

**John 8: 31-59; “You Shall Know the Truth”, Sermon # 53 in the series –  
“That All May Honor the Son”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall, on  
September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, in the Morning Worship Service.**

The greatest issue set before any person in this life is what will you do with Christ, and what will you do with His word. For what you will do with Christ and His word will determine your eternal destiny. Jesus says – If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples. Are you a disciple of Jesus Christ? There were many there in the crowd that day, it says in verse 30, who believed in the Lord Jesus. And He would lovingly direct them into the means of having assurance that they were His true disciples. There were others in the crowd who wanted to do everything that they could to disprove the fact that Jesus was their Messiah. Let me ask this question to begin our time: Are you abiding in Christ? Are you learning from Christ, each and every day, by abiding in His word? This is the importance of reading and meditating upon the word day by day. It is also important to abiding in Christ’s word, that you regularly come to church and listen to the good preaching of the word of God. And, I can also tell you, that out of this abiding in the word, it will be important that you become a doer of the word, and not merely a hearer. You do not want to deceive yourself as to whether you know God or not.

The problem with these Jews who held this conversation with the Lord Jesus was four-fold. 1<sup>st</sup> – They did not think that they had ever been in bondage, when they were really slaves of sin. (verses 31-36) 2<sup>nd</sup> – They thought that since Abraham was their physical ancestor and father of their race, that God was their heavenly Father.(verses 37-44) 3<sup>rd</sup> – They refused to consider Christ’s glory, and thus they dishonored Him. (verses 45-50). And 4<sup>th</sup> – They did not believe in Christ’s Deity, and thus they would attempt to kill Him. (verses 51-59) So, let us pray, now, as we listen to this message, that none of us will turn a deaf ear to the words of the Savior speaking through His written word; His word which is just as sure and true today, as it was on the day that He spoke it to these unbelieving Jews. You can know the truth if you presently don’t, and the truth will set you free.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – These Jews did not think that they had ever been in bondage, when they were actually slaves of sin.** (verses 31-36)

All of this discussion about bondage came about as a response to this mighty statement of Christ’s – “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.” “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” You can see how easy it is for people to think about literal physical things as being more important than spiritual things. Jesus was speaking about spiritual bondage, and how, if they would listen to His words and continue to receive them and believe them, they would be set free spiritually from the law of sin and death in their members. Truly, He was giving them in these words the free offer of the gospel. But they thought that they were wiser than Jesus. They thought that He was saying that they were in bondage to someone, and so they said to Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone.” “How can You say, ‘You will be made free?’” Now remember, this offer was most lovingly and thoughtfully being made to them by the Lord Jesus, but they took offense at it.

This leads me to ask – Do you know in your own heart and mind, that you have been set free from the bondage of sin? Because, from what we are reading here, I hope that you can see, that there are many people who do not even realize that they are slaves to sin, and when they are confronted with the thought that they are slaves to sin, they will utterly deny it. Here in these verses, Jesus was saying that all people are in bondage to sin, by nature and by practice, but He knew that these men never compared their thoughts and behavior with the word of God and the commandments of God, to conclude in their minds that they were indeed slaves to sin.

And from this, we should conclude ourselves, that unless God is doing a work in a person's heart, unless they are being drawn to Christ by the Father, they will steadfastly refuse to come to Christ. No amount of solemn loving appeal will change their minds. They will refuse to come to Christ. That is the way any person's thoughts are, when they think of conversion to Christ. John 6: 44 – "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...." But, I hope that you can see here, that in relation to the Father's drawing, is always placed the preaching of the word. Unless they received Christ's word here, about their being slaves of sin, they would not come to see their need of His great salvation.

These Jews, we should note, were trusting in their rich religious heritage in being descended from Abraham. They said, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone." "How can You say, 'You will be made free?'" They could understand how the Gentiles could be in bondage to sin; they did not have God's word in the Old Testament Scriptures being read to them on a regular basis. But, they wrongly believed that because they were Jews, and had the privilege of being Abraham's descendants who did access to the Scriptures, that they were somehow free men spiritually; that they were always free to choose for themselves in relation to spiritual things. But they did not understand the doctrine of total depravity; that because of Adam's sin, every part of their being was affected by sin; that they could not choose eternal life for themselves, because they really did not, in their heart of hearts, love the whole idea of their needing to receive grace through Christ.

This should cause us to understand that just because you a religious person, or just because your parents and relatives have been religious persons, it does not at all mean that you are free to conclude that you are not a slave to sin. You are indeed a sinner, especially when you deny that you are sinner. Part of your coming to understand that you are a sinner is when your eyes are opened to come to the conclusion; that in the past you have been unwilling to carefully listen to what God's word was exactly saying in the gospel, and therefore you have not been able to choose Christ to be your Savior, because you have not seen your own spiritual helplessness. Listen to how all-inclusive Jesus' words are. He who commits sin is the slave of sin. That includes all men, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. This includes even the most outwardly moral and religious people in all generations.

Can a slave free himself, then, by thinking that by his own free will he can choose Christ without his being given grace? No, not if he is a spiritual slave to sin. These men who were interacting with Jesus were opposed to ever choosing Him to be their Savior. They did not see their need of being freed. To be spiritually freed, an emancipation proclamation must come to you from God through Christ, before you will ever exercise saving faith in Him. But listen to Isaiah 61, verses 1 and 2 – "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the open of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord..."

This is where true spiritual freedom is found. It is found in believing the good tidings of what Jesus came to do, and to know the reality of what you have done to yourself by your sins. When God's Spirit is working in your heart, leading you on to salvation, you know the reality of being brokenhearted over your sin. You not only see that you have dishonored yourself, and hurt other people, but you have dishonored God Himself by the way that you have thought about the life that He has given to you. You had thought that you were self-sufficient and could do everything that needed to be done in relation to doing God's will, without receiving grace. But now your heart is broken, because you see how far short you have fallen from God's glory in everything that you do and say. But take heart, dear listener, if you are a broken hearted prisoner, Christ can surely heal you and set you free. Jesus will heal the brokenhearted. He will proclaim liberty to you, the captive, as you look to Him in simple faith. He will open the door of

the prison that you have brought yourself into, and He will set you free; not by your own will and actions, but by His own will and His actions.

If these persons that Jesus was speaking to were slaves to sin, even if they did abide in the house of the Lord, in the temple of the Lord, and in all the outward religious duties of their Jewish faith, they could not forever abide in God's house. This is what Jesus was saying to them. But if they believed in Him, they would become true sons and daughters of God, by faith in Him and faith in His word. This what they were opposed to. However, they had plenty enough evidence to convince them that Jesus was the Christ, but they would not come to Him to have Him set them free; they thought that they were free already.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – These Jews thought that since Abraham was their physical ancestor and father of their race, that God was their heavenly Father.** (verses 37-44)

Jesus says to them – “I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.” “I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.” They answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ “Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.’ “But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God.” “Abraham did not do this.” “You do the deeds of your father.” “Then they said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication; we have one Father – God.’” You can see here that Jesus acknowledges that the Jews that He is talking to here, are Abraham's descendants; that Abraham was indeed their physical ancestor, but He points out to them the great difference between them and him. They were seeking to kill Him because His word had no place in them, and thus they were not doing the works of Abraham.

These Jews had every reason to receive Jesus as who He was; their Messiah, the One sent to them from God. They had no reason to be angry and hateful towards Him. He was telling them the truth that He had heard from God. The reason that they hated Him and wanted to kill Him, was because He was reproving their own analysis and wisdom, and He was rebuking their unbelief. Is it not amazing that these men thought to correct the son of God, and to show no regard for His words, or His miracles which were witnessing to them; that He was the Son of God, whom they should love and receive as their Savior and Lord? When a person thinks more of the strength of their own reason and their own opinions, they will not respect someone trying to tell them the truth about themselves and where they need to change.

The works of Abraham were his believing God's word to him in telling him to leaven Ur of the Chaldees. It was his work to receive God's word to him to do it; to travel to a place which God would show him; the land of Canaan. These works of Abraham were done by faith; out of love to God and man. The works of Abraham were his prayers for unbelieving sinners. He interceded in prayer for the ungodly sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah when the Pre-Incarnate Christ stood before him, and He said to Himself – “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?” “For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”

Abraham was a man who truly cared about whether people were going to die in their sins. He stood before the Pre-Incarnate Christ, the Angel of the Lord, and he said to Him – Suppose there were 10 righteous men in Sodom, would You destroy the city? No, the Lord would not destroy it for the sake of the 10. But as we know, if we have read the account, there were not 10 righteous men in that city. But Abraham kept the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, in order that the Lord might bring to him all the blessings of what He had spoken to him. It was because he had faith that God that he did good works in the sight of God. That is how you can know that a person is a true Christian; when they have faith in Christ, and then they go

about to do good works. In a true Christian, faith working by means of love, to glorify God in the way that you live your life. But these men were not doing the works of their father Abraham because they truly did not know the Lord at all. They believed that if they were physically descended from a godly man, then they were godly men.

Sometimes people are very confused at how the Lord brings salvation to them. They think that it runs in their family, or they think it means being a patriotic American. They think it is found in going to a church where they believe that in taking the sacraments that they are being faithful to God. Some people think that if they were born into a good family, they can conclude that they must be born of God. They are not physically illegitimate children, they know; they were not born as a result of fornication. Their parents did not have sexual relations outside of marriage, but they raised them for a respect for God's law. They think that if you can live a clean life outwardly in the sight of other people, they must somehow deserve to merit favor with God. They believe that God is their Father, even though they cannot give you a testimony of how they came to faith in Christ. But this is not right.

Let's think about what the Lord Jesus was saying to these men. He knew that God was not their spiritual Father. He knew that they were the offspring of God; that God the Father had created them, and that He had provided for their every need, in their lives, to that point. But He also knew that He must reprove their false understanding of themselves, and Him. And so He says to them – "If God were your father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me." Now there is the real issue. Do you love the Christ whom the Father sent? Do you love Him because He fulfilled the law where you have not? Do you love Him for suffering on the cross for your sins? Do you love Him because He is the truth personified, and the only way to God? Do you love Him for delivering you from yourself, and loving you when you were spiritually unlovely? You can know that you know God by whether you love Christ.

And so, the Lord Jesus had to tell these men the truth about themselves. "You are not able to listen to My word." And why not, Lord Jesus? He tells them – Because you are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do, He says to them. And what is the Devil like? Jesus tells them that he was a murderer from the beginning of the world, and he does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. That is plain enough, isn't it? He was saying to them that they were acting exactly like the Devil. It was like the Devil had command over them as their spiritual father, and he was telling them to do what he would do in any given situation. He does not stand in the truth of the word of God, but He opposes it at every turn. This is what these men were doing. They were speaking lies about Christ and spreading lies about Him. They did this, because they were speaking from their own nature; their own resources of supposed wisdom, which was not wisdom at all, but rather demonic hate-speech.

Let us see that the Devil is a liar and the father of lies. Everything that he promotes, opposes the truth of God as it is found in the Scriptures. If you love and practice a lie, you will be damned, it says in Revelation 22: 14 and 15. "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." "But outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie." That is what these men were doing; they were loving and practicing a lie, that Christ was not who He said that He was, the Son of God. May each of us take heed to our soul. For if you practice righteousness, you are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. The person who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. And, so it was for this reason, that Christ was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – These men refused to consider Christ's glory, and thus they dishonored Him.**  
(verses 45-50).

“But because I tell the truth, and you do not believe Me.” “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” “And if I tell you the truth, why do you not believe Me? “He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” “Then the Jews answered and said to Him, ‘Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?’ “Jesus answered, ‘I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.’ “And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges.” The guilt of these unbelieving Jews only gets worse as it goes. Jesus says that it was because He had told them the truth that they did not believe Him; as though there was something inherently wrong with His life and His speech. They conceived a great prejudice against Him for no reason at all, except that He did not fit their conception of someone who would be their Messiah. And so, He asks them which one of them could convict Him of sin. Well, none of them could, because He had no sins to be convicted of, by them. This was telling them outright that they had conceived a prejudice against Him which had no basis in fact or truth.

He was telling them the truth, but they did not believe it. But the reason that they did not believe it, Jesus says, was because they were not of God. They had not been born again by the Spirit of God. Their hearts had not been opened by God through His granting them the grace to spiritually see the glory of Christ. He who is of God hears God’s words; that is, these men leaned to their own fallen understanding and they refused to receive Christ’s words. They did not know that He was God made manifest in the flesh. But in their spiritual blindness they thought that they were of God. They thought that their thoughts about the Lord Jesus were correct; that He had not been sent to them from God, but that He was doing these things from Himself, and He was seeking His own glory; so deceived were they in their analysis. They even go farther than that, feeling provoked to it by Christ’s strong words to them, telling them that they were not God’s children. They say – “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

Now this was taking things a step too far; that is their saying that Christ was a half-breed Jew, and that He was a schismatic and a heretic; and what was much, much, worse, that He was demon-possessed. They wanted to dishonor Him by saying that He was not one of them, but that He was one of the Devil’s own. This they said to the Lord of Glory, the One who is to be worshiped and adored for His purity and His perfections. This is what it means to be reviled. It means to be evil-spoken-to, in a way which dishonors you, because you are being spoken to in hurtful, mean-spirited, and lying way. Most awful, in this case, they were speaking to Him in a blasphemous way. They were sinning in such a terrible way against our Lord, that they were sinning against the Holy Spirit, and thus they would never come to know God’s mercy.

But the Lord Jesus, you should understand, was suffering for our sakes in these things. Because in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2, verses 21-23, it says this – “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’; who when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.” Will you not learn from the Lord Jesus, dear Christian. If He who was pure and perfect and holy could be reviled and despised and rejected by men, you too, who believe in Him will also be maligned and misunderstood. But remember the last of the Beatitudes. Matthew 5: 11 and 12 – “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.” “Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.”

**4<sup>th</sup> - They did not believe in Christ’s Deity, and thus they would attempt to kill Him.**  
(verses 51-59)

“Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.” “Then the Jews said to Him, ‘Now we know that You have a demon!’ “Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.’ “Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead?” “And the prophets are dead.” “Who do you make Yourself out to

be?” “Jesus answered, ‘If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing.’ “It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.” “Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him.” “And if I say, ‘I do not know Him, I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word.’ “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” “Then the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’ “Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’ “Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” What a tremendous declaration of truth comes forth from the lips of our Savior, “If anyone keeps My word, he shall never see death.” He means that their soul will never be lost, and that even though they experience the death of the body, that the most important part, their precious soul, will not perish and go to hell. It shall go to heaven to be forever with the Lord. But these Jews challenged Jesus’ statement with mentioning the physical deaths of Abraham and the prophets.

This is the problem with unbelief. It always challenges the straightforward and certain statements of God and Christ. And so here we see unbelief challenging the Perfect Person of our great God and King. Who do you make Yourself out to be, they say? And Jesus right away answers, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing.” Thus His true humility prevails. “It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.” And so it is; that the Father was always pleased with whatever His only-begotten Son said and did. Jesus can read all hearts, and so He says, “Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him.” Jesus cannot deny Himself; the fact that He knows all about God and knows Him in a way that no other man knows Him, because He Himself is God, one Essence with the Father. He would have been a liar if He had said that He did not know God and did not keep His word. Let us take comfort in this tremendous fact, that the Lord Jesus knows all that is in God, because He is God. Let us see Him as uniquely great among all the men of all of human history. None greater, none more righteous, none more holy. None more giving, none more loving, none more serving. None more faithful and true.

Abraham knew this, and he rejoiced to see Christ’s day. He knew that someday in the future that the Lord Jesus would be incarnate and have a ministry where He was despised and rejected of men, but that He would as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, take his place and Isaac’s place in judgment on the cross, and thus Abraham would not have to slay his own dear son. These Jews though this impossible; so very hard to believe, and they questioned how Jesus could have lived back there in the days of Abraham. He tells them in no uncertain terms. “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” And truly, the Jews whom Jesus was speaking to, understood what He meant. He meant that He was the One who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, and told Moses to tell the children of Israel, that “I AM” had sent him to them, and they should believe that it was God who sent him to help them to come out of their bondage in Egypt. The Lord Jesus is the I AM who will help you to come out of your bondage in sin when you believe in Him. Therefore, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.