

30. Jesus Explained How to be Set Free

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others that the one sin that will keep them from receiving eternal life is the sin of unbelief. That is the one sin of which the Holy Spirit convicts them and our children will work with the Holy Spirit as they learn to explain that sin clearly. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus explained to the religious leaders how they could be set free from their sin of unbelief.

The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” We will see again in our topic that the religious leaders could not understand because of their lack of belief. John 8:25-27 says, “Then they said to Him, ‘Who are You?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.’ They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.” We see that the religious leaders showed this lack of spiritual understanding by the fact that they again asked Jesus who He was.

Jesus had been telling them who He was from the beginning of His public ministry. He had given them signs to show that the words that He spoke were true. The problem that the Jewish religious leaders had was the fact that they chose to reject the statement of Jesus each time He said that He came from God. Jesus had just said a few minutes earlier in John 8:15-16, “‘You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.’” In that statement, Jesus showed that the religious leaders judged Him because they were depending on their sinful nature. Then, He said that He was with the Father who had sent Him. However, their unbelief was willful because Jesus had just told them the truth.

Jesus went on to say that the words that He was speaking to the world were the words that He had heard from the Father. The purpose of Jesus, while He was on this earth, was to carry out the will of the Father. That was why He had told the religious leaders earlier in John 5:30, “‘I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.’” Jesus had said at that time that He spoke what He heard from the Father. Instead of believing Jesus, the religious leaders wanted to kill Him. Here, we see that one of the results of their unbelief was the fact that they were going to put Jesus to death as a result of their unbelief. That was why they could not understand when Jesus spoke to them about the Father. They rejected both Jesus and the Father.

Jesus went on to tell the religious leaders that He always did the things that pleased the Father. John 8:28-30 says, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.’ As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.” Here, we see that Jesus told the religious leaders that He knew how they were going to kill Him. Jesus had earlier

told Nicodemus in John 3:14, “‘And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.’” Jesus now told the religious leaders in advance how they would kill Him.

Jesus said that many of the Jews would know that He was the Christ after His death and resurrection. Acts 2:41 says, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.” Then, Acts 6:7 says, “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” The religious leaders as a whole rejected Jesus but many of the common people placed their faith in Him after His death and resurrection. These people realized after His death and resurrection that the things that Jesus spoke did come from the Father and they repented of their sin of unbelief. They showed that they believed what Jesus said about the Father was true.

Jesus said that He spoke these things because His Father had instructed Him to say these things to the people. He said again that the Father was the One who had sent Him. In fact, He said that the Father was with Him and that the Father had not left Him alone. The only time that the Father and the Son were ever separated was when Jesus bore our sins on the cross. That was when Jesus said in Matthew 27:46, “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” Jesus also said that the things that He did were pleasing to the Father. Even though the religious leaders rejected Jesus, we see that the words of Jesus had a great impact on many of the people. In fact, we see that as Jesus spoke these words about His relationship with the Father many believed Him.

Then, Jesus began to speak directly to those who believed Him. John 8:31-36 says, “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’ They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, ‘You will be made free?’” Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.’”

We see that at a later time some had a true belief and others had a false belief. John 12:42-43 says, “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, 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.” That is why Jesus took time to explain how those who believed in Him would show that they were true disciples. Jesus told them, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Here, we see that Jesus said that a true disciple will abide in His Word. This was later illustrated in the early church. Acts 2:42 says, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” True disciples will continue to study the teachings of Jesus so that they can grow in their understanding of Him and His love.

Jesus also explained one of the results of abiding in His Word. We see that those who continue in

the Word of Christ are set free. The Pharisees taught that a person would be acceptable to God if that person kept the law. In contrast, Isaiah 64:6 says, “But we are all like an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” That is why Paul explained in Galatians that the purpose of the law was to bring us to Christ. Galatians 3:24-25 says, “Therefore the law was our *tutor to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” Paul later said in Galatians 5:1, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” Christ wanted those who believed in Him to be set free from their bondage of trying to keep the Law.

True disciples will have a desire to abide in the teachings of Jesus. Jesus said that the things that He taught would help true followers to know the truth. Jesus promised that it is the truth that sets a person free from the bondage to Old Testament Law because those who abide in Jesus are under a new law, the law of liberty. Galatians 5:13 explains how we put that new law into practice when that verse says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” In Christ, we are able to serve one another in His love.

Those who were trying to keep the Old Testament Law because they thought that would make them acceptable to God could not understand what Jesus meant. As a result, they said, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, ‘You will be made free’?” Here, we see that those who did not have a true belief in Jesus thought that because they were descendants of Abraham they would automatically share in the promises that were given to Abraham. John 1:11-13 says, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Jesus came to the Jews but most of them did not receive Him. They needed to have a spiritual birth so that they could become the children of God.

Jesus explained this difference by comparing a slave and a son. A slave is not a permanent part of the family while the son will continue in the family forever. Jesus made it clear that those who did not have true belief were still slaves of sin and not sons of God so they would not have eternal life. In contrast, those who had true belief and chose to abide in Jesus and His Word became sons of the Father and received eternal life. This was why Jesus could tell these Jews, “If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” This is also the message that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain clearly to others. Jesus died so that all those who repent of their sin of unbelief and come to Him in faith will become sons and will have eternal life. They will show that they have this life because they will take root in the love of Christ. Then, they will be able to serve one another in love. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain to others how to be free indeed.