

**The Gospel of John**  
**Week Fourteen**  
**John 8:31-59**

**Day One**

31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." 33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" 34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

v. 31 – Jesus addressed those Jews who had put their faith in Him, some at that very meeting on the Tempe Mount where He was teaching. He told them that the key to their discipleship was holding on to His teaching and commands.

v. 32 – If the believers would do this, (hold to Jesus' teaching), they would know the truth and it would set them free. While this freedom is from sin in Christ, I do believe that this principle can be applied to a variety of life and ministry situations. For example, when I discovered the truth that I was not a pastor in the traditional sense, it set me free. When I found the truth that God has created me more administrative than relational, it set me free. When I embraced the truth that I am a writer, it set me free.

Often, God must open your eyes to the truth that will set you free, because your thinking and preconditioning prevent you from seeing it. It's not that you physically can't see or hear, it's just that you have blind spots that prevent you from seeing things as they are.

Ask God to open your eyes so you can see some important truth that will set you free. Or pray that God will do that for someone else.

And Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha (2 Kings 6:17-18).

v. 33 – **Who answered Jesus?** It does not seem like it would have been the believing Jews, so perhaps Jesus addressed the believers in the crowd and the unbelievers heard what He said. That would be the situation in some if not all churches. Jesus speaks to the believers but some unbelievers are there and judge His words. In this case, the unbelieving Jews were offended that Jesus implied they were not free.

These unbelievers referred to their heritage with pride, for they had never been slaves to any other people group, since the Babylonian captivity. You can almost hear their pride as they confronted Jesus. They were free men! Yet we know that they were not, and the same applies to anyone who doesn't know Jesus, no matter how free they claim to be.

v. 34 – Jesus came right back to the sin issue that He had discussed earlier in John’s gospel. Jesus told these “holy” Jews sinners who were watching for the Messiah and keeping God’s Law that they were sinners! Notice again that He had to preface His remarks by saying “I tell you the truth.” Some sinners admit that they are sinners; others are convinced that they are clean and righteous. I can freely admit that I am a sinner but that God has set me free so that I am no longer a slave to sin. In my 35 years with the Lord, I am free from some of the things to which I was in bondage and I am confident that God will ultimately deliver me from the rest. **How about you?**

## Day Two

35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. 37 I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. 38 I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father." 39 "Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did.

v. 35 – Jesus gave them a practical fact that every person there would know: A slave had no place in the family. The implication there was that a slave to sin has no place in God’s family. A place in God’s family does not depend on being born into the right family or being a descendant of Abraham. Only God can provide membership into His family! The Jews thought of themselves as God’s people, but God had other ideas as expressed through Jesus.

v. 36 – Jesus referred to Himself as the Son who was capable of setting the Jews free through the truth – the truth about His person and nature. The Law could not set anyone free. Judaism or the Temple could not set anyone free. Only the Son, God Himself, could set someone free, including the Jews. The same is true today. There is only One who can set anyone free from sin so they can relate to God.

v. 37 – Jesus did not back off reminding the Jews that He knew about their murder conspiracy. When they would ultimately succeed, He wanted them to know that it was not because of their cleverness or secrecy. It was carried out in the sight of God, with His full knowledge and understanding.

“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.” -- 21:1

The reason the Jews were murderous was because there was no room for Jesus’ word in their lives and hearts. Rejecting God’s word opens you to all kinds of sin and evil. The Jews who had memorized “Thou shall not kill” were about to break the very commandment they insisted they upheld and honored. Religion does strange things to you and your thinking.

v. 38 – Jesus was simply being a faithful witness of what He had seen and heard in the Father’s presence. He was not there to establish His own credibility but rather that of the Father. His testimony was indeed true and just. Jesus implied that everyone operates as a son, Him as a Son of God and them as sons of the devil. I had never considered that prior to knowing Jesus I was a son of the devil. Forgive me, Lord! I thank You that you have done so.

v. 39 – The Jews quickly reverted to their family tree, claiming that their fatherhood came from the lineage of Abraham. Jesus took exception with that, for He pointed out that they would do the works of Abraham if he truly was their father. Abraham was a man of faith in God, so they should have faith in God by putting their faith in Him, if they were truly Abraham’s children.

**Are you a child of Abraham?** If you have put your faith in Christ, you are!

### Day Three

40 As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. 41 You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. 43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.

v. 40 – Jesus argued correctly that those Jews could not be Abraham’s children, for they were trying to kill Him for telling the truth. Abraham would not have done such a thing. Jesus indicated that their ethnicity was less important than their spirituality, something the Jews never completely grasped. They had faith that their Judaism put them in right standing with God, so much so that they could plot murder and not see anything wrong with it.

Jesus was under a death threat and it was only because He told the truth. **What trouble are you in for telling the truth?**

v. 41 – **I wonder if the Jews were insinuating that Jesus was an “illegitimate child,” knowing the circumstances surrounding his birth? Could they have been saying, “We are not illegitimate (like You)”?** At any rate, the Jews stepped up their defense and claimed that God was their Father, relying on the Scriptures for their claim:

Then say to Pharaoh, "This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son (Exodus 4:22).

They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am Israel's father, and Ephraim is my firstborn son (Jeremiah 31:9).

v. 42 – Their claim was bogus in Jesus’ mind because they did not love Him. Anyone who claimed God as his Father would love Jesus. **Is that still true today?** It is! Anyone who serves the one true God must acknowledge His one true Son – that makes perfect sense. Somehow who says, “I am very intimate and close with that family,” yet did not know the family’s children, would be lying. How much more would that be true about God!

Jesus was an emissary from the Father. He did not come on His own. The God the Jews claim as their Father had sent Him. Therefore, if they had God’s heart, they would know that Jesus was from the Father. They did not have God’s heart, however, so they did not recognize Jesus or His mission.

v. 43 – Jesus explained why they could not understand His words or the phrases that He used. They could not hear because God was not their Father. It was impossible for them to hear. When one hears from God, it is an expression of God’s grace and not a decision on man’s part. Yet one must cooperate with what one hears, or else one hasn’t really “heard” because there is no obedience or change.

**Do you hear God? If so, what is He “saying” to you at this point in your life? What are you doing to retain what He says?** Remember the warning in Psalm 50:

You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you (Psalm 50).

#### Day Four

44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! 46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? 47 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

v. 44 – Jesus did not win many friends and allies by telling the Jews that neither Abraham nor God was not their Father, but rather the devil himself! Jesus indicated an intimate firsthand knowledge of the devil and acknowledged his existence. He knew him from the beginning and bore witness that there was no truth in him, being a liar and the originator of all lies. So if that is the father is like, then the children – here the Jews – had to have the same nature. So if anyone is not in Christ, his father is the devil, for the devil is the father of sin.

This is another indication that Jesus was (and is) God. He spoke of heavenly things with firsthand knowledge. Only God could know that much about Satan and speak about it so confidently. The Jews must have been infuriated at such an accusation, but Jesus was not mincing words. He was committed to truth – in fact, He was the truth – and He had come to confront the Jews with their rejection of God.

v. 45 – Since the Jews believed lies, then they could not receive the truth from Jesus. Since that was true, they could not receive Jesus, for He was the embodiment of truth. Things were so mixed up in Israel that the truth sounded like a lie and a lie came off as true.

v. 46 – Jesus challenged the Jews to prove that there was sin in His life. If they could not do so, then they would have to acknowledge that He spoke the truth. Yet there are many who judge God and find Him less than true or faithful. **Have you ever believed a lie about God? Are you believing one now? Do you feel that at some point in your life God was less than who He said He was because something bad or unexpected happened to you?**

v. 47 – Jesus was quite clear: The reason they did not understand what He was saying was that they did not belong to God! Imagine the shock and outrage on the part of some as they heard this comment. Jesus was telling these self-righteous Jews that they had no right standing with God!

So follow my logic: If you don't belong to God, you don't hear God. That means that if you do belong to God, you hear Him! **So why do you doubt?** You hear from God. Your hearing from God isn't contingent on your ability but on God's ability to speak to you. And God is able! **So what are you worried about? Why do you doubt you hear from Him?** Remember what James wrote:

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. (James 1:5-8).

### Day Five

48 The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?" 49 "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. 50 I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. 51 I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

v. 48 – The Jews accused Jesus of lying, so they asked Him a question. If He was a liar, how could they expect the truth? Yet they asked the Son of God to pass judgment as to whether or not He had a demon! If He said "No," they would have said He was a liar. They judged the Holy One of God to be in cahoots with the devil. **Can you see why the Father sent Jesus to confront the wicked hearts of these men?** They acted like they served God, but they actually served the devil. I wonder how many houses of worship they had turned into what was mentioned in Revelation?

I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan (Revelation 2:9).

v. 49 – Jesus denied the accusation, stating instead that He was honoring His Father by saying and doing what He did. He then accused the Jews of dishonoring Him. This was not a pleasant exchange at all, was it? So much for the image that some people have of Jesus being this timid, kind man who went around doing good and making people happy! He was confronting the Jews without hesitation and speaking hard truths publicly.

v. 50 – Jesus stated that He was not seeking glory, but the Father was seeking glory. **Does that sound like God needed glory?** If God needed anything, He would cease to be God. Yet God is worthy of glory and honor; it is His due. Man was created to glorify God, so the Father was interested in reinstating man to his former position through the work and ministry of Jesus. Jesus was committed to that purpose to see His Father receive the glory due His magnificent name.

v. 51 – Jesus spoke another truth: His word was the key to eternal life. Anyone who kept His word would live forever. No prophet could claim that much power in His word. Only God could make that kind of promise and back it up with power. And only one who already had eternal life could promise and give eternal life.

This chapter is simply full of statements that point clearly to Jesus' divinity. There can be no doubt about that. If Jesus was telling the truth, then He was and is God. If not, He is in league with the devil. There can be no other options. Of course, we know that He is God, so He told the truth and cannot lie.

Everyone will live forever; it's just a matter of where they will spend eternity. Some will do so in the presence of God and others apart from that presence. All of us should meet God as a fire:

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:28-29).

Only faith in God's word will spare you and me from that particular expression of God.

### Day Six

52 At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death. 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?" 54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. 55 Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word.

v. 52 – The Jews declared that Jesus was indeed full of the devil. Since they considered Abraham and the prophets greater than Jesus, and since they all died, then they concluded that Jesus had to be lying. **Can you see what bad thinking does to you?** Their bad thinking led them to wrong conclusions with serious ramifications. The Jews could not fathom that anyone could be greater than their heroes of faith. They did not realize that those heroes talked about and put their faith in Jesus who was standing before them.

Jesus was causing the Jews to bear public witness to their unbelief and hardness of heart. He was drawing them out to speak their hearts and they spoke evil because their hearts were evil. They were agitated and ready to carry out their murderous intent, which is just what Jesus wanted to happen. As I have written many times, you must admire Jesus' courage. He had complete faith in the Father's ability to protect Him. When the protection didn't come, it was because the Father had some other plan for Jesus. It wasn't because the Father could not protect Him. **Do you have that same confidence? If you say you do, why are you afraid?**

v. 53 – The Jews asked Jesus a point-blank question: Who do you think You are? Jesus had been telling them who He was, but they could not comprehend it because of their hard hearts. The Jews were obviously venerating Abraham and Jesus was confronting their misplaced loyalty and reverence. Abraham was but a servant of God, like they were. Jesus was greater than Abraham by virtue of His deeds and words. Abraham never talked like or performed the works that Jesus did. The Jews put their faith in the wrong man and it was an affront to God.

v. 54 – Jesus denied that He was seeking His own glory, claiming rather that the God of the Jews was the One who was bestowing honor on Jesus. This was the same God the Jews declared was their God, yet they were denying the truth that their God was conveying through Jesus. They so trusted in their own ability that they refused to consider that Jesus was who He said He was. What a sad state of affairs for anyone to be in!

v. 55 – Jesus said that He knew the Father and to say otherwise would have made Him a liar like the Jews. Jesus knew God the Father because He was the Son. The Jews were not sons of God, so that made them sons of the devil, from whom they took their sinful nature. Jesus reported that the Jews did not know God! Once again, that must have been a preposterous statement to those who heard it! They had devoted their entire lives to the service and knowledge of God and here was a man telling them they did not know God. Jesus was working them into a frenzy so they would reveal their hypocrisy.

God will reveal the truth in your heart. Don't deny the truth when He shows you what it is. Just agree with it.

Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place (Psalm 51:6).

### Day Seven

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."57 "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" 58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" 59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

v. 56 – Jesus made a remarkable statement that Abraham had seen the day of Jesus. When did He see it and what did he see? I have always gone to Genesis 22 for the answer:

When they reached the place God had told him about [Mount Moriah], Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided." (Genesis 22:9-14).

When Abraham saw the ram in the thicket, and he was on Mount Moriah where Jesus was talking with the Jews in John 8, he realized that one day God would provide a sacrifice for man, just as God provided a substitutionary sacrifice for Isaac. Abraham saw the reality of Jesus and he put his faith that Jesus would act to save man from his sins. It's not just that Abraham saw it but that he saw it and rejoiced!

This should not surprise us. God is able to open our eyes to see spiritual realities to which we would otherwise be oblivious. **Why not ask Him to open your eyes?** You don't know what you may be missing. I will follow my own advice.

v. 57 – The Jews were out of touch with everything Jesus had said so far, so we would expect that to continue. The Jews understood that, if Jesus could talk so authoritatively about Abraham and what he saw, then Jesus was saying that He was there when Abraham did what Jesus was reporting to them. The Jews were correct, but they could not comprehend how that could have been true. For this statement to have been true, Jesus had to have been an eyewitness, plus know the reality of Abraham's heart. In other words, only God could know what Jesus was reporting.

v. 58 – Then Jesus delivered the decisive blow. He claimed to be the great "I am" of the Old Testament. This was the "name" or description that God Himself gave to Moses:

Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:13-14).

Jesus was declaring that He was the same God who dispatched Moses to Egypt. Can there be any more clear statement of who Jesus was? There was never any ambivalence on Jesus' part about who He was or what He had come to do. He has now provoked the Jews into revealing what He contended was there all along: murder.

v. 59 – The Jews picked up stones to hurl at Him, considering Jesus a blasphemer. They were ready to show their true colors as murderers. Of course, it was not Jesus' time to depart, so He slipped away through the crowd. Jesus did not stay around, for His time had not yet come.

That is a good example for anyone to follow who faces that kind of persecution. If you can escape, do so. When you have no escape, you will know that you are in God's hands, and He will either protect you or not. You must trust Him for whichever decision He chooses to make. **Can you trust the Lord for your well being and safety?** If you can, then are you still afraid to fly, afraid of water, fearful of traveling, concerned about avoiding missions work?