

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

The Truth Shall Make You Free

Scripture: John 8:31-36

Code: 1522

The Truth Will Make You Free

Turn in your Bibles now for this morning to John 8, and that is not to minimize this passage, it's difficult when you're dealing with Scripture to compare it with other Scripture because it's all so fantastic and so thrilling. But here we come this morning to one of the locus crucious[???] key points, critical locations in all of John's gospel in these verses 31 to 36 of chapter 8. This is a pivotal passage in understanding true discipleship and true salvation. It's critical because in this Jesus puts the emphasis on the very heart of genuine discipleship and He does it by talking about two basic subjects and they are truth and freedom. Those two subjects become the theme of this passage.

And fitting that they should be because they are the two things that man has sought since his first searching for anything. And man continues to search for truth and freedom and they are tremendously related because the only thing that ever really liberates a man is truth. The only thing that ever sets a man free is truth. And so man has searched endlessly, relentlessly for truth that he might be free from the bondage of ignorance. And so the subject of these two verses...this section is these two truths and freedom. And, of course, people have been asking all along...what is true? What is right? What is wrong? What really matters? What is meaningful? What is purposeful? What can I put my life on and know that it will hold? What can I trust? What can I count on? Where are the realities? And the search for truth goes on, it goes on in the lab, it goes on in the classroom, it goes on in the library, it goes on in the courtroom, it goes on in the home, it goes on most of all in the heart of every man. It's an endless quest that continues with every new beat of every heart. And truth alone will free a man. And so men search for truth that liberates.

Sad to say many people have given up the quest. Many people have concluded that there is no truth, that nothing really is meaningful, that meaninglessness is everything and that all you need to do is live for the moment because there is no truth. And people have substituted non truth and non morality and they have gone off into all kinds of escapes to escape the stark shock that they cannot find truth. So they go into drugs and sexual freedom and they drop out and they do every other possible thing even to the extent of killing themselves because they have discovered that there's no truth, only non truth and it's all meaningless and purposeless. It's amazing as you visit the college campus to find out how many college young people are going to college hoping to discover truth and

when they get there not only do they not discover it, but they find that nobody else discovered it either and that the professor doesn't know any more than they do. In fact, he may have concluded there is no truth and he may propagate the existential philosophy and they become disciples of that. You say, "What's existentialism?" It's the idea that you've only got a moment to live, baby, nothing matters but that moment, live it and do what you want with it. That's existentialism. Grab the moment and get all you can. Milk it, squeeze it dry and it doesn't really matter what you do because there's no right and no wrong anyway. And so the search for...the search for truth in a modern educational process is something of an endless search that winds up in a discovery that there is no truth, there's only non truth and so why bother?

Kafka's story of the defiant fisherman is a parable that Kafka wrote to describe modern education. It goes like this. A man picks his way solitary way through rubble and the scorched and charred earth until he comes to a great giant deserted concrete apartment building. He enters through the door and then he hesitates. Then he climbs a cement staircase higher and higher somewhere way up in the top of a building. He begins to stumble down a narrow and black corridor. He turns by chance into a little room, it happens to be a bathroom. And as he steps into the door he sees a man sitting on the sink with his fishing pole dangling in the bathtub. The visitor looks over the scene and finally dares to say, "Sir, you're not going to catch anything in there." To which the man replies, "I know it," and keeps on fishing. Kafka said that's a picture of modern higher education. The scorched earth with all of its rubble and somebody sitting twenty stories up in a cement building fishing in a bathtub for fish that aren't there.

There was a group of Harvard students who came to their professor recently and said, "Sir, we have a group that would like to protest. Do you know of a good cause?" It's a tragic thing, I was saying to Pat Means who is a director of Campus Crusade ministry at Valley State the other day, we were walking along the campus and we were watching all these students...I'm teaching a class out there on Wednesdays. And I said, "Do you think anybody here learns anything?" He said, "Very frankly, very few." He said something about last year they gave them the option of taking an automatic passing grade if they wanted to get into a protest and even the kids that didn't want to get into the protest took the passing grade and went home. And so there is a...there's a dirth of truth and the stark reality that the place that's supposed to be the place of truth doesn't know what it is either. And Paul characterizes it by saying in 1 Timothy 6:5 that men without Jesus Christ and without a knowledge of God are destitute of truth. And Paul also said in 2 Timothy 3:7 that men are ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

I went...one time I was talking to some hippies who had dropped out of society and were about ten of them around. And I went into this place where they lived, the kind of a commune thing. And I thought I'd ask them the ultimate question so I said, "What is truth?" Which was kind of a...you know, a stunning question. But I said, "What is truth?" And they kind of looked at each other and then one guy walked out of the group and he said, "I know."

I said, "What is it?"

He said, "Yen Yang."

I said, "Yen Yank?"

He said, "Yen Yang is where it's at."

I said, "What's Yen Yang?"

He said, "You don't know what Yen Yang is? Man, how can you live without Yen Yang?" He said, "I'll show you." And so he took a stick and he drew a circle in the ground, kind of an oblong circle and he drew a line through the middle of it so that there were two equal parts. Then he drew two equal circles in those two equal parts so that you had two opposite sets. And he said, "See it? That's Yen Yang, man, groove on that."

I said, "So what does it do?"

He said, "Don't you get it?" He said, "Don't you know that if there wasn't a black there wouldn't be a white? And if there wasn't an up there wouldn't be a down? And if there wasn't an out you wouldn't understand what in was?" And then he said, "And if there weren't girls you wouldn't know what a man was." And he went all through these opposites.

And I said, "Well so what does that do for me?"

He said, "That's where it's at, man, that's Yen Yang, man. Life is opposites."

I said, "Wow, all your life and you've discovered Yen Yang and that's it?" All that guy had to hold on to for life was Yen Yang and he was reading a book on it. Now I don't know how long of a book it was, it doesn't take very long to tell you what Yen Yang is. But here's a guy who couldn't find truth and the only truth he could find was the most simple elemental infantile childish concept of opposites, and that's all he could find. And he contented himself with that in the hopelessness of that and constant addition to drugs.

No, people don't know the truth, they don't know. And sadly when they hear it they don't want it, you know? We go around a campus or we meet people and we share the truth and they don't want it

when it comes. Look at chapter 8 verse 45, look at that. "Because I tell you the truth you...what?...don't believe it." You are so non-truth oriented that you don't know the truth when it comes. The soul of man longs for truth to set him free. He wants liberation, everybody wants to be liberated, even women want to be liberated. I'm not going to say anything about that, I have a lot of things to say, I'm not going to say it. But you can liberate them and they can smoke Virginia Slims and they can wear Superman T-shirts and they can do anything they want, but if a person's soul isn't liberated he's in bondage. And I can tell you something else, you can have a man whose soul has been liberated by Jesus Christ and you can make him a slave and stick him in a dungeon and he'll be a free man. That's the way freedom is. The only thing that ever sets a man free is truth and when the Women's Liberation Movement is over, all the disgruntled people will grab another liberation movement because they'll never stop searching for truth that they can't find in anything but Jesus Christ and only that kind of truth sets you free.

You want to meet a free man? Meet Paul. Where is he? In jail, his feet and hands are in stocks. What's he doing? Singing to the glory of God. He's as free as free could be. Well men need to be free and they need to be free only when they know truth. So Jesus comes along in verse 31 to 36, that was the introduction, and in verses 31 to 36 He tells them about truth and freedom. One of the greatest passages in the Bible, I'm just thrilled to know that Christ took the time to communicate this because it's so absolutely essential for us to understand it.

All right, here's His two subjects...truth and freedom. And it is truth that liberates. And this is permanent type freedom and eternal freedom. Now let's look at a little review of historical background. Coming to verse 31 Jesus is talking to the Jewish leaders. Now you'll recall that Jesus is wrapping up His ministry on earth. It's only a matter of several months now and He'll be crucified. He has presented His claims. He has declared who He is. He has done His miracles. He has taught His teachings and they have concluded that He is not who He claimed. They had been angered and antagonized. They have mocked Him and despised Him and are now in a midst of a plot to murder Him. But He continues to confront them and He continues to give them His claims and they continue to mock and they continue to misunderstand. But in the midst of all the mockery and misunderstanding and all the rejection and all of the plotting to murder Him, there were some people who began to respond by believing. And you see them in verse 30.

It says, "As He spoke these words many believed on Him." Now some began to believe. Now Langee[?] and rightly so, a great Bible commentator, calls these half converts. That's not a good theological word but it's a practical word. These are half converts. Their faith is not enough to set them free. Their faith is not enough even to save them. He does not say they have believed unto salvation. They merely are beginning to believe that Jesus is who He claimed to be, that is from God and the Messiah. And they're beginning to believe that. And Jesus wants to take them at the point of their baby faith, their infant faith and move them to full faith and full salvation. So He wants to capture them at the moment of their beginning faith. So when He becomes aware that they are beginning to

believe, He goes right after them at that point. And what He wants to do is take them from that half faith, that beginning faith, and move them all the way to truth and liberty. And so He does it, at least attempts to do it...and incidently, as always, in the case of these leaders it was unsuccessful, He attempts to lead them from their baby faith to full commitment and to an understanding of truth and freedom in Christ.

Now He does it by three things. There are three various thoughts or features in this passage. First is the progress of freedom; second, the pretense of freedom; and third, the promise of freedom. And these three little ideas here, each one separate unto itself, convey to these would-be believers what they need to be full-fledged redeemed, converted and saved individuals. So He takes them where they are, endeavors to bring them to full faith and full salvation by discussing with them the progress of freedom, how you get there, the pretense of freedom and the promise of freedom.

First of all, notice the progress of freedom in verses 31 and 32. Notice in this progress that Jesus takes them where they are and transports them to full salvation in His words. Now watch it, verse 31, "Then said Jesus to those Jews, referring especially to Jewish leaders, who believed on Him, 'If you continue in My word, then are you My disciples indeed,'" *alethos*, in truth, the true disciple, "and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Now there you have the progress to freedom. First thing is to believe, see it there? To believe. Second thing, continue in My Word. When a man continues in the Word of Jesus Christ, that is evidence of his genuine faith, and we'll see that in a moment. Then after believing and continuing, you will know the truth and the truth will...what?...make you free. So the progress to freedom is fourfold...believe, continue, know the truth, the truth will liberate you.

Now let's see these one at a time. First of all, the idea of believing, "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him..." Now here you have the initial point of contact with Christ and that is faith, believing. With all the antagonism rolling around in these chapters and all the mockery and rejection, it's certainly refreshing to find some faith somewhere, to find somebody believing. But the character of their believing has to be seen very carefully because where you see them believing in verse 31, the very same group is in verse 45 and they're not believing. You're about to see the dissipation of artificial faith. And I'll show you what I mean.

When the Bible says somebody believes, you have to study the context and then you have to study the fruit of their life to see whether they have manifested actual saving faith, or whether it's just that baby belief, that infant belief that never has really moved to full conversion. Let me illustrate it to you, it's very clear. Go back to John chapter 2 and verse 23. Now this is a verse we've studied before, here's one of the most important truths you'll ever learn about salvation, and I want you to get it. I want God to really plant this in your minds indelibly this morning. Verse 23 of John 2, "Now when He

was in Jerusalem at the Passover," He had just come there to initiate His ministry and cleanse the temple, "in the feast day, many...what?...believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did." But watch this, verse 23...24, I mean, "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them because He knew all men."

Listen, Jesus knew that the quality of their faith was not saving faith. They had believed but they had not moved to commit themselves and their lives to that faith. There are many people who believe Jesus is the Son of God, many. They're not saved.

Let me illustrate it from another angle. Just mark this down, don't look it up. Luke 8:13, if you're taking notes, write it down, it's an important, important verse. Luke 8:13, now listen to this, Christ has given the parable of the seed and the sower and sowing the seed on different kinds of grounds as to how people respond to the gospel. Listen to this, verse 13, "Some seed was sown on rocky soil, they on the rock are they who when they hear receive the Word with joy and these have no root who for a while believed and in time of testing fall away." The character of their faith is not genuine. For a while they believe, and that's exactly what you have in John 8. They're believing in verse 31, they're not believing in verse 45. Now true faith doesn't do that. You can't turn off true faith. They began to believe.

Let me give you another one. Look at John 12, and here's really an important passage. John 12:42, here you have this distinction, this paradox again and you'll see it very clearly here. John 12:42, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him." You say, "Oh terrific, a whole lot of the rulers get saved." No, it says many believed on Him but watch this, "But because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him lest they should be put out of the synagogue for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." They believed, they did not confess. In other words, they believed that Christ was who He claimed to be but they would not name Him as their own Savior.

Mark it, Romans 10 says this, verses 9 and 10. What did Paul say? "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ and...what?...believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." It's twofold...believe and...what?...confess. And right there in John 12:42 they did not confess Him. Why? Because they were hung up on social structures and prestige. And it was more important for them to be esteemed by the mucky-mucks of their own society than it was to be esteemed by God. Just that simple. That's not saving faith, my friend, not at all.

James so clearly shows us this in chapter 2 and verse 17, and I'm taking time with this because this is an absolutely important truth. Listen to it in 17, "Even so, faith if it has not works is dead being alone." In other words, your faith isn't genuine if there's not something happening afterward. Now

listen, "Yea, a man may say thou hast faith and I have works, show me thy faith without thy works." That's not genuine. "I'll show you my faith by my works." In other words, the pattern of living speaks of whether it's genuine. Watch this. Verse 19, "Thou believest that there is one God? Big deal. Thou doest well, the devils also...what?...believe." That's not the point. Believing is not enough. That's why Paul says confession is absolutely necessary. Jesus said, "If thou shalt confess Me...what?...before men, then will I confess you before My Father which is in heaven." There's no such thing as a secret hidden disciple. You're either open for Jesus Christ in confessing Him as Lord, or you aren't...your faith isn't saving faith. That's right. And some people who claim to name the name of Jesus Christ, claim to believe in Him are not willing to confess Him as Lord and give Him their lives, there are people...I've talked to a man for years, he says I believe everything but I'm not ready to give Him my life. Faith is not enough, not just simply believing.

A good illustration back in chapter 6 of John, in verse 14 this crowd of people said, John 6:14, they said, "This is the prophet, this is of a truth, that prophet..." you know they all believed this is Him...verse 15, let's get Him and make Him a King, this is Him. Now go over to verse 66, same crowd, "From that time many of His disciples...what?...went back and walked no more with Him." See? Not genuine faith. They never were in to begin with.

Now I want to show you one other passage. I'm really loading them up here. Hebrews 10:38, oh this is very...write this down if you're not following, Hebrews 10:38 and 39, very important truth. "Now the just shall live by faith," great statement, but watch this, "but if any man draw back...ah...My soul shall have no pleasure in him." Watch it. "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." You see that? There are some people who don't believe to the point of salvation. They just believe....and then they draw back. But the writer of Hebrews says, "We are those who believe to the saving of souls." See, there's a kind of a faith that's not genuine, that comes and then goes. The writer of Hebrews says we're not that kind. The kind that's believing to the salvation of the soul, that's the kind we are. And God has no pleasure in those that begin to believe and then fall away.

Now receiving is only the beginning. I mean, believing is only the beginning. I'm not trying to say that believing is not important because it is. You can't even come to Christ until you believe. But believing that just stops there and dissipates is meaningless, absolutely meaningless. It must be faith that moves in and apprehends.

You say, "What do you mean to believe in Jesus Christ? How do I mean that?" Just this, when you can believe everything that Jesus Christ said about Himself is true, when you believe that everything Jesus Christ said about you is true, when you believe that judgment of God coming upon this world is true, when you believe the love of God that is given to this world is true, and you take your whole life

and you place it in the hands of Jesus Christ, that is the kind of faith that redeems your soul. Remember how often we've seen people sitting in the deadliness of unbelief here in John's gospel and they wouldn't believe and Christ just didn't bother with them? Can't do a thing with unbelief. It's got to be there. But it's not enough of itself without the next step.

Now let's look at that next step in verse 31. Jesus said to those Jews who believed, here it comes, "If you...what?...continue in My Word then are you My disciples," *alethos*, truly, genuinely.

What do you mean by that? Just this, now watch it, this is not a condition of salvation as much as it is a manifestation of true faith. If you continue in My Word then it becomes obvious that you're one of the true disciples, see? James said, "By your works I can tell your faith is genuine." And so Jesus says it's not enough to believe, you've got to show me the character of your faith by continuing in My Word. That's the revelation of what kind of faith you have, my friend. John said this so aptly over in his first epistle 2:19, listen to it, "They went out from us," get this one, "but they were not of us," see?

People say, "Well somebody was a Christian and then they went away. Did they lose their salvation?" They went out from us but they were not of us. It was never real to begin with. Watch this, "For if they had been of us they would have continued with us." That's as clear as it can be. Now listen to this, "But they went out that it might be made manifest that they were not of us."

You know how you can tell a true disciple? He continues in the Word. He continues in the Word of Christ. That's how you can tell a true disciple. James says, "Don't show me your faith and then say I don't have any works, that's not...that's not legitimate faith." The genuine *alethos* indeed disciple continues in the Word of his Master. And, you see, there's the distinction. The progress to freedom, the progress to liberty is the kind of faith that issues in a life of real discipleship. That's the genuine stuff. The genuine disciple continues, abides, obeys the living Word of his living Christ. And the word "continues," interesting, because the word continue implies obedience. In other words, to continue in My Word means to hear it and obey it, doesn't it? That's exactly what it means. To hear it and obey it.

Now let me just blow a little bubble and then pop it, knock over a straw man here or two for a minute. I've heard very commonly among Christians the dichotomy of Christ as Savior and Lord where somebody says, "Well I accepted Christ as my Savior but tonight I want to receive Him as my Lord," you know. And sometimes people will come forward and they'll write on their little decision slip that I want to make Christ Lord, He's already my Savior, I want to make Him Lord.

Well I don't mean to disparage your attitude at all because, God bless you, that's a great attitude. I understand your attitude, it's just your words that need a little help. Let me tell you something. Christ

is Lord, my friend, whether you like it or not. Christ is Lord of your life whether you like it or not. You don't make Him Lord, He is Lord. If you ever accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, He comes to you as Lord, that's who He is. Isn't He? Is Jesus Lord? Of course He's Lord. You say, "Well I'm taking Him as Savior but not Lord." No...no. You take Him as He is. The question is not, "Is Christ Lord of my life?" the question is, "Do I obey His Lordship?" That's the question. From the day that you invited Jesus Christ into your life, He has been on the throne of your life. The only question is have you obeyed Him? That's all. You don't make Christ Lord, you don't have that option. When you received Him, He came as Lord. He always will be Lord. That's who He is. And if you take Him, you take Him in full character as the Lord Himself.

Now the question is not whether He is Lord, the question is...what?...obedience. That's the question. He's Lord. The question is obedience. And so a man who shows by the obedient character of His life that he's a true disciple is the one whose faith is really the genuine saving faith.

Now isn't that what Jesus said in Matthew 7 when He said, "By their fruits you shall...what?...know them," see? There are a lot of people who claim to be Christ's disciples and they don't have any love for His Word, they don't want to continue in His Word, they don't want to obey it. You meet these liberals all the time, "Well yes, we believe in Christ, well yes," the modernists and all he's talking about the salvation and so forth and so on, all in a different context. And you ask them, "Well, listen here's what the Word of God says about adultery and here's what the Word of God says about immorality, and here's what the Word of God says about teaching the Word of God." Oh...well, that wasn't inspired...and away they go. Jesus said, "If you continue in My Word you show you're a true disciple." It's not a question of whether He's Lord, it's a question of whether you're obedient, He's Lord.

A true disciple is Word oriented, don't you like that? He's oriented to the Word. You say, "Why do you teach the Word so much, MacArthur?" That's because that's what it's all about. What am I supposed to do? Can't help it. The disciple is one who all the time wants all his life to be sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening and learning.

You know, the word "disciple," interesting word. You know what it is? *Mathetes*, you know what it literally means? Learner. Isn't that good? A disciple is nothing but a learner. It doesn't mean follower. There's a shock. It means learner. Oh, sweet homework to sit at the feet of Jesus Christ and learn.

Oh I love what Jesus said in Matthew 11:29 when He said, "Take My yoke upon Me and...what?...learn of Me." I'll tell you, the more I learn of Him the more I love Him and the more I love my brothers. Just kind of changes you when you really learn of Jesus. The disciples sat at His

feet and they said, "Teach us, Lord, teach us, Lord." And their anxious hearts yearned for every word that came from His mouth.

Are you a true disciple? I mean, it's all right just to believe. That's where you've got to start. But have you ever just put that faith to commitment and do you continue in the Word? You love to learn at the feet of Jesus? That's the character of true discipleship. He's a learner. He's a learner. If your salvation is genuine, my friend, you will continue in the Word of Christ, obeying it and learning it. There's no other way to grow. Peter says in 1 Peter 2:2 he says, "As babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may...what?...grow." That's it, be a learner, be a learner, sit at the feet of Jesus, soak it up, take it in.

You say, "Well that's kind of uninvolved." Yeah, well James add a little dimension, I'll throw it in for what it's worth and it's worth about infinity. James said, "Be not only hearers but be...what?...doers." The true disciple doesn't only learn it, he gets up and takes it. He does it. For the true disciple to hear is to do. I love that early church in Acts 2:42, they're all gathered around and they said they continued steadfastly every day in the Apostles' doctrine, see. They were learning. They were sitting at the feet of teachers who sat at the feet of Jesus. The true disciple continues in the Word and he obeys it...he obeys it...he obeys it.

Second John, that little epistle, John says something in verse 9 there, I think it is, that's so good. Listen to this. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God." Doctrine means teaching. If you don't abide, you see, in the teaching of Christ that's evident you don't belong to Him, see? And that's exactly what these Jews did. They said, "Jesus, hey we like the idea of You being King." And then He started talking about sin and they said, "Oh, we don't like that." And they stepped right back out of their faith. You see, they were there but they wouldn't abide in it. They didn't like part of it. They stepped back and that says, in effect, what we read earlier, they went out because they were not of us. Never was really of us. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the teaching of Christ hath both the Father and the Son." Continue, abide, stay in it, obey it, saturate yourself with it. Did you know that Jesus wants to teach you? Oh, He wants to teach you so many things.

Paul knew some of the things He wanted to teach. That's another sermon but just some time read Ephesians chapter 4 and that whole chapter clear through chapter 5 is all the things that Paul wanted to teach the people that he had learned from Jesus. Just exciting, many, many things. And he goes down all through those verses in chapter 4 and 5 saying, "Do this...do this...and be this...and be this...these are the things I've learned from Christ and I'm passing them on to you." Oh there's so many things to learn at the feet of Jesus. If you're a true disciple, that's where you'll stay, that's where you'll stay.

Then the progress of freedom moves further in verse 32. I'll tell you something, my friend, you sit at the feet of Jesus and you know what will happen? "You shall know...what..the truth. He is the truth. You sit at the feet of Jesus Christ and you saturate your mind and your heart with His Word and you are going to know the truth. And isn't it exciting to stand up in a world in a day when people don't know the truth and stand there with your little mind and my little mind that doesn't know very much and say, "I may not know why all of the things work like they do scientifically and I may not understand all of the details, but I know the truth." Truth behind truth. Men are still sitting on the sink fishing in the bathtub and they're not catching anything and the truth is there all the time.

I had a secretary call down to L.A. Public Library cause I wanted to find out some statistics. Found some interesting ones. In L.A. County libraries there are three and a half million books...three and a half million books. In the L.A. Public Library the single large branch, one branch, has a hundred...no, pardon me, has one and a half million books. Now somebody wrote a lot of words and I tried to figure out how many. And with my rather severely limited abilities mathematically, I concluded that there are approximately a hundred and fifteen billion words in that library...a hundred and fifteen billion words. And you know something? I'll bet somewhere on some dirty, dusty shelf somewhere way back in the archives there's a Bible somewhere and it's loaded with truth. And everybody's fumbling around through a hundred and thirteen billion words. Truth. That library gets thirteen hundred and fifty new volumes every day. Boy, somebody is trying to discover something. Two thousand new pages are written every sixty seconds. In fact, we're having problems with storing it. They're working on a laser storage situation where they can store things on laser beams. They've already divided...Curtis Mitchell said devised a system whereby they can store things on molecules and it's gotten to the point now where they can store them theoretically the Library of Congress on an object the size of a sugar cube.

What are they going to do with all the palaver that's drifting around? Man's endless search for truth...truth, truth, truth. And there is no truth and men keep searching. And it's frustrating. Oh it's frustrating. You know, Pilate was frustrated...poor, frustrated, tragic, sad, pathetic Pilate. Over in chapter 18 of John you can just see into this man the character of everyone of these men that you meet today that are like this. This guy is the universal picture of frustration. In John 18:37 he's been all his life looking for truth, like everybody else. And he never did find it. Now watch this. Pilate says in verse 37, he says to Jesus, "Aren't Thou a King then?" Oh what a question to ask Jesus. "Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest I am a King, to this end I was born, for this cause came I into the world...watch this...that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice.' And Pilate says, 'What is truth?'" Man, I'm so sick looking for that stuff. What is truth? Cynical. Who cares about truth? Now let's just get this deal over with, see. Sick of searching and never finding it. What is truth?

"To the one who receives Jesus Christ, he shall know the truth." You say, "How does it come?" Three ways. I know the truth three ways. Number one, John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the way, the...what?...the truth and the life." When you know Christ you know the truth. You say, "Well does that mean when you get saved you can get As on all your papers?" No...no. It's not talking about that kind of truth, it's talking about living truth, truth behind truth, you know. Now I may not understand science, but I know the God who balanced it. And that's better. I might not understand...be able to understand and answer every question, but I know the question of life and death and time and eternity. You see, when somebody comes to know Jesus Christ, He is the truth and we know the truth. And once you know the truth, you can't tolerate error. And I always think of this time that I tried to enroll to finish up my doctorate and just finish up another year and get the thing done and I went to this only seminary where they could do it this way and it was a liberal seminary and the guy told me I had one problem to get a religion major, in this I had too much Bible. And so I said, "Well what do I need to do?" He gave me a list of 200 books to read and I said, "Dear Sir, I have found the truth and I'm not going to spend the rest of my life searching for error." I don't need to know error, my friend. If you know the truth error becomes obvious.

Listen, the one who receives Jesus Christ may not know every bit of science, but he's going to know the God who made it all. You know something? I know the rationale of the universe and that puts me one up on science. Not only that, I understand the plan of history, that puts me one up on history. Not only that, I know the moral order of the universe. You do? Yes I do. If you know Jesus, so do you. I know the destiny of man, the design of God, the purpose of existence, the meaning of life, the essence of love, etc.

You know all that?

Yep.

Did it take you a long time to learn it?

(Snap) just like that.

Are you real smart?

No.

Where did you get it?

Jesus came into my life and I knew it through His Word. The real truth behind truth

You say, "Is that...you just get Christ and that's the end?" No, God's got some more ways to communicate the truth. Are you ready for this? Look at John 14:26, John 14:26, "But the Comforter who is the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things." Oh what a promise. The Holy Spirit is going to come and teach us all things.

Now go to chapter 16 verse 13. Keep in mind He's going to teach us all things. Now watch chapter 16 verse 13, "Jesus says, 'When I go away I'm going to send the Spirit of truth and when He is come He will guide you into...what?...all truth.'" God says, "Now when you receive Christ you receive the truth. That's the beginning of it. Then God plants in your life the Holy Spirit and He guides you from there on into more truth.

Let me ask you something. Do you know more today than you did when you were first saved? Why sure. Who's your teacher? The Holy Spirit moving you along using human instruments some times, right? But remember what John says in 1 John 2:27, "We have the anointing," and he means the Holy Spirit, "so that we have not any need that man teach us because the Spirit of God can teach us." God says I'm going to give you the truth in Christ, then I'm going to give you the Holy Spirit to kind of reach out and get more truth until you can learn all truth. Fantastic.

You say, "Is that all?" No, no. You can't have a good class without a textbook, right? God says I'm going to give you a textbook to go along with all this other. That's in chapter 17 verse 17...chapter 17:17, listen to this, "Sanctify them," Jesus is praying to the Father, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy...what?...Word is truth." Man, isn't it exciting to have all that truth? I mean, we have Jesus Christ, truth incarnate. We have the Holy Spirit, the guide and He's not a drill Sargent, He's a guide and you have to follow, not a command, it's leading. And then to make it and wrap it all up He says, "Here's the textbook of truth." I'm telling you, there's no excuse in the world for anybody who doesn't know the truth. And you want to know what happens once you discover the truth? Look at the end of verse 32, what does it say? "And the truth shall...what?...make you free." Once you discover the truth, my friend, you're free.

You say, "Free from what?" Free from the search for truth. Free from Satan's blinding power. Free from the chains of spiritual death. Free from the prison house of sin. Free from fear and self and people pressure and free from everything. The shackles of ignorance are shattered. Chains of doubts and fear are gone. And we're released to a glorious new liberty. And once you taste that liberty, brother, it's sweet, isn't it? So Paul says to the Galatians, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith...what?...Christ has made you free." Tremendous...tremendous.

Well, these dear Jewish people didn't react positively, which is par for the course. And very quickly let me just show you the reactions. They were shocked at this and it showed the true character of

their faith. And we see in verses 33 and 34 the pretense of freedom. Jesus is telling them they need to be free and you know what they're saying? "Us, we need to be free? We've always been free." See, naturally they react anytime Jesus confronts them with a need, they always build a wall. They never admit a need. Look at verse 33, "They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's seed.'" You don't know who we are. You don't understand. And we're never in bondage to many man. "How sayest Thou ye shall be made free?"

Never in bondage to any man? Boy, did they have short memories. They've been in bondage since...first it was the Babylonians, and then it was the Medo-Persians, before that was the Egyptians and before that somebody else, the Assyrians, now they're in bondage to Rome. They've got Roman soldiers marching all over Jerusalem. "We have never been in bondage to any man." Boy, you guys aren't really looking around.

Let's give them the benefit of the doubt and assume they weren't talking about political freedom. Let's assume they were talking about the freedom of their spirits and their souls and in that sense it is true. You know, the Jewish people have always been free in their souls. They've always believed they had an identity of their own and they ought to maintain that freedom in their spirit. And that's probably what they're saying. What they're saying is, "We may have been enslaved and all these things, but in our hearts we're free because we're God's chosen ones and we're secure in that freedom. We're not in bondage, we're God's chosen people."

You see, again these Jews are trying to hold on to this Abrahamic security, you know, racial security. And, boy, over in Romans chapter 2 Paul is so kind in telling them the truth about it when he says, "He is not a Jew that is one outwardly," right? "But inwardly," see. The Abrahamic Covenant doesn't do anybody any good. Like he said, so what does circumcision profit? It doesn't profit anything unless you believe God. If you believe God it profits. But you've got to believe God. Your racial descent from Abraham is only any good if you believe in God. It's not any good just because of a racial thing, nobody gets the blessing of God by being in a certain race that is eternal blessing. And so they were hanging on to their pretense of freedom, see. They thought because of their Abrahamic identity they were automatically and permanently free. And so Jesus ran into another stone wall.

You want to know something? You can't help somebody who can't be helped. You know that? You can't go to a man and say, "I can set you free," and have the guy say, "I'm already free, thank you." What are you going to do with them? See? This is where you come back to the same principle in Scripture, you can't give a man something to drink until he's...what?...thirsty. You can't give a man something to eat until he's hungry. You can't set a man free until he knows he's a slave. You can't talk to a man about God's grace unless he understands law, right? You can't talk to a man about God's mercy unless he understands justice, see. So you can't set somebody free who thinks he's free already. That's why salvation begins with a felt need. They had this built in defense system of

Abrahamic security.

But, boy, does Jesus take that to task in verse 34. Jesus answered them and He uses this slavery analogy. He says, "Verily, verily I'll say unto you, truly, truly, amen, amen, this is how it is, this is how it is, whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin." You guys may be the descendants of Abraham, if you've committed sin in your life, you're a slave to sin. Now the word "slave" here, you know, you think of it as servant, it says the servant, you think of some guy in a little white jacket, you know, the little tray in his hand and kind of a classy little guy with spit shine on his shoes and that's not the kind of servant they're talking about. This is *doulos* it means bondsman. This is the most base kind of slavery. This guy is the guy that did the dirtiest tasks of all. This is the bondsman with chains around him, abject slavery. Jesus says, "You think you're free, but you are the slavest of the slaves."

This really hits because you are slaves to sin. You know something? The only way a *doulos* could ever get out of his slavery was to die. They were slaves from birth to death, born slaves, die slaves. The only way a *doulos* could ever get released from slavery was to die. You know something? Every man born into this world is a *doulos*. You're a slave to sin. So was I. Every one of us was born a slave to sin. The only way we'll ever get out of it is to die.

You say, "That's kind of hopeless." Yes it is except there's another way to die besides dying at the end of your life. You say, "Really? How's that?" Well you could be crucified with Christ, can't you? Look at it in Romans 6, Paul says this, listen to it, he says, "How shall we that have died to sin live any longer in it?" You say, "When did I die to sin?" The day you put your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, the day you believed in Him and received Him as Savior, you died. In other words, Paul said, "I am crucified...what?...with Christ." In other words, when I received Christ I died on the spot, my old life died. Romans chapter 6, sometime this afternoon you ought to just read over that, let me just give you a couple of quick verses. Listen, "Knowing this," Romans 6:6, "that our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed." The old life dies. And you know what that does? That shatters our slavery to sin cause you're only a slave as long as you're alive, you know that? When a slave dies, you don't kick him and say, "Get along, fella, you've got work to do." If he's dead, man, that's all the slavery you're going to get out of him. And once you've died in Jesus Christ, sin had no more...what's the word?...dominion, that's the word of Lord over slave, and no dominion over you when you died and you rose to be another *doulos* only this time you're not a *doulos* of sin, you're a *doulos* of whom? Jesus Christ, sweet slavery.

So He says this, listen to this, you once were servants of sin...oh He says there are two or three ways, but He's so glad down in verse 32 because you've been made free from sin and become the *doulos* of God. See? When you received Jesus Christ it's just like your old life died and sin has no more dominion. You're God's slave. And later on He says, "Why don't you act like it?" See, you

know...act like it, start serving your new master. And so, Jesus says you're a slave of sin and only death can break it, and Jesus says to us, if we receive Him we're identified in His death and the bonds of slavery are broken.

Then Jesus changes the metaphor again, very quickly, and we see the promise of freedom. We've seen the progress and the pretense. Jesus sums it up, just two short statements in verse 35 and 36 and in both of these verses He uses the slave analogy again only they're both distinct. Don't try to run these verses together, it's as if each one is a total separate entity in itself. If it was a book, it would be three separate chapters. They don't run together and yet they all use the slave analogy only from a completely separate view.

Coming to verse 35 we see another aspect of slavery and this is the promise. And before He gives the promise, He gives a little premonition or warning, verse 35, "And the servant abides not in the house forever, but the son abides forever." Son should have a small "s." He's saying here this, "Don't you realize that the only body in the household with permanent rights is the son, not the slave, right?" See? He's saying to them, I want to warn you, you are slaves and slaves have no permanent rights in the house. And when the master's done with his slave, he just casts him out. Oh that's a warning. He's saying to those Jews, mark it well, my friends, you are slaves not sons and when the economy changes, if you're not a son but a slave, you are going to be cast out. That's a prophetic statement because it wasn't too long until the Old Testament era ended, right? And the age of grace began with the church and every unbelieving Jew was set aside from the promise of God. They were cast out in that sense. Now believing Jews are a part of the church as we are, which we praise God. But He says to them, this is your...this is the death blow to your Abrahamic security, you're not sons, you're slaves. The only person who has a lasting, permanent place in the household is the son...not the slave.

You say, "Well then the trick of the deal is to stop being a slave and start being a son, right?" That's it...you've got it. You say, "How does it happen?" Very easy. "But as many as received Him," who? Jesus Christ. "To them gave He the right," John 1:12, "to be called the sons of God." Only a son enjoys true freedom. So you know what Jesus comes along and says? "All you *doulos* slaves, would you like to be sons by adoption to receive all that the Father would give His own Son?" Joint...what?...heirs, see. You've got to stop being slaves and start being a son. How do you become a son? Receiving Christ. Confessing Him. True faith.

Quickly, verse 36, here's a completely different picture like a whole other chapter, is in the slave analogy and saying a totally different thing. He kind of jumps off the word "son" this time it's with a capital S. "If the Son...that is Christ...therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed, genuinely, *alethos*, honestly, truly."

What does this say? Just this, the only person that can set a slave free is somebody who has the rightful heirship in the family, right? Only the Father or the Son can release the slave. And so Jesus says if the Son decides to set you free, He can do it and you'll really be free cause there will be no more strings, right? Boy, when the household set the slave free they gave him a paper, and he was loosed, brother, and nobody could put him back in slavery. So He says, "If the Son sets you free, you're free indeed." And you know something? The Son goes one better than that, folks, the Son not only sets you free, He turns right back around and makes you a son. Isn't that great? You're not only free, brother, you're a son of God. Oh that's a beautiful thing. Jesus goes one better than freeing you from the slavery of sin, once He frees you He adopts you back into His family as a son. That's exciting. And so says John, I love it, 1 John 3:2, "Beloved, now are we...what?...the sons of God." Isn't that exciting? "But it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Some day we're going to be with Him and it's...whew...we're going to have all the inheritance of sonship, but when are we sons of God? Now. Jesus wants to take you, my friend, from a slave to a son. He's the only one that can do it. And if the Son makes you free, you'll really be free.

Father, we thank You this morning that You've taught us again through Your Word. We ask, Father, that You'll do some freeing this morning, set some slaves loose. God, adopt some new sons into Your family this morning, right out of this congregation. May some who have half faith, beginning faith move to full saving faith and continue in Your Word, know the truth and be made free and then adopted as sons. O God, do Your perfect work this morning. We'll give You the glory in Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen.

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