



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA
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The Gospel of John

True Sons

John 8:37-47

Related Topics: Discipleship; Abiding in the Word; Knowing the Truth; Freedom; Slaves to Sin; Pride; The Condition of Sin; Jesus: The Source of True Freedom; True Sonship

We are continuing in our study of John's Gospel. We are in Chapter 8.

Carried along by the Holy Spirit, John records an event in the life of Jesus that further defines what John has to say about Jesus in the Prologue (1:1-8)

John 1:1-9 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

In **Verses 12-30** of **John 8** — Jesus declared that He is *the Light of the World*, and that those who would *follow Him would not walk in darkness but have the light of life!* After these words of Jesus there were a lot of people — powerful and influential RELIGIOUS people — who rejected Jesus and His Words — they rejected the Light of the World. They hated Jesus for what He had to say. They opposed Jesus because Jesus has called them into his light so that their darkness would be exposed.

While the religious movers and shakers were rejecting Jesus — There were people listening in who professed to believe what Jesus said about Himself

³⁰*As he was saying these things, many believed in him.*

For those who believed what Jesus had to say — made an awesome promise and gave an awesome promise —

³¹*So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

So last week we examined in Verses 31-36 two major issues — True Discipleship and True Freedom.

Jesus defined the TRUE DISCIPLE — *If you abide in my word you are truly my disciples.* Discipleship begins with belief. But it doesn't end there. It consists in *abiding* in the Word. A **true disciple** is one who REMAINS and STAYS in the Word. A **true disciple** is one who LIVES in the Word as if it were his home! We learned that the **true disciple** did not merely believe — but also made His teaching the basis of their conduct.

QUOTE: William Barclay — *The disciple is the learner who learns in order to do. The truth which Jesus brought is designed for action.*

Jesus said that true discipleship RESULTS in knowledge of the truth.

“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³²and you will know the truth,

And then in Verse 32 Jesus said that as a result of knowing the truth, freedom will be yours as a gift — you experience **TRUE FREEDOM.**

REMEMBER — *If you abide in my word you are truly my disciples.* In other words — *Your future loyalty to my teaching will prove the reality of your present profession.*

³³**They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’”**

Many of those who had professed to believe that Jesus is the Light of the World had a problem continuing in His Word. They couldn't understand why Jesus

would say that THEY — the descendants of Abraham — needed to be set free! Jesus then spoke words that exposed them as something they could not imagine themselves to be — SLAVES!

“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.

Here was the second great issue — the issue of **True Freedom**.

True Freedom is not a matter of political and social liberty (which we should never take for granted). True freedom is not a matter of religious heritage.

“Truly, truly, I say to you

Sin exists. People are slaves to sin — and as a result they do bad things. Jesus tells them that there is only ONE way to be set free from the power of sin —

HUGE — The conversation shifts from **sin** to **Him**

³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

We learned how Jesus frees us **from** the *power of sin* and the *penalty of sin*. We learned how Jesus frees us **to** a life of serving God.

Romans 6:22 ²²*But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*

We pick now in **VERSE 37** where Jesus challenges the validity of claiming Abraham as their father.

They said — Here’s our ethnic and religious pedigree. We are descendants of Abraham! **Jesus says** —

³⁷I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. ³⁸I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.” ³⁹They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing what Abraham did, ⁴⁰but now you seek to kill me, a man who has

told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. ⁴¹You are doing what your father did.”

Verse 37 — *offspring* = Greek word *sperma*

I know you are biologically connected to Abraham — his genetic material is in you! If they could have checked DNA in that day they would have proven their biological identity. **BUT HERE’S THE DEAL** — When it comes to spiritual identity — relationship with God — biological and even religious heritage means **NOTHING**. It has been said that God has no grand kids; He only has children! Having a biological parent that has been born again into the family of God does not make you a child of God.

Abraham had a living relationship with God based upon faith in the promises of God. He was good with God.

Jesus says to them — *Don’t say that you’re the friends of God because you’re the biological descendant of a man who was the friend of God.*

THIS IS HUGE — You do not get into the family of God by borrowing someone else’s relationship with God. You have to have your own faith —your own relationship with God.

James 2:23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.

So in no uncertain terms Jesus tells them that even though they have a biological relationship to Abraham they have **ZERO** spiritual relationship to him! In a spiritual sense — they couldn’t pass the paternity test!

WHAT, SPECIFICALLY, PROVES THAT THEY DON’T SHARE ABRAHAM’S SPIRITUAL DNA?

³⁷ My word has no place in you.

Again — remember the emphasis that Jesus has placed upon ***believing*** and ***abiding in*** the Word of Jesus

From the first time we are introduced to the patriarch of the nation of Israel we find him receiving and believing the Word of God. That is why the Bible calls Abraham *“the father of all who believe.”* (*Romans 4:11ESV; Rom4:16 NLT*)

UNLIKE those listening to Jesus — The Word of God had a place in Abraham's heart even when it made zero sense to him. He was a pagan living in pagan central (The Ur of the Chaldees - the birthplace of every false religious system on the planet.) Yet here's what the Bible says

***Genesis 12:1-4** Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." ⁴So Abram went, as the Lord had told him*

No idea WHERE God was going to lead him — or HOW God would bless him — or HOW God would bless all the families of the earth through him. But Abraham picked up and WENT.

Granted — His faith sometimes wavered. Sometimes he tried to fulfill the promise of God with his own fleshly plans. But his faith was so genuine that we are told that

***Genesis 15:5-6** And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir (speaking of Ishmael — the son he conceived with his servant Hagar); your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*

Listen to Paul's commentary on this in Romans 4

***Romans 4:19-21** He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.*

He came to so believe and abide in the Word of God and the Promises of God that we read

***Genesis 22:1-8** ¹After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." ²He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering*

on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.⁴ On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar.⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.”⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together.⁷ And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here am I, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”⁸ Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.

HERE’S THE POINT — If they had Abraham’s spiritual DNA (which is the only thing that counts with God) they would have **ROOM IN THEIR HEARTS** for the words of Jesus.

Jesus takes it even further —

³⁹ ...“If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing what Abraham did, ⁴⁰but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. ⁴¹You are doing what your father did.”

He says that Abraham was their biological dad — but they had a **different** spiritual dad! More on that in a moment.

They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.” ⁴²Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.

Jesus says — *Don’t tell me that God is your father and then act completely contrary to the way that a child of God should.*

One guy put it like this — If you don’t quack and you can’t float maybe you shouldn’t call yourself a duck. A real duck can quack and float. And if you can’t quack and float maybe you have to consider the possibility that you’re actually a brick and not a duck.

Jesus has already proved that they have no spiritual ties with Abraham because His Word has no place in their hearts. NOW Jesus tells them why it is impossible for them to claim that God is their father.

⁴² If God were your Father, you would love me,

HUGE QUESTION — **How do you know if God's your father?** Simple answer — Do you love Jesus? The crowd wants to talk theology and tradition and family and history. Jesus says — *Let's keep this very simple. God sent me. Do you love me? If you love me God's your father. If you don't love me God is not your father.*

Lots of people will say — *I really love God. I'm just not down with Jesus. I don't like the narrow minded view that Jesus is the only way to God. I love God in my own way. I have my own path to God.*

The Bible says

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all

If you want to **love God** — you have to go through Jesus. If you want to **know God** — you have to go through Jesus. If you want to be **adopted** into God's family and have God be your father — you have to go through Jesus. Jesus keeps it very basic (which is the beauty of Jesus). *Do you love me? If you loved me, God would be your father.*

HUGE APPLICATION — The greatest question you can ask yourself is — *Do I love Jesus?*

QUOTE: J.C. RYLE — *We can only come to one conclusion — Where there is no love to Christ, there is no sonship to God.*

Now we come to some of the most **RADICAL** and **ARRESTING** words in Scripture — right from the lips of Jesus. And again we are taken back to the John's prologue.

John 1:14; 16-17 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth... ¹⁶ And

*from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; **grace and truth** came through Jesus Christ.*

We cannot compartmentalize Jesus. We cannot have a redacted Jesus. We love the fact that Jesus is full of grace. But Jesus is also full of truth. We love that fact that grace came through Jesus. But truth also came through Jesus. HERE is the truth.

⁴³Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

FIRST — Jesus sets forth in no uncertain terms the REALITY and the NATURE of the devil.

He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

QUOTE: J.C. RYLE — *There is a devil! We have a mighty invisible enemy always near us--one who never slumbers and never sleeps--one who is about our path and about our bed, and spies out all our ways, and will never leave us until we die. He is a murderer! His great aim and object is, to ruin us forever and kill our souls. To destroy, to rob us of eternal life, to bring us down to the second death in hell, are the things for which he is unceasingly working. He is ever going about, seeking whom he may devour. He is a liar! He is continually trying to deceive us by false representations, just as he deceived Eve at the beginning. He is always telling us that good is evil and evil good--truth is falsehood and falsehood truth--the broad way good and the narrow way bad. Millions are led captive by his deceit, and follow him, both rich and poor, both high and low, both learned and unlearned. Lies are his chosen weapons. By lies he slays many.*

SECOND — Jesus tells this crowd that their father is not God — their father is the devil.

They not only have ZERO RESEMBLANCE to Abraham and his faith — and ZERO RESEMBLANCE to God. They RESEMBLE the devil.

How do you know if Satan is your father? Check your desires. What are your desires? You see — when a man or woman becomes a Christian their desires change.

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

That doesn't mean that they're necessarily perfect, but it means that their desires change. When you are born again you become an adopted child of God. When you sin, as a child of God, it bothers you; not because you got caught or it adversely effects you; but because it grieves your heavenly father.

A Christian and a non-Christian might do the same thing — but because their desires are different one ends up loving it and the other ends up hating it. Your desires change. You don't want to do certain things anymore. Your desires are supposed to change if God is your father.

Jesus says that Satan is a liar and the father of lies — And his kids are liars. Satan can't tell the truth. Lying is his native language. If you hate the truth and you love lies, if you hate righteousness and you love sin, you have zero resemblance to God. You resemble your father the devil. Is your life governed by lies? Not just in saying things that are untrue; but in living a life that is untrue — pretending to be someone or something that you are not. If you believe lies and you participate in lies you have to question whether or not God is your father.

Jesus says that the Devil is a murderer. God brings life, Satan brings death. Everything he touches dies. His whole purpose is to kill things. He wants people to die. He's a murderer from the beginning — all the way back to Cain killing his brother Abel. And from that moment forward he has sought to bring about death.

HUGE — Wherever God seeks to bring life and healing and reconciliation. Satan is seeking to kill and destroy. Where God is seeking to bring healing and wholeness and reconciliation and love to relationships and families and marriages and communities and churches — Satan brings lies and just wants to kill it. He's a murderer.

So Jesus says — *You guys say that God is your father but your desires are don't look like God's. Your lies are evident and you reject the truth. I'm here to reconcile man to God and you're trying to kill me and put to death the saving work of God.*

⁴⁵But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? ⁴⁷Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

I'm going to tackle **VERSE 47** first — and then close with **Verses 45-46**

Verse 47 is a hard bit of Scripture.

The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

There are those who interpret this passage in light of **John 6:44**

⁴⁴No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

That passage of Scripture speaks inescapably about predestination and election. We cannot come to Jesus **UNLESS** God chooses us. There is no argument to be made. As hard as it is on human pride and intellect — the meaning can not be avoided.

However — There are those who say that the phrase ***"you are not of God"*** means that they are incapable of hearing with understanding because the Father is not drawing them —

QUOTE: John Piper — Being "of God" would refer to the choice of God to draw them..... In other words, no one can come to me unless they are "of God"—the God who then draws them to me.

The assumption is that the men and women of **John 8:47** will **NEVER** hear with **understanding** and **NEVER** be capable of believing — because in the matter of election God those who them Father does not draw — cannot ever hear with understanding and believe!

QUOTE: Wayne Grudem — *Reprobation is the sovereign decision of God before creation to pass over some persons, in sorrow deciding not to save them, and to punish them for their sins, and thereby to manifest his justice.*

Grudem, W. A. (1994). *Systematic theology: An introduction to biblical doctrine* (685). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

In that point of view man is morally accountable for something he could NEVER grasp. He is punished for sins that are incapable of being understood as God sees sin. I have trouble finding that plainly taught in the Bible unless I look at a certain passages with a particular bias.

Let me quote **D.A. Carson** on the matter of election from his comments on Deuteronomy 7 —

Three observations: (1) In the Bible, God's utter sovereignty does not diminish human responsibility; conversely, human beings are moral agents who choose, believe, obey, disbelieve, and disobey, and this fact does not make God's sovereignty finally contingent. That is clear from the way God's sovereignty manifests itself in this chapter, that is, in election, even while the chapter bristles with the responsibilities laid on the people. People who do not believe both truths—that God is sovereign and human beings are responsible—sooner or later introduce some intolerable wobbles into the structure of their faith.

Carson, D. A. (1998). *For the love of God: A daily companion for discovering the riches of God's Word. Volume 1.* Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.

I think the Pulpit Commentary is very helpful here —

Others insist that here Jesus speaks of the regenerated man, the true child of God, who has power to believe, who has come to the Father, being predestinated unto eternal life. Even this interpretation does not leave sufficiently ample play to the human freedom, and the personal self-responsibility, which pervades the teaching of the gospel.

The author than quotes the passage again — *The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God — i.e. seeing that ye do not hear the words of God, it is evident that ye are not of God. **They are not excluded from becoming so by any irreversible fate, but their present obtuseness** of spiritual perception, their refusal to accept truth on its clearest exposition, shows that... they are not being drawn to him by in working of the Father's grace. The very form of the expression was once more meant to touch their conscience.*

In other words — We cannot assume that these were **never** going to be *drawn by the Father to Jesus*. Nor can we assume that their failure to hear with understanding at that moment means that they would **always** be — *not of God*.

There are a lot of people present this morning (myself included) who have made room for the Word of God in their hearts, and love Jesus. And by that — they prove that God is indeed their Father. But nearly every one of those people can attest that that there was a time — and that there were numerous occasions that we *did not hear the Word of God* — didn't get it and didn't want it! As Jesus said in *Verse 43* — *It is because you cannot bear to hear my word*. There was simply *no room in our hearts for His message (v.37 NLT)*.

At **that time** we most certainly were *not of God*. At that time we were in the same family group as the crowd in **John 8**

Ephesians 2:1-3 *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

BUT — Those moments did not prove that the Father was not drawing us to Jesus — nor did they prove our reprobation. God kept pursuing!

THIS MORNING'S BIBLE BUS READING gives to us the quintessential illustration of this fact.

Acts 9:1-7 *But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.⁴ And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"⁵ And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."*

Saul was working for the very men who handed Jesus over to Pilate to be crucified. He was complicit with them in it all. He was in charge of murdering Stephen for his faith in Jesus. And now He was on his way to do more of the same. The Word of God had no place in his heart — he had no love for Jesus — and in

his violence and murder he looked like his father the devil. That did not prove that the father would NEVER draw him to Jesus — that he was forever not of God — reprobate — passed over by God.

GOD PURSUED HIM!

CLOSING

⁴⁵But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?

Jesus declares that He is perfect and sinless — and by that declaration He claims the authority to speak into our lives and tell us that we are wrong. People hate that. But it is only in the light of His holiness that we can understand the nature of our sinfulness — and see our need for a Savior. That is why Satan, the Father of lies, has so many false representations of Jesus. He is the inventor of the nice guy Jesus; the good teacher Jesus; the new age ascended master Jesus — any Jesus except for the sinless Son of God. Because we can put ourselves alongside of those other versions of Jesus, and perhaps see the need for a little self-reformation — the need to try a little harder at being good. It is only along side of the sinless Son of God that we see ourselves as sinners without any hope of saving ourselves apart from His sinless sacrifice for us on the cross.

Jesus is speaking to men and women in this room at this very moment! Up until this moment you have not been able to stand the Word of God. Up until this moment you have been of your father the devil. Your life has been one big lie and one non-stop rejection of the Truth. But this morning you are hearing Jesus — who IS the TRUTH. You find yourself standing in the light of who Jesus is — and you KNOW that you are a sinner with no hope of saving yourself.

HERE IS THE GREAT NEWS!

***Romans 5:6-11** For while we were still weak (NLT – utterly helpless), at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person— though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the*

wrath of God. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Acts 2:37-38 Now when they heard this (the message of the cross and resurrection of Jesus) they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.