

*The truth  
will set you free*



***IF***  
*You continue in My  
word*

## *The truth will set you free*

*'Jesus had gone into the temple teaching. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, to test Him, that they might have some charge to bring against Him.'*

John 8:3-6

Immediately following the conversation Jesus had with the religious Jews about their sin, and having told the woman to sin no more, (8:7-11) Jesus makes one of the greatest statements ever uttered on earth. The only one without sin who could have throw the first stone, gives an answer for the real problem of all those born on earth.

*"I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."*

John 8:12

The remarkable thing is that Jesus said "*I am the Light of the world*" What would they have known about this Light from the Old Testament and the prophets that caused them to challenge Him?

In the Old Testament Light symbolises *God's salvation*. The psalmist celebrates God who is "*my light and my salvation*" (27:1; 18:28), and light is

a favourite image of the prophet Isaiah to depict God's saving activity on behalf of the people of God. Isa 9:1; 58:8, 10; 60:1, 19-20

These images of light and salvation are related: just as light shows the way in darkness, so also by God's revelation are we able to know God. To have knowledge of God and to walk in the way that God requires by following Jesus results in salvation. God's light overcomes the darkness.

Then came some discussion about whom Jesus was; He said He came from above, they from below, and that they judged according to the flesh, and then He gave some understanding about His judgement, His relation with the Father and their inability to understand because they were from below and would die in their sins.

*'They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing*

*to Him.” As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.’* John 8:27-30

### *Now we come to the key to freedom*

*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.”*

John 8:31-32

The question is, can we hear the truth?

In order to understand what Jesus is saying in this passage without jumping to conclusions, we need to look to see what He is saying about Himself, what He is saying about those who were questioning Him, about those who believed, and the ones who the truth would set free. So we need to see the *Context* of these verses in the whole chapter and in the rest of the gospel.

Consequently, being set free (v32) has a lot to do with the light come into the world, so that whoever follows Jesus will not walk in darkness. (v12) From this verse we see there are another two issues we need to consider, *the world* and *the darkness*.

Jesus said to them, *“You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins.”*

John 8:23-24

So they were saying to Him, *“Who are You?”* Jesus said to them, *I am from above (8:23) “What have I been saying to you from the beginning? (8:25) “I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world.” (8:26) “And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”* John 8:29

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

John8:30

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.”*

John 8:31-32

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if*

*the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill Me because My word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”*

John 8:34-38

*Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.”*

John 8:42-45

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste*

*of death.’ Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?” Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will 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.” So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.*

John 8:51-59

*What does Jesus say about:-*

**1. Himself.** He is the light of the world and the giver of light (8:12) the Father sent Him and testifies about Him. (8:18) He is not of the world, He is from above (8:23) He is their judge (8:16, 26) He is not alone, the Father is with Him (8:29) The Son is the one who sets you free from ignorance

about God and sin. (8:36) He speaks of what He has seen with His Father (8:38) He has not even come on His own initiative, but God sent Him (8:42) He speaks the truth. (8:45) He said He was God, “*before Abraham was born, I AM.*” (8:58) See Exodus 3:14-15

**2. The unbelievers.** His challengers walk in darkness. (8:12) They are from below (8:23) they are of this world (8:23) they would die in their sins (8:24) they are slaves to sin (8:34) what they have heard they heard from their father the devil. (8:38, 44) they do you not understand what Jesus is saying, (8:43) they cannot hear His word because they are of their father the devil, (8:43) they want to do the desires of their father, (8:44) but because Jesus speaks the truth, they do not believe Him.

John 8:45

**3. The believers who heard,** many came to believe in Him. They were many uncommitted.

John 8:30

**4. The disciples.** They would continue in His word and followed His example, (8:12, 31) they will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. (8:12) they will know the truth (8:32) and the

truth will make them free (8:32) because they keep His word they will never see death. 8:51

### *A short summary so far about the 'you'*

Therefore, the 'you' are the many who have believed in Him. (8:30-31) But if they continued (and there is the problem) in His word and follow Him (8:12) then they will be His disciples. For their believing to be of eternal value, there has to be the continuing to abiding in and the doing of His word.

So freedom is not for all who believe in something He said. In order for their believing to take effect there must be a continuing in His word. They must follow Him (8:12) and His teaching (8:31) so they become like Him. It is clear that believing is only half the condition needed for salvations freedom; obedience completes the work of the Spirit in a repentant heart that follows Jesus.

It means doing what Jesus said to do. *“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.”* John 15:4-5

### *What we need to understand?*

**A.** Disciples need to understand that not everyone who claims to belong to the family of God is a child of God. Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. (8:34) They were offspring of Abraham; yet they sought to kill Him because His word finds no place in them. (8:37) What they have heard they heard from their father. 8:34-38

**B.** Disciples need to know that it is only ‘if’ we continue in His word. So, ‘if you,’ can only refer to those who are true disciples of Jesus who continue in His word. The true disciples will know the truth and the truth can only be known by those who prove to be His disciples by continuing to live obediently by His word.

**C.** The freedom Jesus offers is a spiritual freedom from the bondage of sin—that is, it is a release from the lifestyle of habitual lawlessness which is common in the world. The people who have not understood Jesus were not members of God’s family, (8:37) because they were still slaves to sin.

(8:34) If they were to become disciples of Jesus, they would know the truth of their condition, and the truth about Christ, and Jesus would set them free if they followed Him. Obedient believers would be freed from their bondage and brought into the family of God.

**D.** Disciples are free on the basis of what Christ has done for us and in us. We have been set free from sin and the flesh and made alive to God by a new birth according to His Spirit. (John 3:3, 5-6) By His sacrifice for our sins we are set free from the world and the power of sin. (8:28). Our home is now above where He is.           John 14:3

**E.** Disciples who obey are therefore no longer of the world but of the Kingdom of God. *“If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.”*   John 15:19

Consequently Jesus prayed to the Father *“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”*   John 17:15-17

John later writes, *'Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'* 1 John 2:15

Nothing belonging to the flesh, the world, or that which is from below can give us access to the presence of God.

### *How can we remain free?*

We can only be free in Christ when they keep His word. Only as we come to Him in obedience can we be free from the darkness so we can walk in the light. We are set free by continuing in His word, we remain free by continuing in His word.

Jesus told his disciples, and us, *"If you love me, you will obey what I command"* (John 14:15). *"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me"* (John 14:21). *"If anyone loves me he will obey my teaching"* (John 14:23). *"If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love"* John 15:10

We remain free by following the leading of the Spirit in obedience to all Jesus has commanded us. *"When He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will*

*guide you into all the truth.*”(John16:13) We continue to live in freedom according to our new life in Christ by the work and the power of God.

We remain free by confessing our sin so that we may receive cleansing from sin. 1 John 1:9

We must refuse to listen to unscriptural interpretations of what God is doing. Look at Job’s experience. Unscriptural interpretations are also those where the word spoken by the Lord is taken out of its correct context, so that God is misrepresented and the truth is hidden. The light is given to those who continue in His word, not some distortion of what He might have said.

Consequently, John told us to test the spirits. (1 John 4:1) *They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them.*(1 John 4:5) This testing is not some subjective experience; correct testing is explained a little later when he wrote. ‘*We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.*’ 1 John 4:6

We must also remain in prayer to our Father who listens to those who call on Him. 1 John 5:14

## *The big IF*

This 'IF' is the sorting of the sheep from the goats. (Matt 25:31-46) The sorting of the wheat from the tares. (Matt 13:24-30) It is the Kingdom dragnet used for sorting the fish, some to be kept and the others discarded. (Matt 13:47-50) The big 'IF' is the dividing of the people of God from the people of the world, a people who will believe something but not follow through. People like the rich young ruler, (Mark 10:17-27) or the man who wanted to bury his father, or the man who wanted to say good bye first. (Luke 9:57-62) They didn't pass the 'IF' test. They are always willing to compromise.

## *Conclusion*

Since the 'if you' only refers to the disciples who obey His words, freedom will not be apparent in the lives of those who only agree with Jesus. The casual believer has as their primary concern the need to have more things, to enjoy more of the world's goods, and the comforts the world can give them. So those who don't obey and remain in His word will stay in bondage to the world of things, to sin and the power of the evil one.

Some who claim to be in God's family may be religious; they may feel they have a spiritual inheritance as children of Abraham, but if they fail to do the will of the Father, they fail the 'If' test.

It is only those who believe in Jesus and keep His word that He sets free. No obedience, no freedom. It's only the obedient who are children of God. *'He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.'* John 3:36

In Him we are free from the eternal consequences of sin. We are free from the guilt of past sins. We are free from the power of sin to control us. We are free from the darkness to blind us to the corruption of the world, so that we may walk with God.

True discipleship is more than intellectual agreement. Those who are "really" followers of Christ will continue in His Word. That means not only accepting His teachings as truth, but also obeying His teachings. Actions speak louder than words.

*"So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."* John 8:36

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

**John 8:36**

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