

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Jesus: The Light of the World John 8:31-36 Part 4

This weekend we, along with millions of other professing Christians around the world, are celebrating the resurrection of Christ. That celebration will express itself in many different ways. Some of those celebrations will be quite large, others will be quite small. Some of those celebrations will be quite festive others will be far more somber and subdued. Some will involve elaborate decorations and others will be rather plain. There are all kinds of ways to celebrate the resurrection of Christ but I cannot think of a better way for us to celebrate the resurrection than for us, personally in our pursuit of holiness to plug into the very power that raised Christ from the dead.

Can this actually be done? The Apostle Paul certainly thought so. Let me read for you **Philippians 3:7-10, "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. (8) More than that I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus My Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, (9) and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, (10) that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."** Can we actually in our pursuit of knowing Christ plug into the power that raised Christ from the dead? Absolutely! What did Paul pray, **"that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection."**

Plugging into the power of His resurrection each and everyday will transform a rather ordinary life into an extraordinary life. It will take a life that we may think is OK and make it truly special. But how do we plug into this kind of power? This brings us back to the passage that we have been studying over the past several weeks.

We are presently examining John 8:12-59, which is a continuing record of the events associated with the last day of the feast of booths. How did this passage begin?

The passage began with a claim by Christ that He was the light of the world (John 8:12). Let me read for you John 8:12 "Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world." How did the Pharisees respond to Christ's claim? The initial response of the Pharisees to the claim of Christ was one of unbelief (John 8:13-20).

They told Him because He bore witness of Himself that His witness was not true and then when Christ told them that His Father, referring to His heavenly Father, also bore witness of Him they disdainfully challenged Him to produce His Father. The Pharisees were not a very receptive audience.

After this response of unbelief Jesus, in John 8:21-29 warned the Pharisees if they did not respond positively to His claim in the here and now, they would be forever separated from Him in the hereafter. This is where we left off last week.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

My hope for this message this weekend is that we might not be satisfied with a life that we think is Ok, but rather, we through the same power that raised Christ from the dead find ourselves living a life that is truly special and perhaps even extraordinary.

So how will these Pharisees and others listening to Christ respond to all that He has said including His warning? Many responded to all of what Christ said, including His warning, by making professions of faith (John 8:30). Let me read for you **John 8:30, "As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him."**

The totality of what Jesus had said including His warning was so compelling that the apostle tells us that many came to believe in Jesus as the Christ.

We don't know exactly who these "many" people were, but I would assume that this group might have included even a few Pharisees. So how will Jesus respond to what appears on the surface to be a great outpouring of faith?

He doesn't get particularly excited. In fact, He does something that might be considered rather surprising.

Jesus responded to these many so-called professions of faith by exposing them as superficial (John 8:31-59). In other words, Jesus will expose these professions as false. He will do this incrementally starting in **John 8:31** going all the way down to **John 8:59**. So what is His first step in this process?

His first step in exposing their professions as superficial was to explain to them what characterizes the life of someone who has made a genuine profession of faith (John 8:31-36).

Let us read **John 8:31 "Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine.'"**

Those making genuine professions of faith will abide in the Word of Christ or in other words they will persevere in the Word of Christ.

But someone here might ask, "But what exactly does Christ mean when He speaks of abiding or persevering in His word?" From the context of John 8:31-59 abiding or persevering in His Word implies obedience. In other words abiding or persevering in His word does not mean that we throughout the course of our lives will simply acknowledge the truthfulness of His words. If this were the case then most every person living in America would have to be considered a true disciple of Christ. Obviously it is bigger than this. Abiding or persevering in Christ's word means that our lives will be characterized by obedience.

Having said this, it is also important for us to understand that there could be times when someone who has made a genuine profession of faith in Christ might struggle with obedience but as a rule, they will abide in the Word of Christ or in other words they will be obedient to His Word.

Does this describe you? Can you honestly say this weekend, that you are persevering in the Word of Christ or in other words can you say this weekend that your life is all about obedience. If your answer is "Yes" then it would appear that you are a true disciple of Christ and your profession of

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

faith is in fact genuine. If your answer is "No" then you are more than likely, not a true disciple of Christ and your profession of faith is more than likely superficial or false.

The bottom line is this: you can know whether or not you are a true disciple or a false disciple based on how you interact with the Word of God, or in other words how you interact with the Word of Christ. If you interact with Christ's Words in the way that a true disciple would interact with Christ's words thus producing obedience, several things would be true. What are those things?

These things are listed out for us in **John 8:32**. Let me read this verse for you, "**And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.**" Jesus tells us that the first thing that a true disciple of Christ will experience as they interact with His Word is this: They will know the truth. What exactly does this mean?

If we interact with Christ's Word as a true disciple would interact, we would first of all know that Christ's word is truth, not in an academic sense but in an experiential sense (John 8:32). In other words the truth of Christ's Word will come alive for us. We can find an example of this in **2 Thessalonians 2:13**.

Let me read for you **2 Thessalonians 2:13** "**And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.**"

The word of Christ when it is received in the hearts of a true disciple will be received as the very Word of God. It will deeply impact them and it will accomplish God's work. It will not simply be an interesting piece of trivia that they give mental assent to.

This is very comforting to me and I hope that this is very comforting to you. I, by the grace of God am continually not only finding myself taking Christ's words very seriously, but I am also finding that those words are producing in me all kinds of spiritual energy. And what is the source of this energy? I believe it is the power that raised Christ from the dead, or in other words it is the power of God working in me through His word. This is not something that is isolated to me. It is something that is common in all true Disciples of Christ when they as a disciple of Christ interact with His Word.

So what is the first thing that happens when a true disciple interacts with His Word? The first thing that happens when a true disciple interacts with the Word of Christ is that they will know the truth, or in other words they will know the truth of Christ's Word experientially in respect to its power. So what else would be true if we interact with Christ's Word as a true disciple of Christ?

Those who come to know Christ's Word as truth, not in an academic sense but in a experiential sense, will also find that truth setting them free (John 8:32). Let us continue to read **John 8:32** "**And you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.**"

Isn't this the inevitable consequence of what we have just discussed. If we, as a true disciple of Christ have come to know the truth in the way we have just described it, or in other words experientially in respect to its power, then of course knowing that truth will set us free.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

In other words we will not be enslaved to our life as we once knew it doing the things we shouldn't or not doing the things we should.

How are true disciples able to abide in Christ's Word or live a life of obedience? True disciples are able to abide in Christ's Word, or in other words live a life of obedience because they have come to know His Word as truth and that truth sets them free.

Hopefully, these words that I am sharing with you are an encouragement to you. Hopefully, these words that I am sharing with you are uplifting to you. Hopefully these words I am sharing with you are even challenging for you. If this is so this is good, because this is how you would expect a true disciple of Christ to respond.

But how will those who had made these so-called professions of faith in **John 8** respond? Will they be encouraged, uplifted and even challenged by the Words of Christ or will they not? Unfortunately these Jews who had made these so-called professions of faith struggled.

Unfortunately, the Jews who had just made these so-called professions of faith struggled with Christ's teaching that the truth would set them free (John 8:33). Let me read for you **John 8:33** **"We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone."** Now isn't this a rather surprising statement? Why am I saying this? I am saying this because we know and even these Jews know, that they had been, over the centuries enslaved to just about every major national power. This means that they must have meant something else by enslavement. What then might that be?

They were struggling with Christ's implication that they were in some kind of spiritual bondage and needed to be set free (John 8:33).

In other words these Jews were convinced that they were spiritually whole and did not need a physician because of their genetic relationship to Abraham. They might be willing to accept the fact that Jesus is the Christ, but they are not willing to accept His teaching that they need to be set free.

So they ask Christ for an explanation at the end of **John 8:33**. So let us once again read the verse, **"We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone, How is it that you say, 'You shall become free?'"** Jesus will now answer the question.

Let us read **John 8:34** **"Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, (He doesn't want them to miss the point) I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.'" What did Jesus want them to understand? Those who sin are slaves to their sin, whether they realize it or not and this includes who? This includes the physical offspring of Abraham. This had to be very difficult for them to hear. But Jesus is not yet done speaking to them about their enslavement.**

Jesus, then after explaining to them what He meant by slavery in John 8:34, now progresses to the status of slaves in John 8:35-36.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Let me read for you these verses, "**And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the Son does remain forever. (36) If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.**"

Jesus, in these verses draws attention to the difference between a slave's relationship to the household in which he belongs in contrast to a son's relationship to the household in which he belongs. Why is this contrast important to appreciate?

The Jews viewed themselves as sons in God's household because they were the physical offspring of Abraham. But they presumed wrongly. They were the physical offspring of Abraham, but they were not sons in God's household. The Jews were slaves. They were the slaves of sin and therefore did not have the rights of the son nor the security of the Son in God's household (John 8:35)

Therefore, though they might now be enjoying certain blessings because they are in fact the physical seed of Abraham, and are part of God's household as slaves, they should not assume that they will remain in the household of God and continue to enjoy the blessings of that household forever, since they in fact are not sons but slaves. What does Jesus tell them? "**And the slave does not remain in the house.**"

But there is one who does remain in the house and who is that? Let us continue to read the verse, "**And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.**" Who is the son? The son is Christ, and as the Son He permanently belongs to the household, or in other words the household of God (John 8:35). This fact can be extremely helpful to those who are slaves, such as those who are slaves of sin. Why?

Let me read for you , "**If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.**" What does this verse mean?

Jesus not only enjoys inalienable rights as the unique Son of God, but He has the authority given to Him by His Father to liberate slaves (John 3:35). The Jews thought because they were the physical offspring of Abraham that they were sons in God's household. They were wrong. They were slaves of sin just as at one time we were the slaves of sin, and if nothing changed they would die in that condition and be internally separated from God.

CONCLUSION

These Jews believed in Jesus as their Messiah and may have been trusting Him to deliver them as a nation from the Romans and perhaps they were even trusting Him even to set up an earthly kingdom, but they were not personally trusting Him to set them free from sin. But it was their sin that was killing them. And it was their sin that they needed to be delivered from.

What about yourself? Do you, like these Jews, believe that you are free when you are in fact not free? It all depends on why you came to Jesus? Did you come to Jesus to be truly delivered from your sin or was it all a sham? Did you come to Jesus for an entirely different reason that had nothing to do with your sin at all?

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

It you came to Jesus to be truly set free from your sin, then you have become a true disciple of Christ. And as a true disciple you are abiding in His Word and the Word has come alive for you and you are in the process of being more like Christ as you are being transformed from glory to glory. You are therefore experiencing life as Christ meant it to be experienced. You, in other words have plugged into the very power that raised Christ from the dead and your life cannot be considered ho-hum or mundane, in fact it has become special.

But if you came to Jesus for some other reason, other than to be set free from your sin you are still a slave of sin unable to fully enjoy this life and ultimately damned in the next.

If you want to change that this morning, you need not only to recognize that you are a sinner but you need to want to be set free from your sin. And if this is what you believe, and if this is what you want, then you can be assured that you will be set from that sin if you come to Jesus in faith believing that He is the Christ the Son of the living God who through His death, burial and resurrection opened a door to heaven.

How can we be so assured of this? What did Jesus say to these Jews in **John 8:36**? If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.