Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

How to Die in Your Sins
Scripture: John 8:21-30
Code: 1521

You have your Bible, will you please turn to John's gospel chapter 8 and I would like to read as you follow, verses 21 through 30. Beginning in verse 21, John records: "Then said Jesus again unto them, 'I go My way and ye shall seek Me and shall die in your sins. Where I go ye cannot come.' Then said the Jews, 'Will He kill Himself because He saith where I go ye cannot come?' And He said unto them, 'Ye are from beneath, I am from above. Ye are of this world, I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you that ye shall die in your sins, for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.' Then said they unto Him, 'Who art Thou?' And Jesus saith unto them, 'Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you, but He that sent Me is true and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him.' They understood not that He spoke to them of the Father. Then said Jesus unto them, 'When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am and that I do nothing of Myself but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me, the Father hath not left Me alone for I do always those things that please Him.' As He spoke these words, many believed on Him."

May God bless this portion of Scripture to our hearts.

This has been indeed a rich and rewarding time. I don't know about you but I know that I have learned and grown so much in my knowledge of Jesus Christ. You've often heard the expression and perhaps said it and perhaps been the object of its saying, this expression, "He has nobody to blame but himself." Very common expression. Well, I really don't feel sorry for him because he has nobody to blame but himself.

Surprisingly enough that statement is biblical, very biblical. As we come to this portion of John's gospel we will remember that for eight chapters now, John the apostle who wrote this gospel, John...incidently, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit...John has been detailing now for eight chapters the claims of Jesus Christ. He has been carefully outlining them. And He has given to Israel, that is Jesus has, sufficient evidence to prove who He is and to make any rejection of that evidence irresponsible and guilty. And that's exactly what has happened. The claims of Christ have been clear. They have been sufficient to produce faith. And if men have not believed, they have nobody to blame but themselves.

Now in the mind of Jesus anyone who has seen and heard and experienced everything that He has done and still doesn't believe, bears the guilt of that unbelief all by himself. For the revelation has

been complete, it has been substantial, it has been sufficient to make unbelief inexcusable. Anybody who can get to the eighth chapter of John without seeing who Jesus Christ is, has no excuses. And any Jew living in Jerusalem or anyone living in Galilee who could have heard and seen all that they heard and saw and still conclude that this was not the Christ, has nobody to blame but himself for all the evidence is there.

But tragically, that's exactly what happened. Men have loved their darkness rather than light. They have willfully rejected Jesus Christ and His claims. And we've already seen that. You'll remember, for example, in Galilee, Jesus went to Galilee and made His claims, taught them, healed them, fed them, and as long as He was doing that, everything was all right. He was king material as long as there was a healing, feeding-type thing. But as soon as He started proposing spiritual blessings while they craved only the physical, He no longer fitted their messianic mold. When He started demanding spiritual cleansing and started speaking about spiritual reality, He left them and they left Him.

Then He came to Jerusalem and in Jerusalem, it wasn't much different. The opinion followed a similar course as it had in Galilee. There was...there was Jesus exemplifying again in His deeds and His words who He was. His power to impart life was obvious. He was dynamic. He was tremendous. And great crowds followed Him and they moved with Him wherever He went. And some of them wanted to make Him king and He healed them and He took care of their physical needs.

Then He began to measure the crowd and then He began to sift the crowd, the genuine and the false and He began to sift them by spiritual demands. He began to talk about sin and hypocrisy and spiritual reality. And the crowd began to be divided. And you come to the last section that we've even talked about, the last couple of chapters and it tells us there was a division among the people in chapter 7 toward the end. And the crowd begin to sift and their hypocrisy and their false religion became the issue and Christ was no longer messianic material. They didn't get the message anymore and they didn't like the message and the crowds began to melt away. The truth of the first chapter came to pass, He came unto His own and His own...what?...received Him not.

But they were responsible for they had heard the truth. The offer of salvation was clear. They had made their choice. Now few had believed. Remember back in chapter 7 about verse 40 or 41, some said this is the prophet, some said this is the Christ. Most of them rejected and they had nobody to blame but themself.

So we've seen in the course of chapter 7 and 8 a progression. Chapter 7 began with kind of a perplexed hopefulness, kind of thinking, "Maybe this could be the Messiah." Chapter 8 ends in a violent hostility as they attempt to kill Jesus. And so Jerusalem, like Galilee, rejects Christ with all His claims, with all the magnificence of His person, with all the miracles that He did they rejected Him. And that rejection led to the statement of verse 21 where we begin our message.

"Then said Jesus again unto them, 'I go My way and ye shall seek Me and shall die in your sins. Where I go, ye cannot come.'" Jesus said...Because of your rejection, you're going to die in your sins and wake up too late to the fact that you missed the Messiah.

And what He's really doing is pronouncing sentence on them. He's saying your rejection is resulting in a sentence. The tragic result of refusing Christ is to die in your sin, unforgiven, unrighteous, doomed, damned, unfit for heaven, never to enter it. Jesus says to them, "That's your situation, you're going to die in your sin." Eternal death. It's still going on today, did you know that? A hundred people a minute go to hell and that's the ultimate tragedy. Weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, fire, unquenchable thirst, punishment, separation from God, every horrible thing beyond our imagination a part of hell and yet people go there because they refuse Jesus Christ. And whereas Christ for all these chapters prior to this has been making claims and claims and claims, now He stops making claims and starts making condemnations. Whereas once He said, "I am the light of the world," now He says, "You're going to seek Me and not find Me and die in your sin," and the complexion of His ministry has changed diametrically because of rejection and unbelief. And Jesus warns and says the inevitable consequence of unbelief is to die in your sin.

You say, "Well how can God do that? How can God sentence people to die?" Well, God doesn't do it. Men do it. Jesus said in John 5:40, "You will not come to Me that you might have...what?...life." You won't come. Jesus says, "You reject Me and the natural inevitable consequence, you'll die in your sins." It's not as if Jesus is going around saying, "Okay, just for not doing that I'm going to kill you." Not at all. The inevitable consequence of a rejection of Jesus Christ that a man will die in his sins. That's the moral order on which the universe is built.

Tragically, many choose to die in their sins. Many do. And so I've entitled this sermon, "How to die in your sins." And the reason is because it's so obvious from these Jewish leaders in this passage the characteristics that cause them to die in their sins that I think if we can just pull out these things, we can really see the clear picture of how a man actually dies in his sins. How to die in your sins. Four ways to be sure that you'll die in your sins in this passage. Four ways to be sure that you'll die in your sins.

Number one, be self-righteous. Number two, be earthbound. Number three, be unbelieving. And number four, be willfully ignorant. Any combination of those or any single one. Self-righteous, earthbound, unbelieving, willfully ignorant...four ways to die in your sins. Jesus said, "You will die in your sins and where I am you can never come." And then they proceeded in the following dialogue to confirm exactly what Christ said by showing that they had all four of these things. They were self-righteous, earthbound, unbelieving and willfully ignorant. And thus Jesus could say to them, "You will die in your sins," for they passed every test for one who is to die in his sins. They met every requirement.

Watch it. First of all, they were self-righteous. The first way to die in your sins is be self-righteous. This is the first step, first feature, having no need of Christ, being completely content with you as you are, that's what self-righteousness is. And this is perfectly illustrated in these people, I want you to see it, verse 22, "Then said the Jews..." Now the word "Jews," remember, in John's gospel has specific reference to the leaders. Not so much to the people, but to the leaders. "Then said the Jews," likely the scribes and Pharisees, "'Will He kill Himself because He saith where I go you cannot come?'"

You say, "What is this?" Well Jesus said He would leave and they wouldn't be able to find Him. Jesus informs them that, "I'm going to return to My Father and then you're going to die looking vaguely and hopelessly for a Messiah that you've already blindly misunderstood and rejected. You're going to die unsatisfied, unsanctified, unredeemed, unreconciled and unforgiven. And the eternal home of the Father will be closed to you forever."

You know what Jesus does is He's actually announced their doom. He said to them, "In fact, your rejections spell your doom." Now the seriousness of this rejection is without words to describe. To reject Jesus Christ is so serious and to do it on the basis of self-righteousness is so illustrated by these men. And I want you to see it in the statement of verse 22. "Then said the Jews, 'Will He kill Himself because He saith where I go you cannot come?'" Now what does that mean?

Just this, they are ridiculing Jesus. They are laughing at Him. So vile was their rejection that Jesus to them was a joke. You say, "I don't get the picture." You will in a minute. To an orthodox Jew, get this, to an orthodox Jew suicide was a very, very significant thing. You say why? Because the rabbis had always taught that anyone who committed suicide went to the darkest part of Hades permanently. Josephus in his history records this that it was common Jewish opinion that anybody who committed suicide was cast into the darkest part of Hades and was separated from Abraham's bosom which was what the Jews called the place for the good dead, Abraham's bosom. You remember the rich man was in hell and Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom. But Hades was the blackest, darkest part and that anybody committing suicide would go to Hades permanently.

And now you know what they're saying. They're mocking Him saying, "Well, maybe He's going to kill Himself, then He would go the darkest part of Hades and He'd escape us there cause we're far too righteous to ever get there." Now you get the picture? Self-righteous, "Well, you'd have to go to the black of Hades to escape us. And, of course, we'd never go to that place, not us." They're ridiculing Him. "Maybe He's going to kill Himself and be sentenced to black Hades where we will never go, being so righteous." Oh yik...isn't that disgusting? I mean, such self-righteousness. They were...they were so righteous in their own minds that Jesus was a joke to them. Ha-ha, very funny, Jesus. And they were deaf to what He said. He had just said you shall die in your sins, they didn't hear a word. They were so busy defaming and mocking and laughing and making a joke out of Jesus that they

never even heard a word He said. That's the way it is with unbelief, it never hears anything. And once again they turned their venom on the blessed Son of God. He was going to die, they were right...He was going to die, but He wasn't going to kill Himself, they were going to be part of it. He would die voluntarily yes, but it wasn't suicide. He would die at the hands of men. And it's true that He would go somewhere where they can't come, but it wasn't Hades. It was heaven. But they didn't get it. He said, I'm going where you'll never go, they assumed it's got to be the blackest part of Hades. But it was heaven where they'd never go. He was going to die and they didn't understand, so they're ignorant self-righteous mocking makes out of the message of Jesus some kind of a joke. And they laughed until they die, then they cry in hell.

Jesus is no joke. When Jesus says you shall die in your sins, that's no laughing matter. So self-satisfied were they that they could laugh in mockery at Jesus. You know how self-righteous you'd have to be to do that? Unbelievable. Self-righteousness is deadly. Self-righteousness is a guarantee that you'll die in your sins, absolute gilt-edged guarantee. I remember the illustration of Job, you know, Job had the lousiest friends in the world. And in Job 12:2 his friends had given him crummy advice so long that he had had it and finally he says, "All right, I get it, no doubt you are the people and wisdom will die with you." See. I mean, wow, when you boys go the world will be in total ignorance. Boy, you know it all. Solomon said in Proverbs 12, I think it's verse 15, he said, "The way of a fool is always right in his own eyes." Self-righteousness is deadly. In Matthew, you don't need to look it up, I'll just read it to you, chapter 7 verse 21, Christ gives us a picture of the coming judgment on those who are self-righteous. He says, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name did many wonderful works and cast out demons?' Then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you, depart from Me, ye who work...what?...iniquity.'" I don't know you, I have no love relationship with you. Self-righteousness.

Over in chapter 9 Jesus...of Matthew...got very sarcastic with those Jews. "It came to pass...verse 10...as Jesus sat eating in the house, behold many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples." And, boy, in the eyes of everybody, tax collectors were really bad news. They were the scum. They were the worst and open out overt sinners and companioning with Jesus and the disciples. Well, when the Pharisees came there, they're super-pious, verse 7, "The Pharisees saw it, they said unto the disciples, 'Why eateth your Master with tax collectors and sinners?'" What's He doing hanging around this bunch?

When Jesus heard that, He said unto them, oh the sarcasm drips from this statement, "Well, they that are well don't need a physician." He's implying that they're well...you think you're well, what am I doing to do with you, you're well. See. Verse 12...verse 13 He says, "But go and learn what that meaneth. I will have mercy and not sacrifice." In other words, I'm sick of your works. "For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." You be self-righteous and God can't do a thing for you...not a thing. Jesus can't touch a self-righteous man. If a man doesn't recognize his sin and his need, then Christ can't touch him. Even Isaiah says, "All our righteousness is like filthy rags." Paul

says in Romans 3:20, "By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified." You can't be redeemed by the deeds of the Law, by works. In the next verse, verse 21 to 23 he says, "It's only by the righteousness of Christ given to us that we can be righteous." It's not my righteousness, it's Christ's given to me.

So it's very simple. To die in your sins requires that you are self-righteous. How do you do it? Never recognize your sin, don't ever look at it. Never acknowledge you're separated from God. Don't admit you've ever done anything wrong. Put all your trust in yourself. All confidence in your good works, your religious position, your...your godly thoughts from time to time. Don't ever face your sin. Maintain your self-righteousness. You know something? You'll stack up your so-called good works and rather than God crediting them to you, they will damn you.

And so, Jesus meets them again on the level of their self-righteousness. But then Jesus in His incomparably deft method slashes the cutting edge of His wisdom to the very core of their problem, and I want you to see some devastating words in verse 23. "And He said unto them," listen to this, "'Ye are from beneath.'" And when I first read that I didn't quite get the connection. Then I began to study this dialogue and reflect on what just happened and I got it. You know what He's saying, this is an ironic statement. They have just said, "Well, so You're going to go somewhere where we can't come. Well, maybe You're going to kill Yourself and go to the darkest part of Hades, we'd never go way down there below the darkest part of Hades." And Jesus says, "Yeah, you came from there." You see it now in verse 23? "Don't tell Me you're not going there, that's where you came from."

You say, "People aren't born in Hades." You're right. You're right. But the source of their hypocrisy and the source of their self-righteousness was right out of the pit, wasn't it? See. Very often Jesus speaks behind the person to the source, doesn't He? Remember what He said to Peter? "Get thee behind Me...what?...Satan." Remember what He said to the King of Tyre in the Old Testament? Talking to Satan behind the king. Why even in the book of Revelation when He talks to the Beast, the Antichrist, He often talks to Satan behind Him. He's saying to them, "You think you're never going to the darkest part of Hades? You're whole operation comes from there." All their unbelief, all their hypocrisy, all their false religion came right out of the pit itself. Willful ignorant unbelief is right out of Satan's backyard.

Look at verse 44, "You are of your father...whom?...the devil." Now that doesn't mean they were born as children of the devil in hell and got reincarnated and came to earth, or something. That just means the source of all their activity is hell itself, Satan. Jesus says, "Don't tell Me you're...I know what you're implying when you say I will kill Myself...don't give Me that, you came from there. A source of your antagonism and your hate and your rejection is right out of the pit."

You know, it's a terrifying thing to realize but do you know that any person who rejects Jesus Christ is a disciple of Satan? That's exactly what Ephesians 2 said. The person who is dead in sin, walks

according to the prince of the power of the air, Satan governs his life. So if you want to die in your sins, the first thing is just to be self-righteous and let Satan run your life. Satan loves righteousness, self-righteousness. Oh he loves it. And the guarantee is there, you'll die in your sins.

Second way to die in your sins is verse 23 in the middle. He says to them, "I am from above," and here's the key, "ye are of this world." Second way to die in your sins is be earthbound...be earthbound, be completely strapped to the system, be completely geared in to the world. Don't ever live for the eternal, don't ever get God in perspective, don't care about spiritual reality, just live for the temporal, the material, the physical satisfaction and it's a guarantee you'll die in your sins, spend an eternity unforgiven and unredeemed. Just be earthbound, captive to the system. John said, 1 John chapter 2, "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is...what?...not in Him." That's the dichotomy right there.

Now notice what He says, "I am from above, you are not from this world or in this world, but of this world." In other words, you are engulfed in its system. You love it. You're identified with it. James put it so well. He drew the dichotomy as extreme as it could be drawn in the fourth chapter and the fourth verse when he said this, listen to it, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God and whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Now you can't draw dichotomy any more exact than that. If you just want to be the complete opposite pole from God, just be earthbound, be in love with the system of this world. The dichotomy is there.

You say, "Well, what do you mean by the system?" Well, what is the world? What's the world promoting? Well, three main things it's promoting today is humanism, number one, right? Man is ultimate. Who needs God? I'll solve my own problems, run my own world. As soon as I take an Excedrin. Who's he kidding? Somebody else comes along and says, "No, the world isn't humanism, it's materialism...gimmee, gimmee, gimmee. Somebody else comes along and says, "No, it's not humanism, materialism, it's sex, satisfaction of the physical lust."

The world is selling these things. Somebody are buying them, that's all they have. You know, when you shop in Satan's store, you don't have a lot of options. He's the proprietor, you buy what he offers. And if you're totally separated from God, you don't have any choice.

So the true believer is in a totally different realm. The one who rejects Christ is earthbound and he's a disciple of Satan and separated from God by an infinite gulf. But I want you to look at the true believer and look at the difference. Look at 15:18 of John. Chapter 15, a couple of verses there.

It says in verse 18, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you." Now watch this, He's talking to those believers, those disciples, "If you were of the world," which implies they weren't, "the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world...yes you're in the world, yes, but you're not of it, you're there but you're not a part of its evil system...cause you're not of the

world cause I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." Isn't it great to know that God has chosen us out of the world? That's the difference. Oh, that's the difference. And I love what John says over there in 1 John chapter 5 verse 4, listen, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world." Isn't that tremendous? If you've received Jesus Christ and been born of God, you're not a part of this world. Whatever is born of God overcomes the world and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God. We've overcome the world, we're not of the world.

I want to show you a passage, I want you to look at it, Philippians chapter 3. And this passage so beautifully illustrates the dichotomy between the believer and the unbeliever in terms of the world. Philippians 3:17, "Brethren, be followers together of me," says Paul, "and mark them who walk even as ye have for us...have us for an example. Think note of how people live. For many walk of whom I have told you often and now I tell you in weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." The worldly, the person who doesn't know Christ is an enemy of Christ. Here's the description of the worldly person, "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, or their physical appetites, whose glory is in their shame." In other words, they flaunt their dirty deeds. Boy, is that true today. People are proud of their...of their evil. But notice the last of verse 19, "Who mind...what?...earthly things." See.

And then all of a sudden, like dawn, you come to verse 20. This is the world in verse 19. Verse 20, "For our citizenship is...where?...in heaven and we look that way waiting for the return of Christ." You see the dichotomy there as Paul paints it? The worldly person, earthbound, preoccupied, his God is his appetite, his destruction is going to be a disaster. He glories in his sin. Compares notes with his buddies at the office. And he minds earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, we're not of this world. Oh we live here but we're not of it. The world is going to pass away, and I'll tell you something, everybody that's part of the world is going to pass away when it goes.

So there's a sure guaranteed way to die in your sins, and that's be earthbound. Be strapped to the world and never ever acknowledge your sin. Whatever you do, don't do that.

There's a third way to be sure you'll die in your sins and there's another perfect illustration of it. And that is to be unbelieving, and this is the crux of all of it really. Verse 24, "Then said they unto Him, 'Who are You? Who art Thou?' And Jesus said unto them, 'Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.'" This is a tremendous verse, I want you to get it.

They were unbelieving. They said, "Who art Thou?" Oh pardon me, I want us to go back to verse...how did I get down there? Verse 24, we skipped it, "I said therefore unto you that ye shall die in your sins for if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins."

Now back off, forget verse 25 for a minute, I don't know how I did that. Edit that out of the tape. Verse 24, "I said therefore unto you, 'Ye shall die in your sins for if ye believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins.'" In other words, the key here was to be unbelieving. Don't believe in Christ and you can be sure you'll die in your sins. That's what He said. You'll die in your sins if you believe not. That's the real key. Just don't believe in Jesus Christ, refuse to believe in Him and you'll die in your sins.

The way of escape is open and the "if" there leaves the door open, doesn't it? Doesn't it say that? "If you believe not," that implies you don't have to, doesn't it? The door is still open. If a man wants to disbelieve, that's his prerogative. That's his choice. Be unbelieving. No one has to die in his sins. Jesus is such a Savior that He can help anyone. He can help those Jews that day, He can help any man who ever lived. No man has to die in his sin. But the one who persists in a rejection of Jesus Christ will die in his sin...unpardoned, unfit for heaven, unprepared to meet God. But it doesn't need to be that way.

Notice what He says in verse 24, "I said therefore unto you that you shall die in your sins, for if you believe not that I AM..." just drop the word "He" for a minute. You believe not that I AM. I am what? Just what He said in verse 23, that I am from above and not of this world. And, you see, that was their big hangup. The thing that irritated the Jewish leaders more than anything was Jesus constantly claiming to be God, you see. And this just irritated them. It made them absolutely aggressively angry and hostile. And He says, "I'm sorry if you don't believe that I AM." I am what? Just what I said, from above and God...you don't believe that you'll die in your sins.

Somebody says, "Can a person be a Christian and not believe in the deity of Jesus Christ?" No way! No way! Impossible! And I think it's even further than that, I think He's saying if...He just stops with "I am," you have to believe that I am. That I am what? Not only that I am from above and not of this world but that I am everything I claim to be. You say, "What did He claim to be?" Light, life, bread, food, water, Messiah, that prophet, the promised One, Christ, the Savior of the world, the Son of God, the Judge, equal with God, etc., etc., etc. Just believe that I am and....blank...and write it all in. If a man believes that Jesus is all He claimed to be, then the separation will cease, won't it? For the instant a man believes, he's joined in union with God, becomes a part of Jesus Christ. No more separation and he is called out of this world, and his citizenship is in heaven.

Somebody says, "Well, how long does it take to get naturalized?" It all happens in an instant. Faith in Jesus Christ, out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light by trusting Christ. But if a man refuses to believe, if he carries that chasm and refuses to believe, he'll die in his sins and there's not a thing that God can do about it. But faith can bridge the chasm. Faith in that He is in what He is and in what He has revealed is the germ of eternal life. To refuse to believe shatters that hope. And Jesus meant that when He said in chapter 3 verse 36, listen, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life...here's the chasm, the next statement...and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him." There's the dichotomy and faith is the bridge. In order to move from

damnation to blessing a man moves on faith. Believe...verse 24...if you believe, He said. Just believe.

Somebody comes along and says, "Well, is there a second death? I mean, a second chance after death? Is there a second opportunity to believe in Christ after you're dead? Certainly God's going to give you a second chance." And I've had people talk to me about this. In fact, one person particular recently... "Well, I just can't believe that God wouldn't give people a...He'll keep them in hell a little while and kind of shape them up and then He's going to give them another chance to go to heaven." You know something? There is nothing in the universe that I would rather believe than that. I would love to believe it. With Richard Baxter, I would say, "O God, for a full heaven and an empty hell." But that's not how it is. That's not how it is.

"If you believe not that I am, you will die in your sins." Unforgiven, unpardoned, unredeemed, unreconciled forever, that's the way it is. And if a man does, he has nobody to blame but himself.

So, a warning. Jesus says, "If," and that word "if" is so important because that's the door that's still open to faith, see. It doesn't have to be that way. If is there. You don't have to do it. You can believe. The "if" is still a potential.

Then we come to a fourth and final way to die in your sins. Verse 25 to 29, not only to refuse to believe, to be earthbound, to be self-righteous, but to be willfully ignorant...to be willfully ignorant. Verse 25, and here we come to that question. "Then said they unto Him, 'Who art Thou?'" Now that question, when I first read that I thought...oh, help. For eight chapters He's been telling them who He is. For days and days and days in Jerusalem He's been telling them who He is, now they come to the...Who are You? You know. I mean, haven't you been listening, people? Who am I?

But there's more to this statement than that. For that's not just a pure legitimate question. They never ask those kind. It's a mocking statement. And the Greek form of it kind of leads us into the mockery. We can kind of read it because the statement is *soutis ai(??)* and you can almost hear them say it, just three little short words, *soutis ai*, You, who are You? See. What are You doing standing up there telling us we're going to...who are You...die in our...what is this? You know, sneering at Him. What gives You the bright idea that You were going to declare, you know, judgment on us? Who are You? As if He's treaded on their sacred ground as an unwelcome and unnecessary edition who has no right to be there.

But, behind the mockery there's still ignorance, isn't there? They really didn't know. And it's amazing they didn't....you know something? I've told you this before, I'm going to say it again, unbelief produces ignorance. You know that? Don't confuse me with the facts, my mind's made up, right? I'm ignorant because I won't see it your way. Unbelief produces ignorance and they were ignorant. And I love that ninth chapter, verse 30, look at it. Jesus healed this blind man and the Jews said, "Hey, hey, who did this? How did it happen? Where did he come from? Where did he get his power? What did

he do?" And they were asking this poor guy all these questions and he hit them right between the eyes. Verse 30, "The man answered and said unto them, 'Why here's a marvelous thing. You know, this is really amazing.'" What is? "'That you know not from where He is and yet He hath opened mine eyes.'" Isn't that terrific. You've got to know that people don't go around opening eyes who just live in the neighborhood. I mean, when somebody comes along and says, "See," and your eyes open, you've got to know that's somebody from somewhere else. He says this is a marvelous thing that He opened my eyes and you don't know who He is. The only thing that can produce that kind of ignorance is unbelief. You know that? Just don't believe. Willful ignorance. Oh, verse 19 of chapter 8, is another one. Remember earlier they said, "Oh, listen, we know You, Jesus, we know You, You can't be Messiah. We know You. Your father, Your mother, all your...we know, You're not the Messiah." And Jesus says, "Sure, you really know Me, don't you?" And look what He says in verse 19. He's been witnessing and He says, "I have someone who will verify My witness, My Father in heaven." Verse 19, "They said unto Him, 'Where's Your Father?'" You know, He's claiming God's going to come to His aid, where's Your Father? Where is He?"

"Jesus said, 'You neither know Me, nor My Father.'" You wouldn't know My Father if He came down here and said "Hello, I'm God." You wouldn't recognize Him. Unbelief produces a blinded ignorance. They didn't know anything.

Jesus gives them an irrefutable reply. They give Him this sarcastic mockery. In verse 25 He says, "Oh, I'm the same that I said to you from the beginning. I'm just who I've been telling I was all along." He never adds anymore. He never reiterates. You know why? Mark it, Jesus never commits Himself to...what?...to unbelief. Never. Willful ignorance. He says, "I'm just who I told you I was." As if to say, "That's all I'm saying, I'm done with Me. Good bye, that's it." I told you who I was, I have nothing more to say about Myself.

But, get a load of verse 26. "I have many things to say and judge of you." I'm through with Me, I'm not through with you. And the character of what I have to say about you is the character of judgment. See it in verse 26? "I have many things to say and to...what?...to judge of you." In other words, Jesus says you've shown your willful ignorance, you've shown your absolute rejection and I'm now through talking about Myself. But I've got an awful lot to say about you. What's He going to say? Judgment. He's going to condemn, the word "judge" means to condemn. You can read verse 26 accurately, "I have many things to say and to condemn of you." He has stopped claiming and started condemning their unbelief. They had enough revelation to be responsible, their ignorance was inexcusable. Their unbelief was intolerable. Jesus says it's time to declare your judgment. He has much to say.

And, you know, for the last part of His ministry, He said an awful lot. He said an awful lot about judgment...an awful lot. And He adds to it the fact that He's not just talking about it from His own standpoint. Verse 26, He says, "But He that sent Me is true." I'm not just judging you on My own. And He goes back to the same connection to God again which so infuriated them. He says, "But I

speak...but He that sent Me is true and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." I'm judging you and I'm bringing condemnation, but it's not just Mine, it comes from God...it comes from God.

Look at verse 16 of chapter 8, "And yet if I judge, My judgment is true for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me...if I judge, we judge together." Back in chapter 5, I think it was verse 30, comes to my mind. Yes, "I can't of My own self do nothing, as I hear I judge and My judgment is just because I seek not Mine own will but the will of the Father who has sent Me." In other words, Jesus says, "I'm judging you, but not Me alone, God too." His judgments are all of God. And so, Jesus has a judgment message to give that comes from God.

You say, "Well why would Jesus want to do that? I mean, why would Jesus want to condemn and judge them? And pronounce doom on them and tell them they're damned to hell and they're going to die in their sins?" Only one thing would make Jesus want to do that, you know what it is? Love, compassion. You see the word "if" is still there in verse 24, do you see that? It's still there. And Jesus is saying, "Will you believe while you have time? Because if you don't, you're going to die in your sins." Some people think it's wrong to preach on judgment. Many preachers completely avoid it. I think Jesus set the pattern and I don't think you do justice to human beings if you don't declare that if a man continues in unbelief he'll die in his sins. To preach the whole counsel of God demands that we preach judgment and we do it in love and compassion. We have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, as God does not. We with Jesus Christ are not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. And we must preach judgment to warn men. So He preached it but they didn't hear.

Verse 27, "They understood not." And that, my friend, is the story of their lives. "That He spoke to them of the Father." They didn't know He was talking about His relationship to God. They didn't know...they never understood anything and they were willfully ignorant.

Then Jesus concludes and He concludes in a very devastating way because He says to them, in effect, you may be ignorant now, and willfully so, but some day you're going to know the truth, all of you are going to know the truth. And that's true. Some day every man will know that Jesus is Christ. Look at verse 28. "Then said Jesus unto them, when you have lifted up the Son of Man," that is His death, "after that then shall you know that I am who I said I was and I do nothing of Myself but as My Father hath taught Me I speak these things." Jesus says you're going to know I'm who I claim to be and you're going to know that I speak accurately of my relationship to God and you're going to know it after I'm crucified.

Now what did He mean? This is a very difficult passage to interpret and there are...there must be 50 possibilities that are introduced by commentaries. Let me give you what I feel is as good a one or as best a one as best as we can ascertain. What does He mean that after My crucifixion you are going to

recognize who I was? Just this, after the crucifixion came the sack of Jerusalem, first of all. And in the sack of Jerusalem, Titus Vespasian and his Roman army hit Jerusalem with a tremendous jolt. One million, one hundred thousand Jews were killed. One hundred thousand remaining ones were sold as fugitives into slavery, but one million one hundred thousand died. And you know what happened when they died? They died in their sins and went to hell. And you know what they realized when they died in their sins right off the bat? What's the first thing they realized? Jesus was who He claimed to be. That must be the first stark realization of a dead man. Jesus says, "After My death you'll realize judgment's going to come. The final point of rejection in Israel was the crucifixion of Christ and after they had accomplished that, Jesus said you will wake up to recognize." Two years after that, 20 thousand Jews were slain in Caesarea and 20 thousand more recognized. Not too many years after that ten thousand Jews were slain in one day. Their throats were slit by the inhabitants of Damascus. Forty-five years later Hadrian moved in, destroyed 985 towns in Palestine and 580 thousand Jewish men were slaughtered. Within 50 years two million Jews woke up and said He was the Messiah, the only problem was they said it too late. They said it too late. And some are still waking up. And since I started talking, maybe 50 people have gone to hell and awaken and said He was who He claimed to be.

But there's another side to this. He said, listen now, verse 28, "When you've lifted up the Son of Man you shall know that I am who I said I was and that I'm related to the Father." And you know something? Some knew it without dying. You say, "What do you mean?" Just this, I believe there were some gathered there that day who would be in heaven with Jesus Christ as a result of seeing His death and what immediately followed His death? His resurrection and the great outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost and the founding of the church. How many people were saved on the day of Pentecost? Three thousand...three thousand. And I believe Jesus is saying you're all going to know who I am, some of you in death and some of you in life. And to know who Christ is in death is absolute hopelessness. But to know who He is in life is life abundant and eternal. And there were some of those gathered there, no doubt, that came to Jesus Christ after His crucifixion. But isn't it true what He said? Everybody sooner or later knows, don't they? So Jesus said, "After My lifting up, you'll know who I am. Some of you by seeing Me in My death and resurrection, and saying that was Messiah, look at the resurrection, look at the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, that's the One we've been waiting for and you'll believe. Others will die and perish in the judgments and wake in hell to discover indeed He was Christ, but to discover it too late."

Then Jesus adds a thought of His relation to God in verse 29, "And He that sent Me is with Me, the Father hath not left Me alone...everybody else had...for I do always those things that please Him." He just drives that same nail home to them again, that thing that irritated them to death, His relation to God.

Well, how do you die in your sins? Be self-righteous, don't ever face your sin, be earthbound, be unbelieving, be willfully ignorant and I'll promise you beyond a shadow of a doubt you'll die in your

sins, that's what Jesus says. But remember, to do it you've got to stumble over the cross, refuse the love of Jesus Christ, trample His precious bloodshed for you. And if you do it, you've got nobody to blame but yourself.

Maybe there are some of you this morning, you don't want to do that. Look at verse 30. There were some there who didn't do. "And as He spoke these words...what?...many believed on Him." See, there's always those few, always those few who don't want to die in their sins, they want Jesus Christ. You know what happened to that many? They lived, they're living now, they'll live forever in the presence of Jesus Christ. The choice is yours, as it was theirs. You will know that Jesus is who He claimed to be, I pray, God, you know it in this life.

Father, we thank You, this morning, for Your Word to us. Lord, we have dealt with a passage that is stern and stark and stunning, leaves us somewhat breathless and yet, God, we've dealt with it in honesty cause it's here. Lord, we know that Your Spirit would have us talk about it, You've known for months this is where we'd be, You planned it this way. And, God, You've used it, I know, to touch somebody's heart. I know what I've learned in terms of urgency. God, I would pray right now for those who are here who don't know Jesus Christ who are on a collision course with death and will die in their sins, God, shatter their self-righteousness, loose the shackles that bind them to earth, plant faith in their hearts, shed Your light in their minds that they may no longer be ignorant but they may know the truth and the truth may make them free.

Why your heads are bowed just as we close in a moment, you're just kind of meditating. If you don't know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior this morning, you're going to die in your sins and I feel that I've had to warn you just as Jesus did. But it need not be so for if you believe, you can become a citizen of heaven and you'll never die in your sins, you'll just pass out of this world to go into the presence of Jesus Christ forever. You say, "How does it happen? How can I do it?" Simply ask Christ to come into your life, accept what He's done for you, say, "Christ, I want You in my life, I know receive You as my Savior." Do that right now in your heart, you'll pass from death to life. You don't have to die in your sin. If you don't want to, receive Christ right now.

Our Father, we pray that You'll bless as we conclude our service in Christ's name. Amen.

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