

# God Doesn't Care How you Feel

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John 8:31-32

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**Bible Text:** John 8:31-32  
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Do you realize what an audacious politically incorrect statement that we just made? That the name of Jesus has no rival and has no equal? Now some might say, "What gives you the right to make that type of statement?" It's not our opinion. It's not our denominational "stance." It comes from the word of God which makes it very clear Jesus said himself that there was no other way but him unto the Father. There is one Mediator between man and God, the man Christ Jesus. It's not an opinion. It's not the latest poll, it is the simple words of God. Why is it audacious? Because God said it. Why is it politically incorrect? Because God declared it. In just a few moments, not just what we have sung together but we're going to find that there are some other things that he has stated very clearly that are just as audacious that we need to be just as excited about.

Let's pray.

*Lord, as we come to this time where we prepare our hearts for the hearing, the studying and the preaching of your word, thank you, O God, for how we have corporately and collectively lifted our voices to the throne room, we have declared your goodness, we have declared your mercy, your grace, but we've also declared your power and your authority, that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. God, we make that statement not because of the song we sang but we sing the song because of what your word proclaims. Lord, may we be faithful now not just to read, not just to hear, but to do what your word says. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

This morning, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the Gospel of John 8. Now as you're turning to the Gospel of John 8, for those of you that may be first time guests or visitors with us, or there may be a few of you that for whatever reason haven't been with us the last couple of weeks, we're walking through, we're taking a journey as a family of faith this season and we're asking a very strategic important question: what does a disciple of Jesus Christ look like? Now there are all kinds of opinions, there are all kinds of ideas, and there have been "bestsellers" that have been written supposedly answering this question, but as we turn to the word of God today, we have to ask ourselves what does a true follower of Jesus Christ really look like?

We begin in Luke 9:23 where from the words in the mouth of Jesus he made this statement, "If any man come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me daily." That's kind of the mantra, that is the theme that a disciple of Jesus Christ is willing to revoke all things of this world to follow him with a reckless abandonment.

Last week, we addressed kind of the first real tangible aspect that our lives should be centered on the person of Jesus Christ. John 15:5, Jesus made this statement, he said, "I am the vine, you are the branches, he that abides in me and I in him shall bear much fruit for apart from me you can do nothing." We continue this week in John 8. Even though our lives are to be centered on the person of Jesus Christ, every single one of us is subject to opinions, ideas, philosophies and information, and the Bible tells us in James 1:8 that a double minded man is unstable in all of his ways. How easily we are swayed, even as believers. How easily we are convinced by all of the incredible amounts of information that comes our way.

So today we address the issue even though we are centered in Jesus, how is it that we are grounded in our faith? What is it that will give us stability in our faith? And as we're going to see at the end of the message, what is in our lives that will make sure that when the storms of life come, our lives are safe and secure in our faith?

Today in John 8, beginning in verse 31, it says, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him." Now I'm going to stop for just a moment. Notice the audience that Jesus is speaking to. These are not the skeptics of the world. These are not the Pharisees who came to the miracles and said, "By what power are you doing these things?" These are individuals who most likely have already been removed from the synagogue. These are the individuals who have begun to follow Jesus and begun under the scrutiny of those in their society and their culture. These are those who have pledged some type of faith and allegiance to who Jesus is. Notice what he says to them,

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

What a declaration that we can know the truth, the truth will set us free, but Jesus qualifies that by saying, "If you continue in my word." How does this happen in our lives today? Three very simple questions we're going to answer. We're going to answer what is it that gives us the stability and the security in our faith? How does this get implemented in our lives? And finally, why is it so critical?

Let's address the what. What is the product, what is the thing, what is the item that allows us to have this security in our faith? I know most of you expected the answer, in fact there's a pretty clear picture on the screen, it is the word of God, it is the Bible. And by the way, I want to thank Ms. Lowe, one of our young children in our children's ministry who provided this image for us today. That way our children's ministry and those of us as adults are able to study the same subject matter together. But I know you expected that because those of us who have a "Baptist background," there was a history book written of

us some years ago entitled "People of the Book," and we may have some type of differences of opinions and ideology and ways of doing things, but at the end of the day, we are known as those who adhere to, believe in, and walk in the truth of God's word. And when we talk about what gives us security, what gives us stabilization of our faith, the what is in your very hand right now.

But let me give you some important advice: what you're holding in your hand is not – hear me clearly – it is not decoration for the bookshelves of your home. What you're holding in your hands is not a coaster for a cup of coffee. And I don't understand why it is here in the South but this is not decoration for the dashboard of your pickup truck. I don't get that. What you have in your hand is not something to be admired from a distance, to be looked at or to look impressive to those who visit your house, this is the living breathing words of God, is what you have here, alright? This isn't a piece of art, this is a life transforming document that God has given us. I want you to know some things about what you're holding in your hands. This is inspired by God. Do you know what that means? It means it was breathed by him. It was given by him, the exact words.

You know, in 2 Timothy 3:16 it says all Scripture is inspired by God. The last time I checked, do you know what the word "all" means? All. It means all, yet sometimes we question, "Well, why doesn't the Bible address this issue? And why doesn't the Bible talk about that?" Well, according to John 20:31 it says if everything Jesus ever did or said were written down, all the libraries in the world could not contain the information. You know, sometimes we spend so much time worrying about what the Bible doesn't have, we forget to spend time focusing on what it does have for us.

What we have are the inspired God-breathed words, but they're not just inspired, they're preserved. They are preserved. Do you know what that means? According to Psalm 12:6-7, it says that the words of the Lord have been purified seven times, from this generation forever. Now, we're in the South here and many of y'all on our media ministry, you may not be in the South so forgive us for being Southern for just a moment, but we have a practice down here to others it may seem a little odd but for most of us it's just normal. We do what's called canning. Do you know what canning is? Where you take fresh fruits and you take those fruits and you under a process of placing them in a can or in a jar mixed with other elements, primarily sugar and stuff, so that you can have fruit out of season or you can have food down the road, even months and years that you may not have the ability to consume at the present moment. Let me tell you something about preservatives. Let me tell you something about canning fruit. The purpose of canning the fruit is so that you have the nutrients and you have the element for time past the present.

Oftentimes people come to me and they say, "Well, don't you know that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the New Testament was written in Greek, and I read in English and somehow it just doesn't work." Yes, it does. It's just like that peach that you have from the tree, it may have been fresh that first day but when you "preserve" it, it is still good even years down the road. What you have in your hands isn't just the words of God that he spoke at one time in isolation, but the words of God that endure. According to Jesus, heaven and earth will pass away but his words will never pass away.

But they are also magnified. Here's what I mean by magnified. According to Psalm 138:2, it says the words of God are magnified above the name of God. Now I want that to just sink in for just a moment because according to Philippians 2, at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess, but yet his word according to Psalm 138:2 is even magnified above that. That's why when Jesus made that statement in Matthew 24, heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away, I've got news for you, this book that you acquired somehow, maybe it was a gift, maybe you went out and purchased it, you bought it, the words that it contains will not fade away ever. According to the words of Jesus, heaven and earth will pass away, my word will never pass away.

Now that's the product. That's what we have. So let's talk about the problems. Why do we struggle with what I just shared with you? Three ways. First way is this: your head. You say, "What do you mean by head?" We tend to overthink some things. We tend to try to rationalize things and say, "Well, I can't get my head around that." We fall into the Nicodemus syndrome. Nicodemus was educated. Nicodemus was in the political circle of his life and Jesus made it real simple, he said, "You must be born again." Nicodemus said, "I don't get this. I can't get my head wrapped around this." You see, one of the problems we have with the Bible when we talk about it being our security and our foundation for life, is sometimes if we can't get our head around it, we walk away from it. You know, the Bible testifies of itself that it is unsearchable riches. In other words, you can read the same passage over and over and over again, in fact, just in the last 24 hours, I read a passage of Scripture I bet I've read over 100 times and I saw something I had never seen before.

You see, sometimes the problem is our head, other times the problem is our heart. You say, "What do you mean by heart?" You know, we live in this world today where people say, "Well, that just doesn't feel right to me. Or I just don't sense that's right for me." And how many times do we say, "Well, I just don't feel that. Or that just doesn't connect with me." I'm going to say something to you and some of you are going to take this and it's going to seem ugly and I don't mean it to be. I mean it to be loving. God doesn't care how you feel. He doesn't. You say, "You mean God doesn't care?" No, no, God cares but notice it says you shall know the truth, and when it comes to feelings, everything today is relative. "Well, that's okay for you but not for me. And I like this and I'm just not feeling that." I've got news for you: when you say, "I'm not feeling it," it may be the indigestion from pizza last night. That may be what you're dealing with. And so many times we say, "I don't like the way the Bible says about that. I don't like what it says and therefore I don't want to..." You see, that's our problem. Sometimes we get so thinking about it that we can't wrap our minds around it, and at other times we say, "Well, that doesn't connect with what I hear or what I want. Listen, that's not what I want it to say." There are a lot of things in here I don't want it to say, the problem is it does.

And here's the last problem: it's our feet. You see, some of you today, man, you get it. You understand what the Bible says and you're willing to do, you get it. You're not going to argue with it. In fact, you're not even going to allow the opinions of our contemporary

culture to seep in to distract you. But then it's about actually putting it into place. When the Bible says forgive 70 times 7, you don't want to forgive. The Bible says go into all the nations with the Gospel, but you just want to stay at home. When the Bible speaks about what we are to be and the lives we are to live, you may can read the words, grasp the words and you're not even going to argue with them, but man, it's tough to live them.

So we talk about what is it that roots us, what is it that stabilizes us, what is it that grounds us in our faith? It is the word of God inspired, preserved and magnified by God. The problem isn't what he's given us, the problem is us and getting ourselves out of the way.

So how do we do it? How do we make the word of God a life transforming agent in our life? The first thing is this: it's got to be continuous. Years ago, I was a Bible salesman. In fact, I was first employed as a Bible salesman at the Family Christian Bookstore in Waco, Texas, and my job was to help people buy their Bibles. There is something that I learned as a Bible salesman is this: if you have a Bible and you never pick it up and you never open it, it'll last forever. It'll last forever. If you have a Bible that you take it to church on occasion, it'll last 10 to maybe 15-20 years. If you have a Bible that you take to church regularly and every now and then during the week or at some special time or maybe the time during distress you open it up and flip through the pages, it'll last you 5-10 years. But if you have a Bible that you spend time in it every single day of your life, you open the pages, you turn the pages, some of you like to mark the pages, and it becomes a textbook for your life, by the time it has its second year anniversary, it should begin to fall apart. Hence the old adage: if your Bible is falling apart, your life might be being held together.

You see, what we know as the word of God, a digestion of the word of God just for 30 minutes to an hour every Sunday ain't gonna cut it, folks. It's not. Jesus said, "If you continue in my word," not if you look at it once a week, once a month, every now and then. If you continue in it.

You know, social scientists have told us that it takes about 21 days to establish a habit, to begin to have a pattern of life that you begin or maybe something that you end in your life, after 21 or so days, you begin to do so unconsciously. That's why those that are part of our Master Life Bible study, that's one of the products, that's one of the endgames, that's one of my heart's desires is because one of its intents is to make sure that you study the word of God in increments every single day so that 3, 4, 5 weeks from now, it just becomes a part of your life.

Those that are in the neurological field that study the brain activity, particularly with addictions and behavior substance abuse and such, one of the things they've discovered is that when you go through what we know as the detox process, that the brain, by the way, created and formed by God, is able to actually rewire itself after about 28 or 35 days so that it no longer thinks and/or craves. Now once a substance is reintroduced again, that process begins again. But you know that God has made you – listen – you're able to

rewire how you think. You're able to rewire how you live in life, but it takes a daily continuation of the word of God.

This continuing, according to Jesus, he says, "If you continue in my word," here's what he says in verse 31, "you are my disciples indeed." You know, that name "disciple," it's a word we love to hear but it's very ominous in our culture, but if we were to go back 2,000 years ago in the culture of which Jesus spoke it, it would resonate a little bit more. You see, in their culture they had a celebration. On the last day of a young man's 12<sup>th</sup> year, the day before he turned 13, they had what we know as a bar mitzvah and we may have heard of bar mitzvahs, we may have even attended a bar mitzvah, it's a celebration of manhood, but thousands of years ago, it was a little bit different than today. There were two main functions of a young man's bar mitzvah. The first one is it was at that day or that event where he would receive the pledge of his wife. In fact, it would be an arrangement between the families and either there was a newly married couple that their firstborn daughter would be betrothed unto him, or maybe it was somebody that was already married and had already had a child that was 6, 9, maybe 12 months old, but that's why you understand that in the Bible oftentimes it was a 28 or 30 year old man who would marry a 12 to 14 year old girl. That's because at the bar mitzvah, that was that pledge that the family is coming together.

But more for our intent today, when he says, "You shall, if you continue in my word, you're my disciple indeed," the last day of a young man's 12<sup>th</sup> year was his last day of formal education. That's right, school was over. You could close the textbooks and know no more quizzes, no more tests. But it was at that celebration and it would begin the next day where whatever trade or profession that he would be going into, his apprenticeship would begin. Maybe it was carpentry. Maybe it was masonry. Maybe it was a blacksmith. Maybe it was an attorney. Maybe it was a rabbi. Maybe it was in the medical profession. Maybe he was an accountant. It didn't matter the field, on the first day of their 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, they began to be an apprentice. They began to, as the word disciple means, they began to walk in the dust of somebody else's feet. In other words, it was no longer about textbooks and quizzes and tests and pop tests, it was about walking and living and breathing 24/7.

Notice the disciples in the Gospels. They didn't meet with Jesus every Thursday from 2 to 3, did they? They didn't say, "Do you know what? We're pretty serious about this stuff, we're going to meet every night for an hour and a half." Every place Jesus went, they were there. In the morning, they all woke up in the same vicinity. At night, they went down in the same vicinity. If he was walking on water, they were there. If he was healing the sick, they were there as well.

You know, there's a phrase Jesus uses when he calls the disciples that is mesmerizing to our culture today. He goes to a man named Matthew who is a very successful tax collector. He goes to James and John who are very successful commercial fishermen. He's just walking by and he says, "Hey, come and follow me." They're gone. And you wonder to yourself, "Why is it with such a reckless abandonment, they didn't think twice about it?" In fact, the Bible says they quit mending their nets and they just took off.

Because that was the phrase that the rabbis would use. You understand that being a rabbi in Jesus' day was the dream job of every young man and every family. And every young lady that was betrothed to you, I mean, that's what they desired because that was the political, religious, financial movers and shaker of their culture.

And on that last day of their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday, if the rabbi who he had been studying under came and said, "Come and follow me," that meant that he was going to walk in the dust of his feet and learn from him. Here is Jesus of Nazareth, this rogue rabbi, he walks by and he says, "Come and follow me." What is so critical about this verse is that discipleship and walking in the feet of Jesus does not occur with once a week, 60 minutes intervals. It does not occur with even an occasional regular 60-90 minute. It happens when we wake up, just like Deuteronomy 6 says. By the way, Deuteronomy 6:4 is kind of the John 3:16 of the Old Testament where it says, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God." When you wake up in the morning, talk about it. As you go throughout your day, discuss it. When you go to bed at night, have it on your heart and on your mind. In fact, even from the Old Testament days, it said that the word of God is not just an occasional time period in life that we study, but something that we walk in the dust of every moment of our lives.

So we talk about how is it that the word of God can become the stabilizer in our life? It's got to be a continuous process that leads to a calling out, that no longer are we just happenstance, no longer is it hit and miss, but we actually are walking in the dust thereof every moment of our lives.

Why is this important? Notice verse 32, Jesus says, "You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free." It's an incredible promise of God. He says if this occurs in your life, you will be free.

Last night I was sitting in our living room with the young men of our house and we were going through our Master Life Bible study and we were focusing on this verse, and we were talking about it, and one of my sons, I'm not going to tell you who it was, but he has two younger brothers, one of my sons, he spoke up and he said, "Dad," now this is from the mouth, the wisdom of a 16 year old, he said, "Dad, why is it that everybody quotes verse 32 but nobody quotes verse 31?" Look at verse 32, "You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free." Have you ever heard that from the mouth of a politician? You have. Have you ever heard that from somebody that was making some type of promise? You have. How many times in our public venue have we had somebody stand up and say, "Oh, you'll know the truth and the truth will set you free"? The problem is in most of those venues, it is the truth that is relative to the cause that they're trying to get you to buy into. But what does verse 31 say? "If you continue in my word, you are my disciples indeed. Then you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free."

So what are the promises? Well, according to the word of God, the promises of being free applies to our past. In fact, Psalm 103:12 says that when the Lord forgives us of our sins, our sins are removed as far as the East is from the West. Let me peel that onion for just a moment. That means when we come to this place in our life, when we grasp the

understanding that we are the problem and Jesus is the answer, when we grasp and understand that we have sinned, we have rebelled, we have gone contrary to the ways and the will of God and realize we need a Savior, and we call on the name of the Lord, Jesus forgives us, he saves us, and according to Psalm 103:12, our sins are as far as the East is from the West. In other words, if you had the type of vehicle or a plane that could do so, you could take off North from here and eventually you'd be headed South, but if you started going East, you're never going West. If you start going West, you're never headed East.

Do you notice what that promise is? That promise is that you can be free of your past. It never has to creep up again. It never has to be a part of the vernacular again. Why? Because the Bible says that when he forgives us, it is as far as East is from the West. Hear me clearly: that is not the promise of a preacher, the promise of a denomination, or an opinion poll, that is the word of God.

Not only are we set free from our past, we're set free from our present. I'm not going to ask for a show of hands or a verbal response, but oftentimes we struggle even with the today of life. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal or fleshly like the world's, but they are spiritual to the bringing down of strongholds and taking captive every thought unto the word of God.

There is a promise not just of our past, there is a promise of our present, there is a promise of our future. Jesus' last words in the Gospel of Matthew 28:20, he says, "I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I will be with you until the end of the age." We live in a world where everybody wants freedom, the problem is they want it according to their rules, their regulations or their celebrities, and not what God has said. He said, "You can have freedom but it has to be according to my will, my way, and my word."

One last remark. When we look at the promises, there is our protection. You say, "What do you mean your protection?" The most famous sermon Jesus ever preached was the Sermon on the Mount. It begins in Matthew 5, ends in Matthew 7. He gathers a group of people and he begins to say, "Blessed are these and blessed are those. You have heard it said but I say unto you." Three chapters later, Jesus gives an analogy. He gives a parable. He says there are two individuals, there are two families that build a house. They're absolutely identical. They were created by the same architect. They were built by the same contractors. They had the same floor plan. They have the same paint scheme. The only difference is one of them is built upon a sand pit and the other one is built on the rock. You see, from a distance they look the same. From a distance, everything looks great. Here's the problem: Jesus says that the rain and the wind is going to come and, yes, does it come. Life happens. We're disappointed. We are discouraged. Oftentimes we receive diagnoses that we don't want to have and guess what? That is wind and that is rain and he says, oh, but the person who builds their life on the sand, the winds and the rain will come and that house will come crumbling down because it was nothing but smoke and mirrors. But that man who built his house upon the rock didn't prevent the wind, didn't prevent the rain, but it was able to be grounded and stabilized in spite of the wind and the rain.



In our world today, even as believers in Jesus Christ, there is so much information, there are so many ideologies coming at us wanting to sway us here and sway us there, the only way we're ever going to be grounded as a disciple is if we do so according to his word.

Let's pray. With our heads bowed and our eyes closed, you know, maybe you're that person here today that you'd be willing to admit, you'd be willing to confess that you've never been freed. You've been in bondage for years and you've been doing everything in your power to try to get out. I've got great news for you. Jesus said that you can be free according to his word. Romans 10:13 says if you call on the name of the Lord, you will be saved.

If you're that person today, let me just encourage you just to have a conversation with the Lord. You don't have to say it out loud. In fact, you don't even have to say the same words I would say. This isn't about jumping through hoops or crossing t's or dotting i's this is about your heart crying out to the Lord and maybe that conversation would go a little something like this. "God, today I just want to confess I'm the problem, but I believe that Jesus is the answer. I believe that Jesus loved me so much that he was willing to be born on my behalf. I believe Jesus loved me so much he was willing to live a sinless life on my behalf. I believe that Jesus loved me so much that he was willing to pay the price for my sins on the cross and three days later he rose from the grave so I could be forgiven and I could be saved. God, today I don't have all the answers to all the world's problems but I do know that Jesus is the answer to my sin problem. In the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me. I'm asking you to save me. I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, maybe you had that conversation with the Lord today. If so, we'd love to have a conversation with you. We'd just love to dialogue and celebrate what the Lord is doing in your life. Or maybe today you'd be willing to admit you had that conversation with the Lord years ago or decades ago but you've learned from his word that you've been easily swayed. Or maybe you've been what James 1:8 calls a double-minded man and maybe today the decision that you need to make doesn't require coming up and having a conversation with somebody, maybe it is the decision to when you leave the property today, to no longer live life according to emotions, feelings and other people's opinions, but what does the word of God say?

*Lord, as we come to this time, thank you for second chances. Thank you, God, that when we're out there on our own doing things our way and it's an absolute mess and disaster, that you don't leave us to our own vices, you don't abandon us, but you actually come and you seek after us, desiring for us to be in your perfect will for our lives. Lord, thank you for third chances, fourth chances, and for some of us, an infinite number of chances, that this day we can be where you desire us to be. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

I'd encourage you if you would, stand with me as our team leads us. Any decision, I'll be here at the front.