

John 8:31-47
Key Verse: 8:32

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

John 8:31-47 Lesson 22

Key Verse: 8:32

The people to whom Jesus is speaking are the Jews who had believed in him (30). Undoubtedly, among the people here were some of the men who acknowledged their sins by leaving the room when Jesus said, "If anyone of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." These men were living in spiritual darkness because they lived life on a physical level. When Jesus pointed out their spiritual ignorance and warned them that unless they believed him, received him as God's Son, the Messiah, they would die in their sins, (24) many believed in him.

It is to these people that Jesus is speaking. He told them that they could really become his disciples if they would hold to his teaching. (obey his teachings (TEV). Then he touched the vital spot of their lives. He implied that they were slaves, not free. Jesus was getting too personal. They reacted. "We are descendants of Abraham. We have never been anyone's slave." This was not true, historically. Their whole history was a record of slavery. The Jews had been slaves in Egypt. They had suffered as captives of the Babylonians. Now, they were suffering under the oppression of Rome. It is evidence of their human greatness that, in the midst of bondage and human suffering, they never lost their identity as Jews. In a human sense, they were free—they had never given up. But Jesus was not talking about their national shame. He was talking about a much more personal problem. "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." (34) They were slaves of jealousy and physical lust—jealous of Jesus and lustful just like the woman they had dragged into the temple. Pride and lust are very hard chains to break. The Jews' pride made them unwilling to face themselves.

Once, Jesus had talked with a Samaritan woman (chapter 4) When he put his finger on her sin, she humbly received him as a Prophet and finally confessed him to be the Messiah—because he knew all about her and she realized that he cared. But when Jesus touched the real problem of these Jews, they flared up in anger and self-defense. They were so angry that they tried to kill Jesus. They rejected the way to freedom. They rejected truth and held on to lies and self-deception. The way to truth and freedom is to hold to the word of Jesus, to continue in his word, to continue to study the Bible and seek to obey God. Jesus said that their actions showed that they were children of the devil, not children of God. A child's actions resemble those of his father. The devil is a liar and a murderer. These men rejected the truth and sought to kill an innocent man.

When we are confronted with our sin , we may let our pride and our passion control us as these Jews did, or we may choose the way out of bondage to freedom. We may look in faith to the Son of Man lifted up on the cross for our sins (28) and continue in his word, obey his teachings, until we know the truth and the truth sets us free.

When these Jews first saw Jesus' signs and heard his words they believed. When we first study the Bible and our eyes are suddenly opened to the eternal truth there, we believe and are full of joy. Then Jesus tells us, as he told the Jews who believed—hold to my word, obey my teachings and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free. As we hold to the word of God by continuing in Bible study, the

first truth of which we become aware is the truth about ourselves. We are slaves to sin. We do not like to face this truth. It hurts our pride It demands that we give up what we want to hold on to . It runs counter to our natural desires. Following the truth is costly. But if we really love truth, then we will love God and the Son whom he sent. We will follow his word, become his true disciples and know the truth that makes us really free.