

Truth that makes us Free!

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**“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed on Him, “If you continue in My word, you are My disciples indeed.
And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”**

John 8:31, 32 NKJV

Last time we looked at Matthew 28:18 -20, what is commonly referred to as “The Great Commission”. We saw that the commission was not simply to convert the world but to disciple the world. Therefore the commission is not fulfilled after the last convert has risen out of the waters of baptism, but as each new believer enrolls as a pupil a disciplined learner of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mathetes—a learner; thought accompanied by endeavor; one who follows one’s teaching. A disciple is not only a pupil, but an adherent; hence, they are spoken of as imitators of their teachers.

Webster’s Dictionary states that a Disciple is one who accepts and assists in the spreading of doctrine of another.

Discipleship is a yoke.

“At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight.

All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gently and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Matthew 11:25-30 NKJV

Discipleship costs but also compensates.

Discipleship is like exchanging money in a foreign land. You take the currency of your life and exchange it for currency in the new life. Trying to use the wrong currency in the wrong part of the world will only get you nothing.

Some currency that brings leadership and greatness in the world are not valid in the Kingdom of God.

“”But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many.”

Matthew 20:25-28 NKJV

John 11:44 –“Loose him, and let him go.”

Discipleship is a perpetual process of letting go and holding on.

It is summed up in the words of the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Philippians,

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forget those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 3:12-14 NKJV

The Amplified Bible states verse 12 this way,

“Not that I have attained [this ideal], or have already been made perfect, but I press on to lay hold of (grasp) and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus (the Messiah) has laid hold of me and made me His own.”

This is the difference between the casual believer and the disciple and as we stated earlier there are fewer disciples than there are Christians.

“Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed Him, “If you continue in My word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

John 8:31, 32 NKJV

I want us to look closely at this powerful verse. Within it is more practical truth than I believe we get at a casual glance.

Notice that Jesus states the freedom they are seeking is conditional.

“IF you continue in My word.”

IF is a conditional word that is used throughout the word of God:

Deuteronomy 28: 1—“Now it shall come to pass, IF you diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God...”

2 Chronicles 7:14—“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven...”

Isaiah 1:19—“If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.”

John 4:10—“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”

‘If’ is a conditional conjunction and it means that we can agree to do what the Master is asking or we can choose otherwise. The choice is always ours.

There are conditions to growing as a disciple and Jesus gives us the most important in this verse as He is calling these people and us that are here today to the life of a disciple.

One important not that must be shared, when we say that there are conditions to operating in the Kingdom of God we are not referring to the Love of God, the Acceptance of God, and your Right-Standing with God. However, to know God, work in the service of God, accomplish something in God, to receive the wisdom of God, favor of God and blessings of God, this requires conditions, that being OBEDIENCE.

“Obedience is the underlying theme in the life of a disciple, obedience without negotiation.”

“Obedience is better than all sacrifice.”

1 Samuel 15:22

A true disciple is an obedient doer of the Word of God.

Lets again look back at John 8:31, 32,

“If you CONTINUE...”

The word ‘continue’ means to stay or be static in place, state, relation or expectancy. It is translated as to abide, endure, and remain elsewhere in the New Testament.

James' epistle to the scattered tribes abroad gives us insight into how Jesus wants us to continue in His word.

James 1:21-25

OBJECT LESSON: MIRROR

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls.”

Meekness or being teachable is a characteristic of a True Disciple.

“But be ye a doer of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any man be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:
For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”

“But whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

The disciple does not casually read the word; he is in static position with it. He looks into it until the change and transformation is complete.

Lets look at John 8:31, 32 again, there is still more to this powerful verse.

“If you continue in My word, then (and I like to say only then) you are My disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

I want you to notice two things Jesus mentions in this verse that in our 21st Century culture are seemingly diametrically opposed.

We saw that the word continue means to stay, abide, endure in place, state, relation or expectancy. In other words we could say that this describes discipline, the discipline of continuing in the word and abiding in Christ.

A True Disciple is a Disciplined Follower.

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one that beats the air.

But I DISCIPLINE my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NKJV

Then at the end of the verse, Jesus states that the truth will make you free. As I stated earlier in our culture the terms DISCIPLINE and FREEDOM to not go together, they are polar opposites.

Freedom to the ‘Land of the Free and Home of the Brave’ is doing anything I want, when I want, how I want, and with who I want to. But as this culture we live in has shown us:

“What is Freedom to the Flesh can put the Soul and Spirit of a person in Bondage.”

In our culture we associate discipline with bondage, not getting to do the things we like to do, when we want to, how we want to and with whom we want to. We think of restrictions, labor, and grueling, boring hours of toil doing nothing that we would like to do otherwise.

But Jesus deliberately puts these two together, but when we think about it:

“Freedom comes from Discipline.”

Because sandwiched in between the discipline of continuing in the word and the freedom we decided is the meat of truth.

“What is bondage to your flesh can liberate your Soul and Spirit”

The discipline of continuing in the word brings forth revelation or truth that when applied brings freedom to our lives.

What is this Freedom?

Simple: The freedom to be like Jesus.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master.”

Matthew 10:24-25 NKJV

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.
And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”

Ephesians 5:1, 2 NKJV

A True Disciple is an Imitator of Jesus Christ.

Now the way I like to read John 8:31, 32 is this,

“Then Jesus said unto those Jews who believed Him, “If (it’s up to you) you continue (discipline yourself to abide) in my word, then (and only then) you are my disciples indeed.

And you shall know the truth and the truth (that you know) will make (a process of acting upon the revelations in My word) you free.”

King Gregory Version

But what do we do with this freedom?

True Disciples reproduce themselves in the lives of others.

The end of the journey is not when we arrive at full perfection as a disciple, but when we begin to instill what God has done for us in others. We are to be disciples and disciple makers. We are not just called to be faithful, but to be fruitful. Jesus gives us the freedom to become like Him, so that we can help others become like Him also.

