

A Claim that Stunned the World

“Learning Jesus” (The Gospel of John)
John 8:48-59

June 9, 2019

BIG IDEA

Many dismissed Jesus. The Lord’s claim that He is the Eternal God is a unique claim. It’s an over the top claim. It’s a saving claim. Then, as now, it is a claim that stunned the world. In order to find eternal life, it’s vitally important that you believe it.

THIS WEEK’S SCRIPTURE

Context:

Many Jewish leaders were blinded by sin. Jesus kept telling them truth but they traded it for a lie. In their minds, as descendants of Abraham, they didn’t need what Jesus was peddling: forgiveness of sins. As far as they were concerned, their birthright gave them that. But Jesus kept telling them: If you were really followers of God, you would follow me.

Those are the basics of the narrative that John chronicles from verses 31-50. But now things were heating up. He was about to make a claim that would send them into a frenzy and would change human history.

John 8:51-59

Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”⁵² The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?”⁵⁴ Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’⁵⁵ But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word.⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”⁵⁷ So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?”⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

1. The Lord's Ultimate Mission is to Offer Life

John 8:51 – *“Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”*

With a strong assertion of “Truly, truly” (or, “I tell you the truth”), Jesus asserts that if a person keeps His words (equivalent to remaining in Jesus’ word)...he will never see death.

- a. **Jesus made it clear that He is the author of life. What do the words “never see death” mean to you? What do you fear most about death? Does this phrase take the fear of physical death away?**

- b. **The Jewish leaders didn’t think they needed Jesus in order to be saved and find eternal life. What do you think? Have you invited Him to be your Lord and Savior?**

2. Hard Hearts Think Only in Human Terms

John 8:53 – *Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?*

These Jewish non-believers were stuck. They couldn’t see spiritually. They were depending on their position as literal descendants of Abraham for their eternal future. That was a big mistake.

- a. **When our hearts turn hard, we have a difficult time thinking spiritually. What are some of the things that cause you to become bitter or harden your heart toward God?**



5. Jesus Offers Real Freedom Based on His Undeniable Divinity

John 8:32; 58 – ³² “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”.... ⁵⁸ **Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”**

Now Jesus had the platform He needed to fully introduce Himself. They didn't like it. The claim dismissed them as frauds. The claim demanded obedience of them. The claim stripped them of their privilege. They didn't accept the Lord's gift of freedom because freedom requires submission and faith.

a. Culture teaches us that we are free when we do our own thing. Yet these leaders were in bondage to sin. How do we get free?

b. From your experience with Jesus, what does freedom in Christ look like?

c. The Jewish leaders stoned Jesus (8:59). Their loyalty was to tradition, the past, and to their own religiosity. Where is your allegiance?

6. Practical Takeaways

a. Don't rely on religiosity to be saved. Why are people likely to count on religious systems rather than a relationship with Christ? How can you help others see that Jesus is the only way to be saved?



- b. Look for and accept truth. When you read the Word and pray, be open to what God tells you so your heart doesn't get hard like these men.**
- c. Believe in Jesus and find life. The Bible exhorts us to believe in Jesus and be saved. This is the point of the Gospel of John. Now would be a good time to believe. Your life will never be the same.**

PRAY

Dear Lord, help my heart to be soft. Give me listening ears. I do believe that you are the great I AM. What an amazing thought: The God of eternity dwells in me! Help me to walk with you and never lose my faith. Protect me from the enemy who tears at my soul. Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- [*The Gospel: The Power of God for Salvation*](#) – a book from Matthew T. Beckish
- [*The Imperfect Disciple: Grace for People Who Can't Get Their Act Together*](#) – a book from Jared C. Wilson

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

The redemptive work of Christ and preparation for his departure: Serving the disciples by washing their feet and cleansing them. (John 13:1-20)

