

Truth Will Make You Free

A study of the memoirs of the apostles, that are sometimes called the gospels, and the epistles of the apostles, which are sometimes called the letters of the apostles, reveals that the apostles echoed the same truths that Jesus taught. A Christian should not be surprised since the Holy Spirit would have directed them to write the same truths (2 Peter 1:20-21). A simple example occurs in 1 John where the apostle John repeatedly uses the phrase “little children” and in 1 John 2:8 he refers to a “new commandment.” The phrase was used by Jesus and the new commandment was given to the disciples in the upper room just before He was betrayed (John 13:33-34). In this study Jesus will reveal that one can believe in Him but not necessarily have saving faith. He will talk about being free to a group of people who thought they were free. They did not realize that Jesus was speaking about spiritual freedom. This study is for anyone who thinks that they have liberty in the country in which they live. We will discover one can have physical freedom but not spiritual freedom.

TWO TYPES OF FAITH. In our last study Jesus had just finished a conversation with the religious leaders. Jesus told them that He was the Light of the world (John 8:12). He was spiritual Light (John 8:12). He had come from heaven because the God the Father had sent Him (John 8:16, 18). He told them that He was going to return to heaven and because they were sinners, they would die in their sins if they did not believe that He was God (John 8:24). He predicted His death, resurrection and ascension. The Pharisees responded with disbelief and contempt. What a sad response. Yet, there was a group of people who did believe in Him. Our study is about this crowd that claimed to believe in Him.

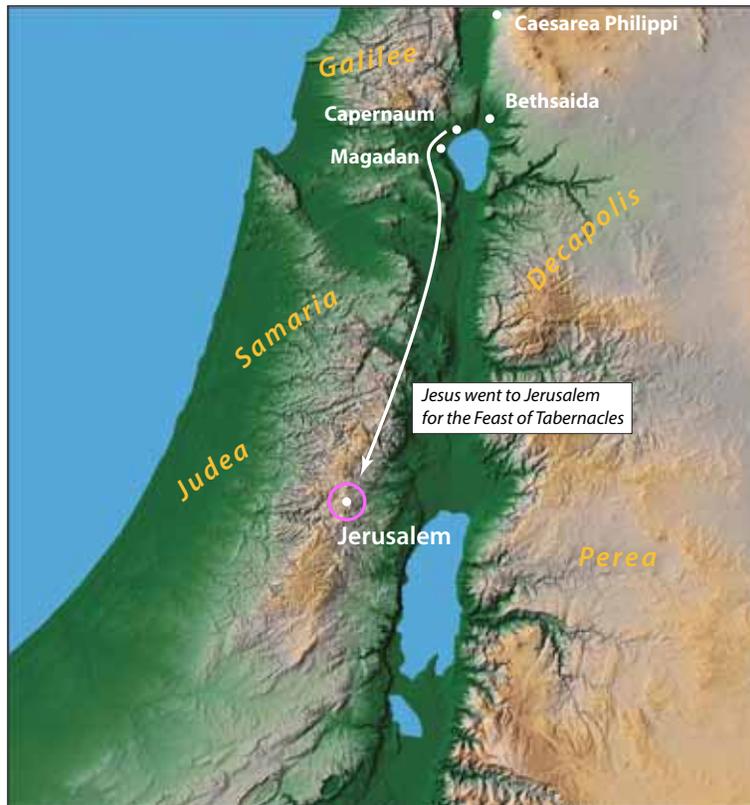
So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” John 8:31-32 (NASB)

The gospels tell us that Jesus knew the hearts of men (Luke 11:17). This verse reveals that He knew that some of these “believing individuals” did not truly believe what He had said. Some of them were not true Christians. There are many today who claim to be Christians who are not real

Christians! This is not a new or unique idea. The apostle Paul reveals the same truth when he was moved by the Holy Spirit to write these words,

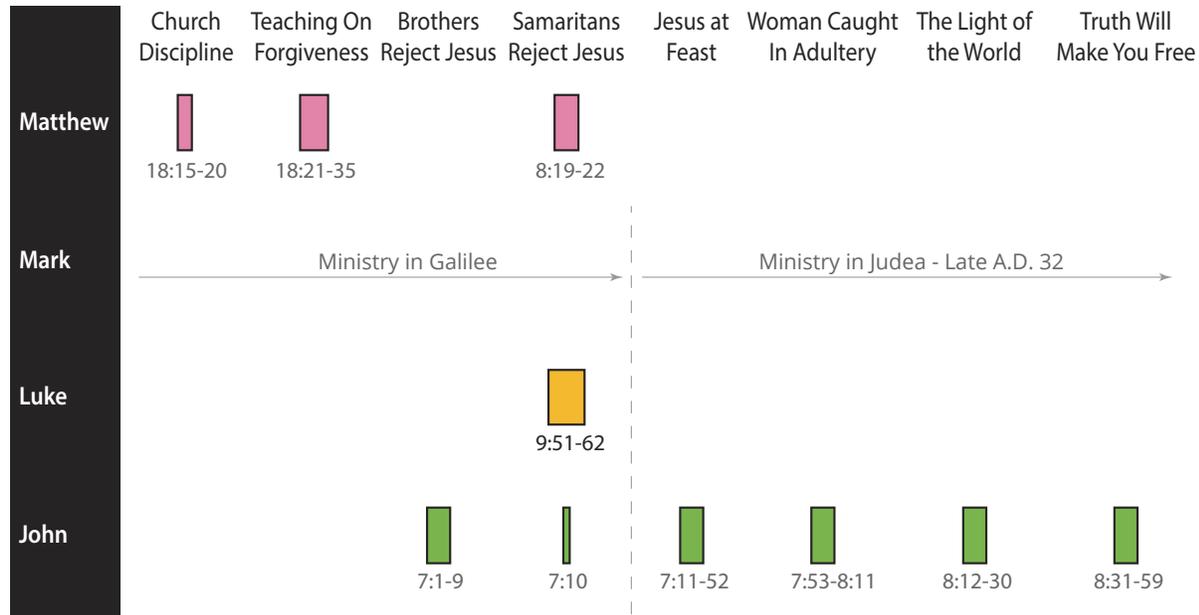
Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 1 Cor. 15:1-2 (NASB)

Notice the phrase that the apostle Paul used at the end of verse 2, “unless you believe in vain.” The root Greek word for “vain” is *eike*. It means “empty” or “without reason, or without basis.” This means that a person can



Life and Heart of Jesus

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believe in Christ but that belief can be shallow or empty. They do not really believe they are sinners, who Jesus Christ is or what He did for them. Maybe they are not genuinely serious about their sins. Instead they want something from God. For example, some people wanted to be become Christians because they wanted God to save their marriage, to solve a problem at work, to rescue them in a wartime battle or to heal their physical body. I know several men who “became” Christians because they wanted God to solve their financial problems or make them wealthy. Others have “become” Christians because they enjoyed the love, excitement or the atmosphere of success at a church. This sad truth is revealed in Jesus’ parable in Matthew 13:18-23. The parable describes four types of people. Two types were individuals who were initially excited about Jesus but did not “continue being” Christians. They were not real Christians and the proof was that they left because of money and persecution. 1 John 2:19 explains it this way,

They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they

had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. 1 John 2:19 (NASB)

This is what Jesus was referring to when he said, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine.” Some people have deceived themselves into thinking that they are Christians, because they prayed a prayer or had some experience. They do not understand what it means to be a real Christian. Romans 8:13 tells us that a real Christian is one who is putting to death the deeds of the body. Since the deeds of the body are sin (Gal. 5:16-21) this means that a Christian is one who is increasingly having victory over sin (1 John 2:3 and 3:7). So, true Christians are those who continue in His Word, that is, reading, studying, believing and practicing it.

TRUTH WILL MAKE YOU FREE. If we look back at John 8:31-32 we discover that after Jesus said, “If you continue in My Word” He then gave a statement of truth and then a benefit. We have already examined the statement of truth but

You Must Continue

Reference	New Testament Passages
Matthew 10:21-23 24:8-13	"... the one who has endured to the end will be saved." "... the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved."
Mark 13:13	"... the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved."
Luke 9:62	"No one ... looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."
John 8:31	"If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine"
Acts 13:43 14:22	"... were urging them to continue in the grace of God." "... encouraging them to continue in the faith"
Romans 2:6-7	"... by perseverance in doing good seek ... eternal life"
Colossians 1:22-23	"... if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast"
1 Timothy 4:16 6:12	"... as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself ..." "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life"
2 Timothy 2:12	"If we endure, we shall also reign with Him ..."
Hebrews 3:14 6:4-7 10:23	"... we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast" "... have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance" "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering"
James 1:12	"... for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life"
1 Peter 1:6-9	"... that the proof of your faith"
2 Peter 1:5-11	"... be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you"
Revelation 2:10, 25-26	"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

not the benefit. The benefit is that those who continue in His Word will know the truth and, as a result, be set free. We do not know if Jesus made that statement and then stopped or was interrupted because the next verse, John 8:33, states that the crowd objected to His comment. Then His explanation occurred in verse 34. The crowd protests and their reveals their pride and deception.

They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free?'" John 8:33 (NASB)

Yes, they were descendants of Abraham, but it was not true that they had never been enslaved. The nation of Israel had been enslaved to the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persians, Grecian empires and at the time of this conversation they were enslaved to the Roman empire. It is possible that they were thinking that they had never been slaves in the sense of being owned by someone and given orders on a daily basis. It is possible that they were thinking

that they were not slaves in the spiritual sense. They worshipped what they believed was the true God. People often protest things like this when they are angry. They are quick to defend themselves but do not accurately think. But they did not understand Jesus' message.

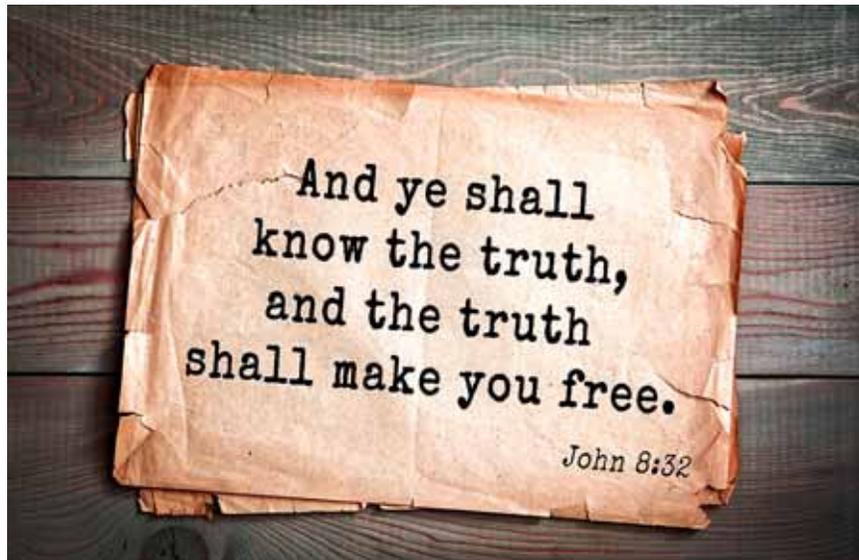
Their answer reveals that at least they understood Jesus was talking about freedom. Their response helps us understand Jesus word "free." The Greek word is *eleutheros*. It has the idea of not being bound or of being independent. In most countries in the world, people consider ourselves to be free because they are independent within the boundary of their nation. We have personal liberty with certain rights to go where we desire and act in specific ways. But Jesus was not talking about physical freedom. He was talking about freedom from the bondage to sin.

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. John 8:34 (NASB)

Jesus does not mean that sin is some external force that

has shackled our hands and feet. No, instead sin exists within our mortal bodies (Romans 6:12). It is a spiritual condition of lawlessness that exists in every baby at birth (1 John 3:4). Ephesians 2:1 tells us that we were spiritually dead and we were sons of disobedience before we believed in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:2). Wow, what a description of non-Christians - sons of disobedience. We proved that we are sons of disobedience every time we sinned (James 1:13-15). In fact, before we believed in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, we could not escape the control of sin in our lives. It had control of us - influencing our passions so that we would obey our lusts or passions and not God's will. We chose sin and not righteousness. Romans 6:20 tells us why we acted like that.

It says that we were slaves of sin. But when one believes in Jesus Christ one is a freed from sin (Rom. 6:6-7, 20). One of the signs that a person is a Christian is that they increasingly experience victory over sin. That is, they sin less and less. That is the message of Romans 8:13.



... for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Rom. 8:13 (NASB)

The point of Jesus' statement was that the proof they are slaves to sin is revealed by the fact that they sin. They were in slavery to sin.

Jesus illustrated His statement with a parable about a slave and the son of the master of the house.

The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. John 8:35 (NASB)

The key to unlocking the meaning of this parable is to understand that the son of the master of the house has the right to come and go from the house. In fact, some day he may inherit the house, but the slave does not have any rights to the house. In fact, some day he will have to leave. Later in Ephesians 1:5 and Romans 8:14-25 the Holy Spirit tells Christians that they have been adopted into the family of God. That is, those who believe in Jesus Christ are the sons of God or the children of God (Romans 8:14-16). This means that we will never have to leave but those who are slaves of sin do not have the right to live with God eternally in heaven and they won't. The sons of God are not slaves of sin but non-Christians are slaves of sin.

NO LONGER SLAVES OF SIN.
Then Jesus told them how to be released from their slavery to sin.

So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:36 (NASB)

Freedom from sin is found only in Jesus

Christ. Romans 6:1-7 uses the illustration of baptism to teach us that when someone believes in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, they die to their old self and are no longer slaves of sin.

For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Romans 6:5-7 (NASB)

Then in Romans 6:20 we are told that when we were slaves of sin we could not perform righteous deeds. But after we

trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness our sins, we are freed from sin and become slaves of righteousness (Romans 6:17-18). That is real freedom. For example, Matthew 5:6 says that when we passionately long to be righteous, we will find satisfaction in this life.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Matthew 5:6 (NASB)

Matthew 6:33 tells us that when we seek God first in our lives and that includes a desire to be righteous, then He will meet our needs.

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:33 (NASB)

John 14:21 reveals that then Christ will also help us know

Him in a deeper sense. 1 John 3:7 indicates that a pattern of life (one of practicing righteousness) will give a Christian confidence that they are real Christians.

CONCLUSION. In these six verses of John, Jesus reveals that even though some individuals are described as believing Him, there were some who did not truly believe in Him. What was missing in their lives was a fuller understanding of Him (v. 32). The proof that they were not real Christians would be proven by the fact that they were still in slavery to sin. Those in slavery to sin will not enter into heaven. That is the true home of every Christian, for they are those who have been adopted into the family of God. They are the ones whose lives will demonstrate that they are no longer slaves of sin but of righteousness and they will reap the benefits.