

Slave or Son?

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Date: 21 February 2021

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[0 : 00] But if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, and if we just read again at verse 31.

John 8 at verse 31, where we're told, So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, If you abide in my word, you are my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. As a family, we recently watched a Christian film called Overcomer.

Overcomer. And I have to admit, it's a brilliant film. It's not like other Christian films that can sometimes be, could I say, tacky and tasteless.

And maybe some of them are even misleading and misrepresent the truths of the gospel. But the film Overcomer, I would say it's well worth watching. Its title is based upon the words of 1 John 5, verse 5, where the Apostle John, who is the same author of the gospel of John, John asks the question, And in many ways, that's what the film is all about.

[1 : 30] It's all about overcoming the world by believing and trusting in Jesus Christ for every area of your life. Now, I don't want to spoil the film for you, because I want you to watch it.

I want you to watch the film Overcomer. But in the film, there's this scene where the main characters ask the question, Who are you? Who are you?

And rather than identifying himself, first and foremost, as a Christian, he identifies himself as a teacher, a husband, a father, and then a Christian.

His identity as a Christian was way down the list, which only highlighted that his identity in Christ wasn't his priority.

And that question, who are you? It's what the film is all about. Because the whole premise of the film is that the way to overcome the world is not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the gospel.

[2 : 36] Because our identity, it isn't defined by our job, or our family, or our income, or our possessions, or our sexuality, or even by the culture that surrounds us.

No, as a Christian, our identity is in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone. And you know, it's when he's encouraged to read Ephesians chapter 1 and 2, and write down everything that the Bible says who you are.

It's then that the main character discovers their true identity. And you know, that would actually be a great thing for you to do this afternoon. And we did it after we watched the film.

We read through Ephesians 1 and 2, and wrote down everything the Bible says who you are. And what you'll discover is that the answer to the question, who are you, is that in Christ, as a Christian, you can say, I'm blessed, I'm chosen, I'm adopted, I'm redeemed, I'm forgiven, I'm sealed, I'm loved, I'm saved, and I'm a child of God.

That's who you are as a Christian. That's who you are. My friend, who are you? Who are you? Because, you know, that's the question that Jesus is asking this morning in this passage.

[4 : 01] He's asking the question, who are you? And what he's asking is, are you a slave or a son? Are you a slave or a son?

Who are you? Who are you? And, you know, I'd like to just consider this passage this morning under three headings. Three headings.

A freedom in the son, a father through the son, and a foreshadowing of the son. A freedom in the son, a father through the son, and a foreshadowing of the son.

So, first of all, a freedom in the son. A freedom in the son. And we'll look at verse 31 again. Where Jesus said to the Jews who had believed 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. 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. [5:11] You know, in chapter 7, 8, and 9 of John's Gospel, they form one scene. And, as you know, the scene is the Feast of Tabernacles.

It was that annual festival which the Jews celebrated and commemorated the Lord's provision and protection of the children of Israel during their 40 years of wandering through the wilderness. But it was while attending the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, you'll remember that Jesus declared and he disclosed his true identity as the Christ. That he is the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

He is the Lord's provision and the Lord's protection of salvation of his people. And you'll remember that it was during the morning water ritual. We saw this in John 7.

It was during the morning water ritual that Jesus stood up and he spoke into the silence. And he said, If anyone thirsts, let him come unto me and drink.

[6:14] And then during the evening ritual, on the last day, on the great day, Jesus declared and he disclosed his identity as the Christ by saying, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. Jesus indicated and insisted that to follow him and to believe in him and to trust in him, to come, call, commit and confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, Jesus said it will be light and life rather than darkness and death.

And as we read there in verse 31, many believed in him. Many had faith in Jesus Christ. But what's interesting is that it wasn't saving faith.

It wasn't saving faith. Because as our Bible reminds us, even if we say that we believe that God exists, and we believe the Bible to be true, and we believe that Jesus died on the cross to save sinners, that's not salvation.

That's not saving faith. Because as your Bible says, even the devils of hell believe that God exists, and that the Bible is true, and that Jesus died on the cross for sinners.

[7:37] The devils of hell believe, but they don't have saving faith. They don't have that personal and particular saving faith in Jesus Christ.

And what I mean by this is that faith has fruit, and commitment has consequences. Real saving faith has fruit, and commitment to Jesus Christ has consequences.

My friend, commitment to Jesus Christ brings confession. It brings change in your life. Because believing in Jesus is not just about knowledge or intellectual assent.

No, believing in Jesus Christ for salvation is about receiving Jesus Christ for salvation. Because as we've said before, Christianity is not a cause to join, or a code to follow.

It's a Christ to receive. It's a Christ to receive, as he's offered to us in the gospel. Therefore, in order to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation, you must receive Jesus Christ for salvation.

[8:45] And you do that through contrition of sin, through confession of the Son, and through commitment to the Saviour. That's why Jesus said to those who believed in him, he said in the end of verse 31, If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Jesus said that the evidence of your faith is that there will be fruit. Because fruit has, faith has fruit. Faith, saving faith, has fruit.

And so the evidence of your commitment to Jesus Christ is that there will be consequences. There will be confession, and there will be change in your life.

My friend, Jesus is saying to us this morning, the evidence of your faith is that you will live like a son and not a slave. The evidence of your faith is that you will live like a son and not a slave.

But when the Jews heard this, they immediately questioned Jesus in verse 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?

[10:03] So the Jews, they claim that they're already sons of God. They're not slaves. Because they're sons of Abraham. They're the offspring of Abraham. Because, you remember how God called Abraham.

He called him from the idolatrous land of Ar of the Chaldees. And he called him way back in Genesis 12. God made a covenant promise to Abraham.

I will make of you a great nation. And that great nation was the nation of Israel. Because they were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And then Jacob, he was renamed and he was called Israel. And the Jews were known as Israelites. And they were the children of Israel. And they became the nation of Israel.

But when God made that covenant promise with Abraham, he said, I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you.

[11 : 02] And him who dishonors you, I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth will be blessed. God promised to Abraham that through his seed, through his sons, the good news of the gospel was to go to all the nations of the world through the nation of Israel.

It was through the family of Abraham, through the physical sons and daughters of Abraham, it was through them that all the other families, all the families of the earth were to experience the blessing of God and the benefits of salvation.

And that was the missionary vision of God's covenant promise that we were singing about in Psalm 100. That all people that on earth do dwell would sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

But you know, what happened was that instead of bringing the blessing of God and the benefits of salvation to a lost world, the sons of Abraham kept it to themselves.

And as a nation, the Jews actually became so insular and so introverted and so inward-looking that they became proud.

[12 : 19] They became proud of their position and their posterity and even their practices to the point that they kept the good news of the gospel to themselves.

They kept the good news of the gospel to themselves. They wouldn't share it with anyone, not even their Samaritan neighbours. And it was because of this that the Jews sinned against God's covenant promise.

They sinned against their Saviour and they became slaves to their ceremonies and their sacrifices.

But we see in verse 34, 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. The Jews thought that they were sons.

But Jesus says that they were, in fact, slaves. They were slaves to sin. And they couldn't see that they were slaves to sin. Just like many people in our congregation and in our community, they can't see that they're slaves to sin.

[13 : 28] They can't see that they live every day of their lives in the darkness and dungeon of sin. And they can't see it because the God of this world has blinded their minds in unbelief.

And you know, they're so blinded. My unconverted friend, you're so blinded by the God of this world that you think that salvation is slavery. You think that confessing Christ and living as a committed Christian is actually captivity.

You think that redemption in Jesus is all about rules and regulations and rituals. You think that the blessing of God is boring and barring and binding.

But you know, it couldn't be further from the truth. It couldn't be further from the truth because true freedom, true liberty can only be found in the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners, Jesus Christ.

My friend, whilst you remain in your sin, you remain a slave to sin. You're a slave to sin. But what Jesus is saying to you this morning is that if you come to the Son and if the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed.

[14 : 41] If you come to the Son and if the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed. My friend, there's salvation in the Son. There's freedom in forgiveness.

There's liberty in the life and light of Jesus Christ. So you need to come to the Son because the Son will set you free.

And you know, that's what Charles Wesley came to discover. And that's why he wrote that beautiful hymn. he wrote the words, Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night.

Thine eye diffused a quickening ray. I woke the dungeon flamed with light. My chains fell off. My heart was free. I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

My friend, the gospel message to you this morning is that God sent forth his Son so that in him you can be transformed from a slave to a son.

[15 : 45] My friend, who are you? Who are you? Are you a slave or a son? Because there's freedom in the Son. And then secondly, there's a father through the Son.

So a freedom in the Son and a father through the Son. A father through the Son. Look at verse 37. 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. So as Jesus continued to address the Jews, he asserted and affirmed that even though they were sons of Abraham, they were not the sons of God.

Because as Jesus says, my word finds no place in you. Literally, Jesus was saying, my word finds no room in your heart.

My word finds no room in your heart. And my friend, that's what Jesus says to everyone who is a slave and not a son. Jesus says, my word finds no room in your heart.

[16:59] He says, yes, you believe in the existence of God. Yes, you believe that the word of God is true. Yes, you believe that Jesus died to save sinners, but that's not saving faith.

It's not a personal faith. It's not a particular faith. Because the words of Jesus find no place in your heart. My friend, is it true to say about you this morning that you're unwilling to submit and surrender to the authority of Jesus Christ.

You're unwilling to bow your knee and confess him as Lord. And as a slave, Jesus says, your father is not my father.

Your father is not my father. He says in verse 39, they answered him, Abraham is our father. 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.

And again, Jesus, he asserts and affirms to the Jews that they're not the sons of God because they're seeking to kill him. And because they're seeking to kill him, they're also not acting the way that Abraham did.

[18:12] Yes, they were sons of Abraham. They had received the covenant sign of circumcision that was given to Abraham. But Abraham was obedient to God's covenant promise.

Abraham walked by faith and not by sight. Abraham was saved by grace through faith and not by works. Abraham's faith, we're told, in Genesis, in Genesis 15, it was counted to him as righteousness.

Abraham's righteousness before God was not by his works, but by his faith. And you know, Jesus was asserting and affirming to the Jews that they were unrighteous before God and they were unfit for heaven.

They were unrighteous before God and they were unfit for heaven because as sons of Abraham, they thought that they were righteous in God's sight. They thought that they had inherited salvation from their parents.

They thought that they had been justified by their works before a holy God. They thought that through their law keeping and their feast attending and their ritual participating and their outward living, they thought that they were saved.

[19:27] And you know, my friend, there are many people like them. Many people like them. Maybe you are like them. Maybe you think that you can justify yourself before God by claiming that you've been baptized or you have Christian parents or you went to Sunday school when you were a child or you attend church or you watch online now.

Maybe you think that you're safe because, well, you read the Bible now and again or you pray sometimes or you tithe your money or you help those in need.

You know, sadly some people think that they're saved just because they're a member in the church or they've sat at the Lord's table or they're a deacon or they're an elder or they're a minister. But my friend, not one of these things will make us righteous before a holy God.

Only faith alone in Christ alone. Only faith alone in Christ alone will make us righteous. And you know, this is something people have struggled to come to terms with for generations.

Even in the first century, they wrongly believed that it was what they did that made them acceptable to God. But as Paul explained in his letter to the Galatians, we are justified not by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ.

[20:53] In fact, Paul used the same illustration, the illustration of Abraham and he explained his point by saying in Galatians 3 that God preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham and he preached with the covenant promise, in you shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

And Paul says, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. For the righteous shall live by faith.

but he says, all those who rely on the works of the law are cursed. And that's what Jesus is saying here. That by refusing to live and walk by faith, you're not living as a son.

You're living as a slave. You're living as a slave to your father, says Jesus. And your father is the devil. Your father is the devil, he says.

He's a liar from the beginning. He doesn't tell you the truth because he's always telling you to do more and try harder and be a better person and then God will accept you, then heaven will be open to you.

[22 : 06] But that's not living as a son, my friend. That's living as a slave. That's living in constant disappointment and despair, thinking that you'll never be able to please God because the truth is you'll never do enough.

And you'll never try hard enough and you'll never be good enough to be acceptable to God. Do you know, my friend, what makes you acceptable to God is when you live as a son and not a slave.

That's why Jesus says in verse 42, if God were your father, you would love me. If God were your father, you would love me.

If God were your father, you would live by faith, not fear. If God were your father, you would be obedient, not out of a sense of duty, but out of a sense of devotion. If God were your father, you would respond to Jesus in love, not with the law.

My friend, what Jesus is saying to you this morning is that you need to live as a son and not a slave. You need to live as a son and not a slave.

[23 : 15] You need to have God as your father. You need to experience and enjoy God as the father through the son. It's all through the son.

My friend, you need to come home like the prodigal. You need to come home like the prodigal and live as a son and not a slave.

You need to come home like the prodigal. You remember how he was out in the far country and he came to the end of himself and he actually came home and offered to his father to be a slave.

But his father said, no, you're my son. And you know, my friend, that's what we need to live like. We need to live as a son and not a slave.

But the question arises, how can you be transformed from a slave to a son? How do you experience and enjoy a father through the son? You receive adoption through the son.

[24 : 18] And you receive adoption through the son by receiving the son. You receive adoption through the son by receiving the son. You know, all this goes back to what we were saying earlier, that believing in Jesus Christ for salvation is receiving Jesus Christ for salvation.

salvation. Because Jesus Christ, he is freely offered to you in the gospel. But in order to receive Jesus Christ for salvation, you must come to him.

You must come to him with contrition of sin. You must come to him with confession of the son. You must come to him with commitment to the savior. My friend, in order to be transformed from a slave to a son or a daughter of your heavenly father, you must receive the son.

You must receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. You must ask. You must seek. You must knock. Because the Bible asserts and affirms and even assures you this morning that when you receive Jesus Christ as he's freely offered to you in the gospel, you will experience and enjoy no condemnation and no separation.

But more than that, you will receive that spirit of adoption in which you are able to cry, Abba, Father. You know, that's what Paul teaches us in Romans 8.

[25 : 42] That when you receive Jesus Christ as your savior, you're in Christ. You're in union with Christ. Your identity is in Christ.

You're a Christian. And whenever anybody asks you, who are you? You are a Christian. You are in Christ. And as a Christian, you receive that spirit of adoption which encourages you and enables you every day of your life.

Whether you are faced with sin, suffering, sickness, or sorrow, you're being taught that you can pray our Father which art in heaven.

My friend, Jesus is saying to you this morning, who are you? Who are you? Are you a slave? Or a son? Are you a slave or a son?

Because there's a freedom in the son. There's a father through the son. And then lastly and briefly we see at the end of the chapter a foreshadowing of the son.

[26 : 47] A freedom in the son, a father through the son, and a foreshadowing of the son. Look at verse 56, the end of the chapter. Jesus says, Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day.

He saw it and was glad. So the Jews said to him, You're not yet 50 years old and have you seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. So they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. Now as Jesus continued debating and discussing his identity as the son of God, he affirmed and he asserted and he even assured the Jews and us that there's a freedom in the son.

And there's a father through the son. But then Jesus said that there was also a foreshadowing of the son. He said in verse 56, Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day.

He saw it and was glad. As we said, Abraham was to be the father of many nations because he was given that covenant promise that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

[28 : 05] And as you know, Abraham's seed or Abraham's son was Isaac. Isaac was the son of promise. But you'll remember in Genesis 22, which was around 2000 BC, in Genesis 22, God tested Abraham.

God said to Abraham, Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering.

And Abraham, he submitted and he surrendered to the will of God and he took Isaac to offer him as a burnt offering. But Isaac, he wasn't aware of what was going to happen because as they walked to the place of sacrifice, Isaac asked his father Abraham, he said, Father, we have the fire and the wood, but where is a lamb for a burnt offering?

And Abraham, he responded in faith by saying, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. God will provide himself as a lamb for a burnt offering.

And you know the history. The angel of the Lord stopped Abraham from sacrificing his only son and Abraham called the name of that place, Jehovah Jireh, the Lord is my provider.

[29 : 33] And the provision the Lord made was in the person of Jesus Christ. It was for that reason that Jesus said to the Jews, your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day.

He saw it and was glad. Jesus said, Abraham rejoiced in the experience of his son Isaac because he saw a foreshadowing of the son.

He saw a foreshadowing of the son. Abraham rejoiced to see that God would keep his covenant promise. Abraham rejoiced to see that God would provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.

God would provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. Then in verse 57 we're told, the Jews said to him, you're not yet 50 years old and have you seen Abraham?

Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. Before Abraham was, I am.

[30 : 37] You know, the name I am, it's a divine title and it literally means the one who keeps covenant. The one who keeps covenant. And that's what Jesus was saying.

I am the one who keeps covenant. I am the promised seed of Abraham. I am the one through whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed. I am the lamb for the burnt offering.

I am the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. I am the only begotten of the Father and it's through me, the great I am, that you'll be transformed from a slave to a son.

For if the son sets you free, says Jesus, you will be free indeed. If the son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

my friend, Jesus is asking you this morning, who are you? Who are you? Are you a slave or a son?

[31 : 43] Because you know, having discovered that there's a freedom in the son and a father through the son and we've seen a foreshadowing of the son, you know, there's no reason why you should be a slave and not a son.

There's no reason why you should remain as a slave and not become a son because in order to be transformed from a slave to a son or a daughter of your heavenly father, you must receive the son. You must receive Jesus Christ for salvation as he's freely offered to you this morning in the gospel. My friend, who are you?

Are you a slave? Or a son? Who are you? May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks that Jesus is able to free us, to free us from the bondage of sin and death, that he is able to loosen our shackles, that he is able to allow us to come freely out of prison and to

know that we are able to experience that freedom and forgiveness that is in Jesus Christ.

[33 : 00] O Lord, we give thanks that in Jesus we are able to know God as our Father and that we are able to experience all the blessings and all the benefits of salvation that were promised to Abraham long ago, that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed.

Lord, bless our families, bless our loved ones, bless us in our own souls that we would know Jesus and all his promises. O Lord, encourage us, we pray, to be children, children of God and to live as sons and daughters of the King.

All go before us then, we pray. Bless us, we ask, for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to bring our service to our conclusion this morning.

We're going to sing the words of Psalm 105. Psalm 105, and we're singing verses 1 to 11. This is in the Sing Psalms version.

Psalm 105, and we're singing from the beginning. Give thanks to the Lord God and call on his name. His wonderful deeds to the nations proclaim. Sing praises to him and his exploits record.

[34 : 14] Let all those who seek him rejoice in the Lord. We'll sing these verses of Psalm 105 to God's praise. Give thanks to the Lord for the Father in his name.

His wonderful deeds to the nations proclaim. Sing praises to him and his exploits before.

Let all those who seek him rejoice in the Lord. You've chosen ones too to the Lord and his might.

He never his faith and his wonders beside. His miracles too and his judgments divine.

You children of Abraham, Jacob's own mind. The Lord is our hope and he rules all the earth remembering his covenant the word he's death for.

[35 : 39] He bowed for the ages to come to make fruit and his promise his promise to wake them to life and renew.

To Jacob is sovereign we must make sure with Israel his covenant would always endure.

To you I will give as your fortune to stand, the country of kingdom, the beautiful land.