

The Gospel of John Pt. 14

John 8:31-59

Big Idea

- A. Jesus is the truth, He speaks about the effect of truth and error. Compares His work of truth to Satan's lies. Jesus continues with the, "I AM" statements.

Exposition – John 8:31-59

The previous passage ends with "many came to believe in Him". Jesus engages that group now with a message about the proofs of genuine salvation and a process for growing to be resilient disciples of the Lord Jesus. Warren Wiersbe sums it up, "When we obey His Word, we grow in spiritual knowledge, and as we grow in spiritual knowledge, we grow in freedom from sin. Life leads to learning, and learning leads to liberty." The passage is broken into two primary themes: 1) Freedom vs Slavery v.31-47 2) Honor vs Dishonor v.48-59

1. Freedom vs. Slavery (V8:31-47)

- A. True Discipleship (V31-36) – This is a very relevant topic even today. Clearly there is a breakdown between belief and true discipleship. We've all noticed that many make professions of belief, but never grow in real substance spiritually. As we've recently noted from Hebrews 11, real faith consists of two aspects: mental assent and trust. Some have a faith based in reason, but never allow that conclusion to become more, a conviction that brings life and affects every aspect of our being.

1. The Progress of Freedom (V31-32)

Notice the words, "continue" and "will know" and "will make". Jesus tells that believing is a journey. It has a beginning and destinations along the way. There is a process.



2. The Pretense of Freedom (V33-34)

There is a mistake that is easy to make here. Jesus has been addressing a group of new converts, but "They answered Him" is not referring to these new converts, but rather the unbelieving Jewish leaders who were listening in. They don't recognize the kind of enslavement that Jesus is speaking of. They are referring to political or economic enslavement whereas Jesus refers to spiritual slavery. Jesus corrects them with, "everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin". We should interpret, "commits sin" to mean committing sin in the habitual sense.

3. The Promise of Freedom (V35-36)

Jesus contrasts the freedom of the master's son and the slave. He says, "the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever". When we read the word "son" here we should understand that it is not referring to Jesus' position as the begotten of the Father, but rather he is referring to the son of the one who possesses slaves. The son is free and has the power to set free those that are enslaved.

B. Who's Your Daddy? (V37-44)

- 1.** This is a fascinating passage here. Jesus draws from three different father/son relationships:

Divine Son / Divine Father

Jews / Divine Father

Jews / Abraham

Jews / Satan

2. He warns them strongly to reevaluate who their real father is. Jesus uses His relationship with the Divine Father as a model (V38) – “I speak the things which I have seen with My Father” then He juxtaposes their father/son relationship against it, “therefore you also do the things which you heard from *your* father.”
 3. So, the logic flows like this – Ultimately we act like our fathers. Jesus, the Divine Son acts like His Divine Father (V38). The Jews are natural descendants of Abraham, but they don’t follow his model (V39). They have been deceived by tradition to believe that they are sons of the Divine Father, but they don’t act like Him either (V41-42). Therefore, they must be sons of their father, Satan (V44-45)
- C. Hearing is Believing (V45-47) -- Jesus closes the topic by explaining why they are so conflicted philosophically. The Jewish leaders do not hear the words of Jesus because they are not from God. They are different by their very nature.

2. Honor and Dishonor (V48-59)

- A. (V48-50) -- The Jewish leaders are frustrated because they cannot argue effectively with Jesus on the sheer veracity of His statements. Now they turn from His philosophy to attack His person. The Jewish leaders commit a logical fallacy known as *Ad Hominem*, which is used when you cannot disprove a person’s arguments so you attack the individual, “You cannot believe a word _____ says because he is _____”. In this case it is more like, “You cannot believe a word Jesus says because He is a Samaritan and has a demon.”

Jesus doesn’t even dignify their accusation with an answer. Their accusation of Jesus being a Samaritan likely comes from the fact that the Samaritans questioned the Pharisees claim that they alone could claim to be Abraham’s descendants.

- B. (V51-55) – Jesus offers the truth claim, “... if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” The Jews deflect again by challenging Jesus on the grounds of Abraham’s supremacy because he was their “father”. How could Jesus offer them life when their father, Abraham, died? This reveals once again that the Pharisees struggled to distinguish the eternal from the external.
- C. (V56-59) – Jesus appeals to Abraham’s testimony to persuade the Jews. He uses two approaches.
1. Hebrews 11:13 tells us that Abraham saw Jesus from afar and was glad, “All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance...” If the Jews really valued Abraham’s testimony why wouldn’t they be glad for Jesus’ incarnation?

2. The Jews continue to confuse the eternal with the external in V57 saying, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” In V58 Jesus contrasts Himself to Abraham on the grounds of His eternity. Abraham existed on earth for a season, but Jesus is eternal. “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am” (see notes from Pt. 13 about the “I Am” statements of Jesus)



This is a key consideration for the divine nature of Jesus. He is eternal. He is not a later necessity of man’s sin. He has always existed in the Godhead. His omnipresence with relation to time is a key to understanding much of God’s plan and process.

Jesus’ claim to eternity cannot be misunderstood. He is God. Further, He is the God of the Old Testament. When the Jews hear Jesus’ words, they would have instantly thought of the times that God proclaimed His eternal preexistence (Ex. 3:14; Deut. 32:39; Is. 41:4; and Is. 43:10). The Jews are fully riled by this assertion. The stage is all but set, for Calvary!!!