

**Subject: *Exposing Counterfeit Believers***

**Scripture: *John 8:31-59***

This is a sad case of unbelieving believers or counterfeit Christians. The Jews mentioned in John 8:30-31 believed on Jesus, but obviously they were not believers at all. Jesus knew they were not genuine believers. He read their hearts and knew their faith was superficial and counterfeit (see Jn. 2:23-25).

We know that they were not genuine believers because of what they said and what they did. Jesus said you will know them by their fruits. In every election cycle we often hear candidates for office claim they are men or women of faith. What does that mean? Most of the time it means absolutely nothing. It seems strange that every person on earth would not be a person of faith, I mean a person of real saving faith. Why would you not trust the God who created you, provides for you, and loves you enough to send His Son to die for your sins and give you eternal life?

### **COUNTERFEIT BELIEVERS DO NOT LIVE BY GOD'S WORD (vs. 31-32)**

Jesus said that true believers continue in His word and obey His teaching. In Acts 2 we see where 3,000 people heard Peter's sermon, repented of their sins, were saved and baptized. How do we know if they were genuine believers? **Acts 2:42** *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* Real believers learn what the Word teaches and this truth guides and shapes their lives. Unbelievers have no interest the Word or living by it.

**Matthew 7:21** *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

**John 14:15** *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

**1 John 2:3-5**<sup>3</sup> *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*<sup>4</sup> *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*<sup>5</sup> *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

Living by God's Word is the way to joy and peace and spiritual freedom (vs. 32). Unbelievers think God's Word confines you and restricts you, but actually God's Word sets you free. True believers love the Word of God. Counterfeit believers can take it or leave it, mostly leave it. They have no appetite for it. **1 Peter 2:2** *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.* A person who loves Jesus loves His Word. You can tell if a person truly believes in Christ by his obedience to the Word. On the basis of what Jesus said, a person who does not continue in the Word is a counterfeit and is not a true believer.

### **COUNTERFEIT BELIEVERS ARE ENSLAVED BY SIN (vs. 33-36)**

These unbelieving believers challenged the idea that they were somehow in bondage. They were proud of their Jewish heritage: "We are descendants of Abraham and were never in bondage to any man." That was a lie. Pride blinds people from the truth. Apparently they forgot about the days of Moses and Egypt when the whole nation was in slavery. Apparently

they forgot about the days when the nation was carried away into Persia and then later into Babylon as prisoners of war.

The worst kind of slavery is spiritual bondage. We are sinners by nature, by choice, and by habit. The chains of sin are too light to be felt until they are too strong to be broken. Only Jesus Christ can set us free. This is what he does in salvation. We call it redemption. We are set free from the bondage of sin and Satan by the payment of Christ's blood. We are bought with a price and become servants of a new master, Jesus Christ.

### **Romans 6:12-14, 17-22**

Unbelievers live in sin and love it. True believers can and do sin, but they don't want to. They don't live in sin, don't love sin, don't make excuses for it and they are not bound by it. Spiritual freedom is not the liberty to do what we want to do, but the freedom to do what we ought to do. On the basis of what Jesus said, a person who is in the habit of sinning, loves sin, and is enslaved by sin is a counterfeit and is not a true believer.

### **COUNTERFEIT BELIEVERS ARE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL (vs. 37-44)**

Jesus challenges their claim of calling Abraham their father. He concedes that they are physical descendants of Abraham (vs. 37, "I know that you are Abraham's seed), but He knows they are not spiritual descendants of Abraham (vs. 39, "If you were Abraham's children). He knows their real father and He shocks them when he says you are of your father the devil (vs. 44). Every person is either a child of God or a child of the devil. The Bible warns us not to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever because a child of God cannot be in harmony with a child of the devil. If you're a believer and you're married to an unbeliever, you have the devil for a father-in-law.

A child of God takes after his Father, so he loves who God loves and he loves what God loves. God loves His Son Jesus, and a child of God loves Jesus (vs. 42). God loves truth, righteousness, mercy, and goodness, and a child of God loves truth, righteousness, mercy, and goodness.

A child of the devil takes after his father. The devil is a deceiver and a murderer. His method is deception and his motive is destruction. A child of the devil is known for deception and hate. He does not love God or His Son Jesus. He does not love truth because the truth confronts him and exposes him. He does not love righteousness, but loves sin. He does not love those who love truth and righteousness, but has hatred and murder in his heart. On the basis of what Jesus said, a person who is deceptive and hateful is a counterfeit and is not a true believer.

### **COUNTERFEIT BELIEVERS REJECT THE TRUTH (vs. 45-47)**

Truth matters and truth sometimes hurts. An unbeliever resents the truth and rejects it even when it comes from a perfect source (vs. 46). Jesus was perfect and sinless, but He was despised and rejected. Jesus said the sure mark that a person is from God is they hear and accept God's words. The Jews were not of God and had no use for His words. This is the true test of who is a true child of God and who is not (vs. 47). On the basis of what Jesus said, a person who does not hear the truth and accept it is a counterfeit and is not a true believer.

## **COUNTERFEIT BELIEVERS REJECT AND DISHONOR CHRIST (vs. 48-59)**

As the conversation goes on the Jews become harder and bolder in their unbelief. The same thing happens in all unbelievers. At first, they are open to Christ and His teaching, but then they are unwilling to obey Him. Then they come to resent Him. Then they reject Him outright and become hostile toward Him. Verse 58 is one of the greatest statements Jesus ever made, and these unbelievers rejected what He said and wanted to kill Him. This chapter begins with the Jews wanting to stone a woman for the sin of adultery and it ends with them wanting to stone Jesus who had no sin and claimed to be God (vs. 58).

These verses describe all professing Christians. They disobey the Lord and dishonor Him. They will not allow Him to rule over them. They're ok with religion, but they will not submit to Jesus as Lord. On the basis of what Jesus said, a person who rejects Him and dishonors Him is a counterfeit and is not a true believer.

**2 Corinthians 13:5** *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*