

The Truth Will Set You Free

“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” –Jesus (**John 8:32**, ESV).

But the Pharisees misunderstood. “We are the offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone” (**John 8:33**, ESV). They completely missed the point. First, they were wrong. Had they forgotten their enslavement in Egypt? Had they forgotten the enslavement of the northern tribes in Assyria and the southern in Babylon? Even as they said these words they were enslaved to Rome.

However, Jesus wasn't even talking about this kind of enslavement. He answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin” (**John 8:34**, ESV). The Pharisees were bound up in their sins. If they wanted freedom, they needed to come to the truth.

I know I often like to quote **John 8:32**, but have you noticed **John 8:31** in a while? Jesus began by saying, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth...” (ESV). How are we going to know the truth? How will we be set free? By abiding in the word of Christ. Please don't miss this. The Bible is not our homework assignment; it is our ticket to freedom. As Peter said to Jesus in **John 6:68**, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life...” (ESV). The Bible is not our ball and chain; it is our word of life. As **John 17:17** says, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (ESV). God's word is the truth that can set us free. That is where we meet Jesus and learn about Him as the truth. But what exactly does that mean?

Certainly, one aspect of this is knowing God's pattern for our lives and our churches. It is by discerning God's direction for our lives that we gain truth. For instance, God said we should put away falsehood and instead tell the truth in love (**Ephesians 4:25**). If we don't know that bit of truth, we will more readily be enslaved to lying. As a church, we recognize the truth in God's word that a local church's work is to glorify God (**Ephesians 3:21**) and to uphold the truth (**I Timothy 3:15**). The congregation's work is not to lead political rallies, implement secular education initiatives, or provide for societal welfare. Certainly, if we don't study God's word and see this, we can be enslaved to the wrong work in the church and that will impact our individual spirituality whether we realize it or not.

But I don't think the issue of knowing the truth stops at understanding these doctrinal matters. The fact is, I've met many people and even have been the kind of person that knew the answers about what sin is and what isn't. There are numerous people who could debate with accuracy what God's pattern is for the local congregation. Yet, we keep falling in to sin. The problem is not that we don't know what the truth is about those things. There are some other underlying lies that we believe.

What kind of lies need to be shattered by the truth to set us free from these sins? Remember, Satan is the father of lies and has been lying since the beginning. He is good at it. These lies may not be completely obvious. I'd like your feedback on this. Send me an e-mail this week with your thoughts at minister@brownsburgchurch.info and we'll continue this article in next week's bulletin.

Have a great week.

—Edwin L. Crozier