

# GOSPEL OF JOHN

## Encounter Jesus – The Son of the Living God

### *The Truth, the Whole Truth and Nothing But the Truth*

It's very common in today's New Age Movement and other spiritual circles to hear people say, "I know we disagree but you have your Truth and I have my Truth." So, the big question is are you going to believe in my truth, or your truth or **The Truth**? This lesson picks up in the middle of a conversation Jesus was having with the Pharisees that includes one of the most quoted statements from the Bible. **John 8:32 (ESV)**<sup>32</sup> *and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*"

***True freedom comes from knowing Christ through genuine faith and abiding in His word.***

**Read John 8:31 (ESV)**<sup>31</sup> *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,*

Last week's lesson concluded with **John 8:30 (ESV)**<sup>30</sup> *As he was saying these things, many believed in him.* Some commentators suggest that those who believed did not have genuine faith because of the conversation that followed. However, in every crowd around Jesus we normally find two groups – the believers and the disbelievers. Perhaps the believers needed this exhortation to continue in His word since there were many in the crowd who rejected it, and would urge them to reject it also. I believe this is why Jesus said to the believers in the crowd: *If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.*

***Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone.***

The mark of the true disciple is standing fast in Jesus' Word and living in obedience to His teaching. After a person believes in Jesus, the proof of genuine faith is if we continue to abide in Him. This does not mean that we won't falter or that we will never sin again. It means that when we do sin, we admit it, repent, and get 'back on track' with Jesus. Abiding in Christ is not a special level of Christian experience, available to only a few; abiding in Christ is the position of all true disciples.

**Read John 8:32 (ESV)**<sup>32</sup> *and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

"The truth will set you free" is a common saying in academic circles that want to promote academic freedom and the power of learning. I am told that many universities have this statement on a sign near the entrance of a building yet giving no credit to Jesus, the originator of these words. Concerning truth, He also said in **John 14:6 (ESV)**<sup>6</sup> ... *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* Jesus is the universal point of access to God. There is no other entrance into heaven. If you want to know the Father, you must come to Him through His Son.

When people think of freedom, they most commonly associate it with civil liberty. Freedom in Christ is not the same as political or economic freedom. Some of the most harshly oppressed people in history have been

completely free in Christ. The Life Application Bible explains: “Jesus does not give us freedom to do what we want, but freedom to follow God. As we seek to serve God, Jesus' perfect truth frees us to be all that God meant us to be.”

As I mentioned earlier – every group around Jesus had its believers and disbelievers –now let the arguers begin again!

**Read John 8:33-36 (ESV)** <sup>33</sup> They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’” <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

These arguers wanted to debate everything Jesus said and they whined: *We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone.* Well, that was a total **lie** right out of the gate. God’s Word reveals that the Israelites were slaves in Egypt for over 400 years. It was Moses under God’s direction who brought them out of slavery. On top of that ten tribes of Israel had been carried off as captives to Assyria basically never returning and the Kingdom of Judah had been in captivity for 70 years in Babylon. At that very moment they were under the fist of Rome. But, Jesus didn’t bring up any of that. He went to a more personal place and said: *Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.*

We have not had a *truly truly* (or *verily verily*) statement in a little while. So, let’s remind ourselves that when we read Jesus’ words and see statements beginning with *truly truly* that this not only implies what follows is true but also that the person making the statement has **firsthand knowledge** and authority about it. Jesus had firsthand knowledge that *everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.*

Jesus used a household metaphor to make his point: *Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.* McGee’s down home description puts it this way, “A servant may come and work for you during the day, but when evening comes, he gets his hat and goes home. The son comes in, pitches his hat in a corner, sits down and relaxes because he is the son. The Lord was telling these rulers that they are not really God’s children.” Jesus is ‘the Son’ who remains forever in God’s household.

As God’s Son He is able to make slaves to sin free because of His sacrifice on the cross. Jesus proclaimed, *if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.* Those whom He releases from slavery to sin enjoy freedom in Christ. We are no longer under the wrath of God. Death has no power over us. We are no longer alienated from God, as we are adopted into God’s family!

**Read John 8:37-43 (ESV)** <sup>37</sup> I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. <sup>38</sup> I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.” <sup>39</sup> They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, <sup>40</sup> but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. <sup>41</sup> You are doing the works your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.” <sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I

*came not of my own accord, but he sent me.* <sup>43</sup> *Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.*

Because of their misplaced pride in being children of Abraham, these arguers would not accept Jesus' teaching about freedom. Jesus knew these folks were Abraham's seed. He also knew that all though the centuries the seed of Abraham had been waiting for the promised Seed – the seed of David to come as their Messiah. God had promised Abraham in **Genesis 12:3 (ESV)** <sup>3</sup> *I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*” This One promised to Abraham would bless all families of the earth – not just the Jews. Now, the Promised One was on earth and they wanted to kill Him. He had proven that He was the Promised One by His miracles. But still they did not recognize Him for who He was.

They were proud to claim kin to Abraham but they were not acting like they were related. Unlike these arguers, Abraham believed God! **Genesis 15:6 (ESV)** <sup>6</sup> *And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.* Abraham had been a *friend of God* while they were plotting to kill God's Son.

When my sister was small, she was mad at her father. My mother tells the story that my sister said to her father, “Your people are not my people!” Jesus made a similar statement to the Pharisees when He infers that His Father and their father is not the same.

Once again they tried to attack the integrity of Jesus by inferring that He was an illegitimate son. And, they went on to brag that not only were they related to Abraham, they were also related to God. Scripture confirms that Israel is God's son (**Exodus 4:22**) and God regards Himself as Israel's father (**Jeremiah 31:9**). Without denying the truth of the Scriptures, Jesus pointed out that it did not apply in their particular case: *If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here.*

One verse that assures us that we belong to Jesus is **1 John 4:7 (ESV)** <sup>7</sup> *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.* My grandmother at times doubted her salvation until she took hold of the truth of this verse. For her this highlighted that she was born of God. The Pharisees' lack of love for Jesus highlighted that they were not born of God.

Now let's move on to my favorite part of Jesus' reply to them!

**Read John 8:44-47 (ESV)** <sup>44</sup> *You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.* <sup>45</sup> *But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.* <sup>46</sup> *Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?* <sup>47</sup> *Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.*”

Don't you know they were livid when Jesus said: *You are of your father the devil.* The Apostle Paul would later write in **2 Corinthians 11:14-15 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> *... for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.* <sup>15</sup> *So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness....* These religious

leaders in verbal combat with Jesus were disguised as servants of righteousness. But, they were Satan's spawn!

Reading God's Word in different translations sometimes causes the words to jump out and that is what the NIV does for me with the second half of verse 44. *When he lies, he speaks his **native language**, for he is a liar and the father of lies.* Lying is the native language of the devil, the prince of darkness. We talk about God's Word originally being written in Hebrew, some Aramaic and Greek. The devil's words are written in lies.

Even though Jesus was speaking the Truth, the Pharisees would rather believe the devil's lies. Take this to heart: *Whoever is of God hears the words of God.*

**Read John 8:48-50 (ESV)** <sup>48</sup> *The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?"* <sup>49</sup> *Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me."* <sup>50</sup> *Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge.*

Calling a Jew a Samaritan was a vile curse. The hearts of these 'religious' leaders were filled with hatred and murder. Their emotions would eventually be on full display in front of Pilate when the Jews cried out for Jesus to be crucified. To add to their sins, they were speaking blasphemy against God when they said Jesus had a demon.

While they dishonored the Son, the Son steadfastly honored his Father. Although Jesus was God, He was also 100% human. He felt their verbal barbs but He would not yield to please them. Jesus was honoring His Father and He would not do anything to dishonor the Father.

This debate between the Pharisees and Jesus is not over yet. We will continue it next week. In the meantime, I want to end by focusing on the The Whole Truth!

Once, when a stubborn disputer seemed unconvinced, Lincoln said, "Well, let's see how many legs has a cow?" "Four, of course," came the reply disgustedly. "That's right," agreed Lincoln. "Now suppose you call the cow's tail a leg; how many legs would the cow have?" "Why, five, of course," was the confident reply. "Now, that's where you're wrong," said Lincoln. "Calling a cow's tail a leg doesn't make it a leg."

So, what is your answer to the big question concerning the Truth? Are you going to believe my truth, your truth or **The Truth**? According to scripture the only Truth is Jesus. The choice is yours!