

(31) So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in 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.”

(33) 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.”

(39a) They answered Him, “Abraham is our father.”

(39b) Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did.

(41) “You are doing the works your father did.” They said to Him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father --- even God.” Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of My own accord, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear My Word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.”

(46) “Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? Whoever is of God hears the Words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”

Think on these things:

1) Can you describe the difference between a believer, a disciple, and an apostle? What kind of Jesus follower best describes you? How does Jesus describe a “true disciple” (v.31)?

Believer – **someone who receives God’s salvation by repenting of sin and putting faith in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and deliverance**

Disciple – **a believer who carefully and regularly studies God’s Word to apply to his/her life**

Apostle – **one “sent out” on a mission. (The disciples became apostles after the Great Commission, as later did Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Luke, etc....)**

Which one am I? **(individual response – just looking for honesty among people present)**

True disciple? **V.31 says disciples must “abide in Jesus’ Word” so they will know truth.**

2) In v.32 Jesus says that His disciples “will know the truth, and this truth will set them free.” From vs. 33-34, it is clear that the Jews did not understand Jesus’ meaning that day. How did the Jews understand Jesus’ statement (v.33), and what did Jesus tell them it meant (v.34)? Consider these verses on the key subject: Romans 6:15-18; 7:13-8:4; 2 Timothy 2:22-26; and 2 Peter 2:18-22.

Jews’ understanding – **(Like Americans), we have never been enslaved by any other country!**

Jesus’ meaning – **People who sin are enslaved to sin (v.34). Jesus gives us this truth to grasp, hoping to lead us to salvation (v.32). If we are still living in sin, we are sin’s slaves!**

3) Do you live in this freedom? What would help you to be more successful? Who guarantees this (v.36)?

Live in freedom now? **(Personal responses. Most people will acknowledge they still struggle...)**
To be more successful? **(Something along the lines of living in greater obedience to Christ, of remaining close to Him [abiding], perhaps 'walking in the Spirit' [Galatians 5:22-25]).**
Who guarantees? **V.36 – If the Son (Jesus) sets you free, you will be free indeed.**

4) Jesus speaks of two "fathers" influencing human lives on earth. Who are these two (vs. 38, 42-44)? How does Jesus bluntly describe the Jews' father (not God in heaven, v.44)?

Two fathers – **God our heavenly Father, and the devil (Satan) who is the father of this world.**
Description – Jesus describes the devil as "a murderer from the beginning who does not stand in the truth." "When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." ---- **TRUTH is not found in Satan, only lies and death!**

5) The Jews --- like the Arabs (and all Muslims, by faith) --- cite their lineage to Father Abraham, a great man of faith. Does proving this lineage bring the truth & freedom Jesus talked about? Please explain. Consider Romans 4, especially vs. 3-8, 13, 16-25, and Romans 9:6-8.

Romans teaches that Abraham's children are not those of his physical lineage, but those who live by his faith in God producing righteous works. Neither the Jews (Isaac) nor Muslims (Ishmael) are his "true" descendants without this vital faith in the God who called him.

6) Can just anyone understand God's Word? Who hears God's Word? What can you do as Christ's ambassador knowing this reality? **Can anyone understand? No**

Luke 8:5-15 – People respond differently to hearing the Gospel (rejecting or receiving it).

Acts 28:25-27 – Some people simply live life with dull hearts and ears, and eyes closed, to God.

1 Corinthians 1:18-29; 2:12-14 – People who are perishing consider God's Word "foolishness." They may want to be entertained with miraculous signs and may seek after great knowledge, but God's Word is beyond their understanding without God's Spirit revealing it. Naturally, people do not accept the things of the (Holy) Spirit of God; to them the Holy Spirit and God's Word are just nonsense (folly).

2 Corinthians 4:1-5 – The god of this world (Satan, the devil) blinds the minds of unbelievers.

Ephesians 4:17-19 – People without God, in ignorance, develop hardened, callous hearts.

Hebrews 5:11-6:3 – Even believers can develop dull ears that need to have the basic Christian teachings repeated, rather than growing up (maturing) in the faith !

Who can hear God's Word? **People controlled by the Spirit of God can understand God's Word.**

What can Christ's ambassadors do (2 Corinthians 5:17-20)? **We share scriptures that point to Jesus as Savior and Deliverer, but only the Holy Spirit can bring them to the point of faith.**

People and situations I want to pray for this week: