



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### John 8:31-47: The Lord Refutes the Jews Who Claim to be the Children Of Abraham

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31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." 33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free?'" 34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

37 "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." 39 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. 40 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. 41 You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God." 42 Jesus said 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. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

#### Background Notes

The setting for this discussion was the Temple area in Jerusalem, and it took place shortly after the Feast of Tabernacles. The Lord was addressing the self-righteous Pharisees, as well as a number of people in the temple courts who wanted to hear his teaching. Verse 30 says, "As He spoke these words, many believed in Him." Were these true believers? I would think that some of them were, just as we saw back in verse 31, where many of the people believed in Him. But of course, there would be people who only professed to believe, such as those mentioned in John 2:23-25: "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. 24 But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, 25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man."

In verses 31-32 it appears that the Lord was addressing the true believers of the group, and urging them to abide in His word to prove their discipleship. If they did abide in His word, they would come to know the truth: "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32

*And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* Great promises for the believer!

From verse 34 on, the Lord addressed those who falsely professed to believe in Him, as well as the Pharisees and the self-righteous Jews who not only didn't believe in Him, but were out to discredit the Lord. It is hard to miss the point that the Lord made here, that these religious Jews were not believers in the God of the Bible. Look at verse 44: "*You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*" And verse 47: "*He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.*" These religious Jews to whom the Lord was talking were not pagans -- they were strictly observant, orthodox Jews! What does that say about the destiny of Jews today who will not accept Christ? Orthodox Jews need to accept Jesus as their Messiah and as their Savior, just as much as any other unbeliever does.

### **1. Perseverance is the sign of a believer.**

In verse 31 we read, "*Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed."* **Abiding** in the Word is more than just reading and memorizing the Word. Abiding in the Word means consistently obeying the Word. Abiding in the Word and perseverance go together. Perseverance is characteristic of the believer. To "persevere" means to remain constant to a purpose, belief or task.

The Lord said to the unbelieving Jews, "*I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you"*(v37). Also, "*Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word"*(v43). Not being able to listen to the Word is characteristic of an unbeliever, and it is exactly the opposite of abiding in the Word.

Abiding in the Word and perseverance are signs of a believer. Look again at verse 47: "*He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.*" To "hear" God's Word is not just to hear it audibly, but also to **do** it, to **obey** it, to **consistently** do what it says, to **abide** in it. Perseverance is to abide in the Word. Perseverance is the sign of a believer.

### **2. Practicing sin is the sign of an unbeliever.**

"*Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin"*(v34). The word "commits" here is in the Greek present tense, so the meaning is "to **continually** commit" sin. It is not the idea of occasionally committing a sin -- it means to **practice** sin. That is the idea. Continually practicing sin is a sign of an unbeliever.

The Lord went on to teach that if you practice sin, you are a slave to sin, and a slave to sin is not a son. "*And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed"*(v35-36). You see, a son is a member of the family -- but a slave is not. Unbelievers are not in the family of God -- they are slaves. They may appear to be in God's family. Those religious Jews were making it out to be that they were in God's family, but they were not. Unbelievers are still in bondage or slavery to sin, whether they realize it or not. They are still in their sins.

1 John 3:6 says, "*Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.*" Here again the idea is to practice sin, commit sin continually, to **habitually** sin. Now this verse doesn't mean that a Christian is sinless ("*does not sin*"). 1

John 1:8-10, which is addressed to Christians, says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." Look at verse 46: "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?" The Lord Jesus was sinless, but we are not sinless.

As Christians we do sin, but the important point here is a true Christian does not **live continually** in sin! We don't **practice** sin. Abiding in the Word and perseverance -- those are signs of a true believer. But practicing sin is the sign of an unbeliever.

### 3. The truth will make a sinner free.

*"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"(v32). "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed"(v36). Is there a contradiction between these two verses? Of course not! The Son **is** the Truth! In John 14:6 the Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

Now the idea of freedom here is not the idea of freedom from sickness, or freedom from problems -- but **freedom from sin!** The unbelieving Jews were claiming that they had never been in bondage: "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free?'"(v33). Well, that statement was certainly not true, was it? What about the bondage in Egypt? What about the Babylonian captivity? What about the present Roman occupation? But the Lord showed them that He was talking about the bondage to sin.

Are you in bondage to sin? You don't have to be. Freedom is available! Freedom comes when you commit your life to Christ, and let Him take control of your life. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and He will set you free. If you commit your life to the Lord Jesus, you will come to know Him as the Truth -- and the truth will set you free! The truth will make a sinner free.

By the way, verses 31-32 appear to be addressed to believers. This is the key to overcoming sin in the believer's life. Abide in the Word, and you will increasingly come to know the truth -- and you will come to know Christ as the source of all truth, more and more. You can experience freedom from besetting sin. The truth will make a sinner free.

### 4. Sincerity will not make a sinner free.

If ever you had a test case for "religious sincerity," here it is! The people to whom the Lord was speaking were not pagans and they were not hedonists. They were, for the most part, sincere good-living religious Jews. They **sincerely** thought that not only were they physical descendants of Abraham, but that they are spiritual sons of Abraham as well. The Lord told them that He knew that they were physical descendants of Abraham: "I know that you are Abraham's descendants..."(v37). However, they were not spiritual sons of Abraham -- there was no moral kinship.

If they had been spiritual sons of Abraham, they wouldn't have been seeking to kill Jesus. They would have been doing the works of faith of Abraham (v39), and they would be receiving the Lord's word and loving Him (v42). There would have been a family resemblance -- that's the point. But these religious Jews sincerely believed that the Lord was wrong, and that they were right -- so right, that the Lord must go!

They were sincere, but they were sincerely mistaken. The Lord said that they were following their father the devil (v44). The Lord said that they could not go to heaven, and that they would die in their sin (v21). These sincere, religious Jews were sincerely wrong. Sincerity will not make a sinner free.

## **Practical Application**

### **Who is your father?**

The religious Jews in John 8 thought that the God of the Bible was their Father -- but they were wrong! The Lord said 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"*(v42).

And then in verse 44 Jesus said, *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do."* Notice that the Lord had no problem believing in a personal devil. Satan is not an imaginary being. No, Satan is a real live spiritual being. The Lord said that Satan was a murderer from the beginning. Satan brought death to Adam and Eve and to the whole human race. Satan is the father of lies. *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it"*(v44). Like father, like children.

Who is **your** father? There are only two possibilities: either God is your Father, or Satan is your father. There is no idea in the Bible of the "universal fatherhood of God." There is no idea that "everyone makes it in the end because God is the Father of all." That is **not** taught in the Bible! The Bible clearly teaches that you are either a believer, and God is your Father, or you are an unbeliever, and Satan is your father.

Who is your father?