



ABIDE IN MY WORD

Invite someone from the group to share their faith story. A helpful approach to sharing a testimony is to focus on life before Jesus, meeting Jesus, and life since coming to saving faith in Jesus. Then take some time to encourage and pray for that person. If time allows, share evidences of God's grace that you have observed this past week.

OPENING COMMENT

As we read the Gospel of John, we discover the world is not just divided into two groups: disciples of Jesus and non-disciples. "... *these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*" (20:31) - John wrote his gospel not just to wake up the faith in non-disciples, but also to challenge people who think they are disciples but are not, and to help those who are disciples confirm their faith with certainty. John's gospel is written to sustain faith as well as create it, so that *whoever follows Jesus will have the light of life* and will see like never before and have life like never before - the freedom that comes from believing and living a life rooted in the gospel.

What was the truth or lesson that was impressed on your heart the most from Sunday's sermon?

OPEN YOUR BIBLE AND READ: John 8:31-47 (esv)

"³¹So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples. ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." ³³They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

³⁴Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.



³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. ³⁸I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

³⁹They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, ⁴⁰but 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. ⁴¹You are doing the works your father did." ... continue reading to verse 47

Who Are True Disciples of Jesus?

1. True disciples of Jesus abide in the word of Jesus (v31). What does *abide in my word* mean?
2. Read together Luke 8:4-8 - Jesus describes 4 soil conditions = 4 heart conditions: all 4 hearts were present in the crowd that listened to Jesus that day, and all 4 are present in churches today. Identify the 4 heart conditions represented in the soil. Which soil represents "saved" people?
3. If in your conversation about the previous questions you stated that the 2nd and 3rd soils saved, though it would bring comfort for those who fall into these descriptions, the parable offers them no comfort. The 2nd soil "fell away" (v13) and faith is not mentioned in the 3rd soil, but only being drawn to lesser pleasures.
4. What challenging questions emerge from your conversation?
5. As I hear this parable explained, which soil am I? What is the condition of my heart today?
6. How do I help myself and others, who are anything but soil 4, abide in Jesus word?

What Are True Disciples Freed From?

1. Jesus is telling the crowd that their slavery to sin is far worse than any other problem in the world. How is individual, and cumulative societal slavery to sin far worse than we usually think, when we hear about "sin"?
2. Discuss how abiding in Jesus' word leads to knowing the truth, which leads to freedom from the enslaving power of sin and sin's eternal ramifications.
3. Give some personal examples of coming to discover the beauty of the gospel, freedom in Christ, outweighing a particular lesser pleasure.



What Are True Disciples of Jesus Freed For?

1. The parable in Luke 8 ends by describing the soft hearted, yielding a crop of 100 fold! Discuss how fleeting pleasures haven't compared with the spiritual fruit that has grown in you life.
2. As we abide in the Gospel it fills, frees and fuels us. Abraham's belief in God caused him to follow God wherever God desired (Hebrews 11:8-10). It even caused the Apostle Paul to use his freedom to work harder than anyone (1 Corinthians 15:10). This freedom doesn't produce idleness and passivity. It leads to fruitful, missional living. What is holding you back?

CONCLUSION

"The only use of God's Word that bears fruit is one that clings to it with patient steadfastness and a solid heart - a heart that says the most urgent task is to walk through life with all of its traumas, clinging tightly to God's hand and his Word." Darrell Bock

SHARE AND PRAY

- Pray for each other, pray over sensitive/challenging stories shared.
- If your group experiences a time of confession, don't rush, allow the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of your group members. Take time to pray for those who trusted the group with their hidden secrets.
- Pray that God would give us all the courage to truly abide in Jesus, to grow in knowledge and truth, to spur each other on to live for His glory and the good of a world in need of saving.
- Conclude by praying for those in your life that you desire to discover true freedom in Christ.

