

John Ch8v31-47 - Truth And Lies

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[0 : 00] John chapter 8 and verse 31 to 47. This is on page 1074 of your Red Church Bible.

John 8 verse 31. To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. 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? Jesus replied, Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

[1 : 15] I know you are Abraham's descendants, yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word.

I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father. Abraham is our father, they answered.

If you were Abraham's children, said Jesus, then you would do what Abraham did. As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me. A man who has told you the truth that I heard from God.

Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the works of your own father. We are not illegitimate children, they protested.

The only father we have is God himself. Jesus said to them, If God were your father, you would love me, for I have come here from God.

[2 : 22] I have not come on my own. God sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.

You belong to your father, the devil. And you want to carry out your father's desires. 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 a father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.

Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? Whoever belongs to God hears what God says.

The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks.

[3 : 35] Thanks. Thank you. Well, good morning again. Nice to see you all today. We continue in our studies in John's Gospel.

And today we're chapter 8. And we're going to be thinking about truth and lies. Truth and lies.

Let's pray and ask for God's help. Jesus says, If God were your father, you would love me.

Father, we ask that you would give us a heart that loves the Lord Jesus and loves his word, loving his ways.

Please, will you change us and cause us to love you more? Amen. Well, we're reaching a point in the Gospel of John where we're being confronted to make decisions about Jesus.

[5 : 11] So there's no more sitting on the fence. He's saying, you either do believe in me or you don't believe in me.

Track back with me to verse 24. A summary, if you like, of what he's been teaching in this last section. Verse 24. I told you that you would die in your sins.

If you do not believe that I am he, that is the one who can forgive and give life, you will indeed die in your sins.

Verse 30. Even as Jesus spoke, many believed in him. They heard his truth and they believed.

In fact, Jesus is going further in the text that we've just had read to us. Jesus is pushing us to see if our claims to believe in Jesus are actually genuine and real.

[6 : 18] You see, not everybody who claims to be a believer is a true believer. Look what Jesus says to the very same people who have just said, we believe in Jesus.

Look at what Jesus says about them. Verse 45. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. They say they believe, but Jesus says, no, you don't believe. Think of it this way. I claim to be Irish. You probably, well, most of you, think I am Irish. When Ireland play, I put on the green jersey and I wave the tricolour and I sing and I support my team.

But what you don't know is, please don't tell anyone, I have a British passport. I wasn't born in Ireland, I was born in London.

[7 : 24] I'm not an Irish citizen. According to the state, I am not Irish and as I came to the airport yesterday evening, I had to go in a queue that was not for Irish citizens.

Just because I claim to be Irish doesn't mean I am. Well, same with our faith. Just because we claim to believe doesn't mean we are true believers.

So how do we know who is a real believer? How do I know if I am a believer? Well, we're going to look at two big things.

Believing the truth or believing in lies. Believing the truth or believing in lies. First, believing the truth, verse 31.

To the Jews who had believed in him, Jesus said, if you hold to my teaching, that is, if you continue in my teaching, if you remain in my teaching, you are really my disciples.

[8 : 36] Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. You see, this is the mark of a true disciple of Jesus. If I am a genuine believer, I will have a growing desire for the truth.

I will submit to the truth and I will want to live by the truth. We can't separate belief in Jesus and the truth from Jesus.

The sign, the evidence that we believe in Jesus is that we believe and take seriously the truth that Jesus teaches.

So what is the truth that Jesus teaches? Well, there are three things we want to look at that if we are true believers, we must accept.

First, I am a slave to sin. Verse 32. He says, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

[9 : 40] They answered him, well, we're Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?

Now, that's a strange thing for them to say, isn't it? Because if you know anything about Abraham's descendants that the history of Israel in the Old Testament, you will know that their history is one of slavery.

They were slaves in Egypt, weren't they, under Pharaoh? And then later on, they were slaves in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. And currently, as John writes the gospel, they are being ruled by an enemy force, by the Romans.

So why are they claiming to Jesus that they're free? Well, it seems they would rather believe in their own lies than accept what is true.

A reality, as we'll see, that is running deep in their hearts. In fact, not only have they been political slaves, Jesus says they are spiritually slaves.

[10 : 47] Verse 34, Jesus replied, very truly, I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now, that's a hard truth for us all, isn't it?

Everyone who sins is a slave to sin. No, no, no, no. No, I'm not a slave to sin. I'm free to live and do as I please.

I make my own choices and my own decisions. But here's the point, we can't help but make sinful decisions and choices.

Here's a test for us all. This next week from here on till next Sunday, make a promise to yourself that we won't think anything bad about anyone, that we won't say anything cross or hurtful to anyone, or behave in a way that is selfish to anyone.

Okay, let's promise to do that for a whole week. Well, I don't think we'll get past the day, never mind a week, and we'll find that we've broken the promise many times.

[12 : 07] In fact, we can't even manage to live up to our own standards of what we say is good and right. This is how another writer in scripture put it.

Can you relate to this? For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do.

This I keep on doing. Sound familiar? Because it resonates? The truth is we are all born as slaves to sin.

But here's another truth. I am set free by Jesus. Verse 35. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.

So if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Now the problem of being a slave is you can't free yourselves.

[13 : 21] That was certainly true of Abraham's descendants. They were slaves in the history in their past to Egypt. Their freedom didn't come from within, but it came from one from the outside coming to them to free them.

God had said, you can follow on screen, he had said to Moses, I am the Lord, I will bring you out from under the yokes of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.

Now what God physically did for the people then, he is saying now that spiritually through his son, he is going to release and free people.

Verse 36, if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Jesus comes to set us free from our slavery to sin, he wins our freedom by dying our death with his outstretched arms on the cross. He takes my sin and your sin and he takes the judgment that we deserve so that we can be truly free.

[14 : 45] now you might find that uncomfortable too because we like to think no, no, no, no, no, I can sort it out myself, I can do it, but we can't.

The truth is only Jesus can set us free. And here's the third truth, I am a son forever.

Verse 35, go back to verse 35. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. They're complete opposites.

A son is different to a slave. A slave is under a master. a son is loved by his father.

A slave is on the outside of the family. A son is in the family. A son can never be disowned. They are free to live and receive all the good wonderful gifts from the father.

[15 : 54] What about the daughters? Well, why aren't the daughters written in here? Well, in the first century, the son, the eldest son, would receive the inheritance of the father.

Now Jesus is saying, when I set you free, you all become sons. Men and women, you will all receive the inheritance from God.

Life today and life eternal forevermore. You see, when Jesus sets us free, we enter into the family of God. A family where we are loved and treasured forever.

And I want us to hear that today. If you have been set free by Jesus, you are in his family, safe and secure.

No matter what anybody else may say about you or to you. See what it says at the end of verse 35? you are a son, an inheritor, and you belong for how long?

[17 : 06] Forever. Safe and secure in the family of God. So those are three truths that we must accept, that I am a slave to sin, only Jesus can set me free, and when I do, oh, how marvelous and how wonderful, I become a son forever.

And it all leads to freedom. You see, believing this truth from Jesus leads to freedom, not a freedom to do whatever we want, but a new freedom, a freedom to start living in a way that we could never do before.

he sets us free from our slavery to sin so that we can begin to live as the true children of God. You see, when we believe the truth, we are given by God brand new desires and a new power by the Holy Spirit to be able to live them out.

A life where we love God's word, and a desire to live by its truth and to be changed by it day by day. Believing the truth leads to a life of glorious freedom. So, do you believe the truth?

[18 : 45] Here's the second one. believing in lies. If you don't believe the truth, then the only other option is we're believing in lies.

Look at verse 37, the end of verse 37. Jesus says to them, you're looking for a way to kill me because you have no room for my word.

true believers hold to the truth of Jesus teaching, but those who don't, well, there's no room. You can't possibly absorb or take in his word.

You don't want it. And listen further to what Jesus says when we do not accept his teaching. Verse 43. Why is my language not clear to you?

because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires.

[19 : 56] Not very seeker-friendly, is he? He doesn't mince his words. He is saying very clearly, if you are not a child of God, if you don't accept my truth, you are a child of the devil.

It sounds a bit extreme. Is Jesus not being over the top here? Well, let's think this through together. Again, three things.

First, let's think about the devil. The devil is not an imaginary being who runs around in a red suit with horns poking out his head and a pitchfork.

No, he is real. That's what we're told in verse 44. Second part of verse 44. He is 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. You see, the devil is one who seeks to deceive and to distort.

[21 : 14] That's why John, the writer of John's Gospel, who also wrote the book of Revelation, speaks about the devil like this. He calls him that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.

That's his mission. His mission is out to turn people from the truth by presenting a whole lot of lies. So we mustn't say, oh, the devil's not real, it's just fake.

No, he's a real character. Don't underestimate his work. He does not hold to the truth. And the devil, we're told, is the father of lies.

So what's his big lie? What's the big lie he tells us? Well, as these verses suggest, we need to go back to the beginning of the story of the Bible.

Remember when the devil came to Adam and Eve in the garden? God had made it very crystal clear to them. They could enjoy all the fruit of the garden.

[22 : 37] It's all yours. I abundantly give it to you. You can feast and eat and delight in all that I give you, but do not eat from the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden.

If you eat it, you will die. die. And then comes along the devil.

Remember what he said? Here's his lie. You will not certainly die, the serpent said to the woman. I think I have it there on the screen.

For God knows that when you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. Not just knowing the difference between good and evil, but you will become the masters of it.

You will decide and determine what is good and what is wrong. Here was his lie. God is mean and unkind.

[23 : 45] He's restricting you. If you want true freedom, you decide what is right and what is best for you. It's your life. You know better than God. you know what you need.

And the problem is we have all believed the lie. In 1990, the year that I did my leaving cert, a song was released by the Soup Dragons.

I don't know if you remember them. It became an anthem as we broke free from the regime that we called school. And in hazy-filled living rooms, we danced around like aeroplanes, whizzing around, shouting and singing at the top of our voice.

I won't sing it to you, but I'll give you the words. Don't be afraid of your freedom, freedom. I say, love me, hold me, love me, hold me, because I'm free to do what I want, to be what I want any old time, and I'm free to be who I choose to get my booze any old time.

That was us as teenagers, living the life of freedom. Doesn't it capture what we all want? The absence of rules and the right to choose?

[25 : 14] don't let truth get in the way and spoil your party. Truth restricts you. Do what you want. Choose who you are.

Be free. But what does it say? End of verse 44. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

It's all lies. The reality then, is simply this. The freedom that we crave is not true freedom.

Go back to verse 44. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. desires. And those desires are not good desires, they are sinful desires.

And those desires don't give you freedom, they will enslave you. You see, these desires are like substance addictions that we can't break.

[26 : 29] People who are addicted can't get themselves out of it. and it's like us, we desire something or someone, we crave for it, and we get it, but it never ever satisfies.

And so the desire increases and intensifies, and we indulge more and more in a life of my rights and my choices, and throwing off more rules, and, well, it brings happiness, it does bring joy, but it never lasts.

it leaves us empty, it breaks us and it destroys us, and so the cycle goes on and on. The more we believe the lie, the more we live the lie, and the less we are truly free.

You see, believing in lies leads to slavery. Believing in lies does not set you free.

We are not free to choose and be who I want and do what I want. We're actually trapped and imprisoned. In fact, the danger is we can become death to the truth.

[27 : 47] Verse 46, Jesus says, can any of you prove me guilty of sin? Am I saying anything at all that is wrong? Then if I'm telling the truth, why don't you believe me?

whoever belongs to God hears what God says. And the reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.

You see, if we don't believe what Jesus says, then we're not a son or a child of God. We're a child of devil.

We haven't gained freedom. We've actually lost our freedom. We live in a self-absorbed destructive life from which we cannot escape ourselves.

ourselves. You see, Jesus' message is clear, isn't it? We're all believers. We either believe the truth of what Jesus says, or we're believing in lies.

[29 : 01] We're either set free to live as God desires, or we're enslaved by our own desires. Jesus is coming to us afresh and saying, embrace the truth.

Surrender to the truth. Know the joy of being the free children of God. Because when Jesus sets you free, look at verse 31, if you hold to my teaching, if you remain with it, if you continue in it, you are really, you are truly my disciples, then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. Are you a believer in the truth, or are you believing in lies? Let us come to Jesus afresh and listen to his truth and know the freedom as true children of God.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, there are many, many voices that we hear, voices in our own minds, coming from our own hearts, voices from outside, voices all around.

We pray that we would be attuned to the truth of your word, knowing that it is good for us, that it sets us free, and enables us to live the life that you have created us and called us to live in.

[31 : 02] Father, help us that we would be wary of the lies, that we would turn from them, that we would hear you afresh and walk in your paths.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you have set us free, and that by trusting you, we are free indeed. Amen.