

“The Gospel of John: Accepting the Gospel”

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Scripture

John 8:30-36

“As He spoke these things, **many came to believe in Him.**

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "**If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;** and

you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

They answered Him, "**We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?**"

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.**

"The slave does not remain in the house forever; **the son does remain forever.**

"**So, if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."**

Last Week

Why do they reject Jesus?

SO: They reject the true God because **their heart is hardened**

SO: They reject the gospel because **they are of the world and in the world**

SO: They reject Him because He **did not fit their view of the world**

Hebrews 3:7-8

“Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, **DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS**”

So, today -> Accepting the Gospel

What does it mean to accept the Gospel?

Many Came!

Jesus was speaking directly to the Jews, saying that He was God:

John 8:23-24

“He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. "Therefore, I said to you that you will die in your sins; for **unless you believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.**”

Jesus is God in the flesh

John proclaimed it

Jesus's works testified to it

The Father confirmed it from Heaven

Jesus plainly said it

John 8:30

"As He spoke these things, **many came to believe in Him.**"

So many came to believe in Him

But were they true believers?

We have to look back to:

John 2:23-25

"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, **many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.** But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man."

Jesus had just cleansed the temple for the first time

The Jews asked Him on what authority did He do this

Jesus responded that with God the Father's plan -> **destroy my body and I will raise it up in 3 days**

So many believed in His name from His declaration

BUT Jesus was not entrusting Himself to them

Why?

They said they believed in Him -> the mouth can overcommit

Because He knew their hearts -> their hearts said otherwise -> **they were not His children**

We have the same story here in John 8 -> "many came to believe in Him"

Jesus spoke about a **wedding feast**:

Matthew 22:1-14

"Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.

"Again, he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and **everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.**" But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them."

"But **the king was enraged**, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.

"Then he said to his slaves, '**The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.**'

"Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, **both evil and good**; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.

"But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless. "Then **the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'**

14"**For many are called, but few are chosen.**"

What do we learn from that parable?

The Jews were invited to believe in the Messiah-> but **they were unwilling to come**

They did not make God a priority in their lives -> **more important that they tended to their farms and business**

So, God's servants reach out to many people, both good and evil, and many come -> **the hall was filled!**

God evaluates their preparedness -> some are not dressed appropriately -> **white robes -> cleaned from sin**

Those who say they believe but **do not have fruit reflecting their belief are consigned to Hell**

Many people hang out at churches **purporting that they believe in Jesus**

Jesus summarizes the parable -> "**For many are called, but few are chosen**"

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 7:13-14

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. "**For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.**"

So, how do we know who are chosen for the Kingdom?

The next two verses, Jesus says:

Matthew 7:15-16

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. "**You will know them by their fruits.**"

You will know them by their lifestyle

You will see the priorities of their life -> where God is in their priorities list -> **do they seek first the Kingdom?**

You will know by how they influence others for Jesus

You will see the Spiritual fruit in them: love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, self-control

To the Corinthians in his last letter, Paul writes:

2 Corinthians 13:5

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?”

Paul tells the Corinthians to examine their own lifestyle -> **prove it to yourself that you're in the faith!**

At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said:

Matthew 7:21-23

“Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. **"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23"**And then I will declare to them, **'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'**”

Many will try to persuade the Lord in the day of judgment -> saying, **“Hey, I did a lot of good stuff for You!”**

Jesus will respond, **“I never knew you!”**

You may have hung around the church, but I never knew you

You may have contributed to missions, but I never knew you

You may have spoken My name to people, but I never knew you

Still, the **scariest passage** in the Bible for me

But Do They Remain?

So, how do we know that we know and love Jesus?

I wrote a book about that called “If You Love Me...”

If you're interested in evaluating yourself, send me an email and I'll get a copy into your hands

Jesus tells us succinctly on how we know back to the passage in John 8:

John 8:31

“Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, **"If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine"**

“If you continue in My word” -> continue is the Greek word *meno* which means “to stay or remain”

What does mean to continue in His word?

- When your heart desires to study the Bible -> you stay in His word
- When you long to talk with Him in prayer -> you stay in His word
- When your lifestyle reflects the principles of God's Word -> you stay in His word

If that is a reflection of who you are today?

If so, Jesus says, **“then you are truly disciples of Mine”**

Jesus will tell the disciples later:

John 15:4-5

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches; **he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.**”

The Greek word for abide is the same word in John 8 -> *meno* -> to stay or remain

If you continue in His word, you will bear much fruit for Him

Apart from His influence in your life -> **you can do nothing** -> you have no spiritual vitality

So, we know when we see people completely plugged into church and it is a priority in their lives

They are not forced to come to church by family or position

They are seeking to hear about Jesus and His word and are committed to follow Him each day

These are the people that are free from the power of sin!

Be Free!

John 8:32

“You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

Is the truth in this passage merely knowledge?

What does it mean to “know the truth”?

I know many people who know the Bible backwards and forwards but do not follow Jesus

It cannot be mere knowledge of the Bible

It has to involve a commitment to Him:

Titus 1:1-2

“the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago”

Knowledge of the truth is shown in godliness -> living out biblical principles, day by day

But there is something even more direct than that

What does Jesus call Himself where He's with the disciples in the upper room?

John 14:6

"I am the way, and **the truth**, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Paul exclaims:

Philippians 3:10-11

“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

The joy of Paul's life, after the Damascus road experience, was pursuing more knowledge about Jesus

That Paul might KNOW HIM!

You can hear it in Paul's writings

Are you that way in your life?

Jesus is the TRUTH by which we can be freed!

The Jews in John 8 were not that way, even if they said they believed in Jesus

Do We Need to be Freed?

What do they respond?

John 8:33

"They answered Him, **"We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone;** how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"

"never yet been enslaved to anyone"?

Do they not know Jewish history?

Do they not remember their ancestors being in Egypt?

Do they not know that at this very time the Romans rules over them?

They answer based on the material world rather than the spiritual world

But they are blinded to their own slavery to Rome

They need to be freed:

John 8:34

"Jesus answered them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."**

Jesus is not talking about the occasional sin or mistake

"Commits sin" -> continually living in sin as a practice of their lifestyle

1 John 3:4-6

"Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him."

No one who claims to be His continues to live in sin

The intention of John's meaning here is a willing practice of a lifestyle contrary to what the Bible says

Jesus says the same thing -> "is the slave of sin"

Sin controls you when you willingly live in it

If this reflects of your lifestyle, do you want to be free from that control?

Only the Son Can Make Us Free!

John 8:35

"The slave does not remain in the house forever; **the son does remain forever.**"

In the material world, slaves did not have the privileges of family

A son does have the privilege of family

A son is not a slave

We can be sons (and daughters) of God

Believers are sons and daughters, no longer slaves:

Matthew 5:9

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

Paul writes:

Galatians 5:1

"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore, **keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery**"

We have the ability in Jesus to be free from the power of sin in our lives

Do You Want to be Free?

John 8:36

"So, if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

Paul asked the question:

Romans 7:24:

"Wretched man that I am! **Who will set me free from the body of this death?**"

Paul wrote the response to the question in that great chapter 8 verse:

Romans 8:1-2

"Therefore, **there is now no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

Is your heart moved today to be free from sin?

If the Son sets you free, there is nothing that can keep you out of Heaven

Communion Prayer

Benediction