

Rossville Church of Christ

Doorpost Devo



July 16, 2023



Encouragement from God's Word

John 8:31-38: Disciples Abide in Truth and Are Set Free

The most dangerous lies are not the ones that are obvious to us. The most lethal lies are the ones wrapped in enough tantalizing truth to convince us to swallow the poison of deception before we realize we are doomed. One of Satan's most destructive lies has to do with what he tells us about freedom. We all have a desire to be free.

Scripture Plan: Read

Mon, Tues, Wed.:

Matthew 11:25-30 Each Night

Thurs., Fri., Sat.:

Luke 7:36-50 Each Night

Devo Plan

1. Mon.--Read and Pray Together
2. Tues.--Read, Pray, Ask Questions, and Discuss
3. Wed.--Read, Pray, and Think about how to Apply
4. Thurs.-Sat.--Repeat steps 1-3 with New Passage
5. Sunday--Pray and Reflect on What was Learned in Worship and Class

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Discussion Questions

Matthew 11:25-30

Discussion Question #1: What kinds of people are able to see God's revealed truth? What kinds of people is the truth hidden from?

Discussion #2: Who is invited to come to Jesus? What does it mean to "heavy laden"? What kinds of things in our lives make us heavy laden?

Discussion #3: How does Jesus describe his own heart? What does that mean for our lives? What does Jesus promise if we come to Him?

Luke 7:36-50

Discussion #1: What does Jesus see in the woman that Simon the Pharisee does not see? How does Jesus treat her?

Discussion #2: What is the purpose of the story that Jesus tells to Simon? What is the lesson for us?

Discussion #3: What motivates us to love, honor, and serve Jesus? What prevents us from doing so? Compare and contrast Simon and the woman as you think about your answers.

Apply and Obey

To obey what God says, this upcoming week I will...

I will share what I learned with...

Prayer Points

- Lord, Thank You--for being a Father who loves us and reveals truth to humble little children who trust in you.
- Lord, We Praise You--for your truth and for your loving and gentle compassion and forgiveness toward us.
- Lord, Help Us--to be people of truth and love in all that we are and all that we do.

None of us wants to be trapped, enslaved, or stripped of choice. Yet, what we sometimes don't realize is that Satan promises us a kind of freedom that is not really freedom. In truth, Satan's vision of freedom is slavery because he tempts us with an autonomy that leads to destruction. The ability to do whatever I want is not truly freedom if that independence leads to certain entrapment and death at the hands of what is not good for me. The human heart and modern culture cry out for absolute freedom to do what we want, unbounded by the restrictions of moral norms or imperatives. But begging for such a freedom is like demanding to go skydiving without the restricting attachments of a parachute. A freedom untethered to what is good and life-giving is no freedom at all. In Genesis 3, Satan promises Eve that she can be like God. He persuades her with the lie that God is holding out on her. He convinces her that God's one restriction is a confining one, holding her back from her true potential. In reality, God's prohibition is a protective one designed to guard her from the slavery of sin and death.

Another lie Satan tells us is that we are already free. He convinces us we don't need help, that we are in total control. All the while, sin is ensnaring us in its deadly trap. The first step toward freedom is realizing we aren't free. In John 8, Jesus is speaking to people who thought they were free because they were Abraham's descendants. We so easily justify ourselves by any measure possible to convince ourselves we are not in need of freedom. I am okay because of my race or ethnicity. I am okay because I am religious. I am okay because I am a nice person who does nice things.

Yet, Jesus teaches that he alone can set us free. He sets forth the path of freedom for his disciples in John 8:31-38:

"So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Abiding, living in, and remaining the word of Jesus is the mark of discipleship. Abiding in his word demonstrates and displays that we belong to Jesus, the embodiment and standard of truth. And it is only by the truth of his word that we can be set free from the enslaving grip of sin. Only the Son sets us free for a freedom that is true and lasting. The freedom that Jesus provides is one that smashes the chaining lies of Satan. It is a truth that teaches us but also empowers us to be transformed. It is a truth that changes our desires so that we choose what is good for us, what leads to life.

The problem that Jesus points out in his audience is that his word found no place in them. The word cannot find a place in our hearts and lives if we choose to believe lies that are convenient for us. The word cannot find a place in us if we would rather follow our own perception over the promises and prohibitions of God himself. The word cannot find a place in us if our hearts are so clogged up with selfish desires and self-serving deceptions.

But if we are truly disciples of Jesus, we will abide in his word. We will love it, live in it, meditate upon it, choose it, know it, and trust it. Disciples, then, follow the truth wherever it leads, even if that truth is inconvenient, uncomfortable, or requires sacrifice. More accurately, disciples follow the Truth wherever he leads. The Truth is not simply a set of facts but a person that we trust because there is no deception in him. As we follow Jesus in truth according to his Word, we are set free by that truth. The more we come to know him, the more we love him. The more we love him, our hearts become freed from the power of sin so that we choose what is right and best for us. As disciples, then, we must be committed fully to truth. This impacts the way we consume news, the way we interact on social media, what we say, what we talk about, what we believe, how we think, and how we live. We make all the decisions on the basis of the ultimate truth of God's Word. We let the words of Jesus guide and direct us in every choice, in every decision so that we are led further and further into a life of freedom. Only then will we be truly free and free indeed.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9