house too. Whatever belongs to the Father also belongs to the Son. And the Son lives in the Father's house. The Son has the authority of the Father. And if the Son sets a slave free, that slave is free indeed.

Character of a Son

Then Christ also points out that a son has the characteristics of his father. If the father is a "life giver" (John 5,6,7), then the Son will also be a "life giver." If the Father is righteous then the Son will be righteous.

But, if the father is a liar and a murderer then his sons will be liars and murderers. Sons reflect the character of their fathers. This is a principal, not an absolute. It is a way of speaking. A manner of speech. But the listeners all understood what Jesus was saying to them. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things that Abraham did."

"If God were your father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here." "He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

The Family Business

Jesus is in the "Family Business." He is the Only Begotten Son of the Father.

What is the "Family Business?" To give LIFE. "Life Giving" is the family business.

- John 5:26 ... as the Father has LIFE in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have LIFE in Himself.
- John 5:40 ... come to me to have LIFE.
- John 6: 27 Do not work for ... that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal LIFE, which the Son of Man will give you.
- John 6:33 ... he who comes down from heaven and gives LIFE to the world.
- John 6:40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal LIFE...
- John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread he will LIVE forever... I give (it) for the LIFE of the world!
- John 6:54 whoever eats... drinks... has eternal LIFE!
- John 6:57 Just as the LIVING Father sent me, and I LIVE because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will LIVE because of me! ...he who feeds on this bread will LIVE forever!

And if you are "in Christ," then you are a son of God too. Adopted, yes. But no less loved. No less a son (see Romans 8). And YOU are also to be in the Family Business.

Be a "life giver" to others.

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