

John 8 (Part 3) :31–59 • Jesus and the Truth

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We're going to talk this morning about abiding in truth. So open your Bible to John chapter 8. I'm just going to read the first couple of verses, but then we're going to make our way through the rest of the chapter. But I want to set it up with the first couple of verses, which is verse 31 and 32. So skip down 8, chapter 8 verses 31 and 32. Goes like this,

"³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'"

Let's pray. Father God, we come before You with humble hearts, longing to be fed today spiritually to open our hearts, Lord, all that You want to say. All that You want to show us and teach us. And so, Lord, we incline our ear to hear Your voice. Help us, Father. Help us to tune in and really hear what You have to say. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

I don't know how familiar you are with this passage. We're going to go on and look at the other verses but, this first verse that we're looking at here this morning presents us with somewhat of a problem. Because John writes in verse 31 that Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him.

But then He goes on in this conversation as you're going to see in just a bit, and He confronts them with being children of the devil. He calls them liars. And He says, that they have no room in their hearts for His word. And that seems really strange to you and me when we read this and we begin, and it begins by saying that He begin to talk, He talked to those who believed Him. And we're thinking in what universe are those who believe Him later on to be referred to as sons of the devil, liars and people with no room in their heart for His word.

And I think to myself, or I was asking myself as I was asking this same question, what else do we see in the Bible, that might help us to understand this apparent contradiction, between someone being referred to as a believer, or at least believing Him at some level. But then having no room in their heart for His word.

And I thought about the parable of the sower, (Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15) which Jesus told. And we won't take time to look at it because I'm pretty sure most of you are familiar with it. The Bible says there was a, and this is a story of course Jesus is telling, about a man went out to sow his field. And he apparently wasn't very good at it. Because he scattered it everywhere. Some of the seed fell along the hard path that people had been walking on, and of course that seed did nothing. Birds came and ate it up. But the other three soil types that Jesus talked about were very interesting.

One of the soil types was good soil, and we know that the seed actually made its way into the soil, germinated, took root and eventually bore fruit. But there were two soil types that Jesus made reference to in that parable that didn't do so well. At least not, you know, after a while. And they were, you'll remember, the rocky soil, and when it says rocky, it doesn't mean rocks mixed in with the soil, it means that there was this thin layer of soil. Underneath there was this rock bed that kept the root from actually getting down and becoming established. And that sort of thing. And then there was the thorny soil. And that seed took root, and the roots went down okay, but as it grew up, it was choked out by the thorns and the weeds and stuff that grew up around it.

So, I got to thinking about those two soil types where Jesus said those represent people who received the Word with joy, but then didn't last very long. Because of the various situations that He talked about in that parable. So I thought, well, there's your precedent. There's your understanding that we get from the Word, that it is possible to hear the Word and to even kind of go, yeah that's good. I like that. That's good, Word, but really never allow the Word to take root in your life and to continue on and to abide in that Word, and so forth.

So that's what Jesus is talking about with these people. And He begins, and you'll notice, and I think this is why He starts off by saying to them, if you abide in my word, I think He knew, well, of course He does, Jesus knew. Jesus knew that these were the kind of people that weren't going to abide. They just weren't going to. They weren't abiding in the word. They heard enough to kind of tickle their ears. And they believed what they heard as far as it went, but Jesus knew it wasn't going to go much further.

So He challenged them and said if you abide in my word, and that is the critical phrase that we really want to kind of focus on here this morning. Because the word "abide" is key. And the word abide, if you look it up in your Greek dictionary, it means exactly what you would expect it to mean. It means to continue, to endure, to stay, to remain. Yeah, that's pretty much what we thought it would mean.

And so Jesus is saying here, if you continue, if you remain, if you endure in My word, then there's a promise that goes along with it, *"you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* And Jesus is revealing something to us about the truth. And that is, that the truth has a liberating ability. We'll talk about what it liberates us from in a moment.

But the problem is some people don't want to hear the truth. And that was the case with these people. And just by saying to them, the truth will set you free, that just set these guys off. And, in verse 33, they said, what are you even talking about? We're offspring of Abraham, we've never been enslaved to anybody. How can You say we can be set free?

And you're kind of like, did you guys even ever read your Old Testament, your Hebrew scriptures? Jesus was very gracious not to give them a history lesson. He could have done so. He could have said, um, what do you think happened in Egypt? What do you think happened after you guys got back to your land and then you messed up? And then you were taken captive by the Babylonians and later by the Persians? What do you think happened with the Philistines? And by the way, right now you are under military rule by Rome. What do you mean you've never been enslaved to anybody? What a ridiculous statement.

Well, but the fact of the matter, you can see what's going on in their hearts. They have no room for the word of God. But you know what Jesus is talking about isn't really even that kind of slavery. He goes on in verse 34 to say,

"34...Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you'll (you will) be free indeed."

And He's using an example that they would've been very familiar with. And that is, in that culture, they knew and understood that a slave really had no ability to free himself from his position of slavery. That required somebody who was free to do that for him. And Jesus is making the statement that since He is free, and He's the only free One who is perfectly free, He is able to set us free from whatever, bondage or slavery we may be under. And we'll talk about, what He's dealing with here in just a minute.

But He kind of gets into the crux of the situation in the next few verses. If you look with me there beginning in verse 37, by talking to them about to whom they belong. Because this is the critical part He says. He says, listen, *"37 I know you're (you are) the offspring of Abraham;"* In other words, I know that you have that DNA connection, but that's not what I'm talking about here.

He says, *"yet you seek to kill me because my (and this is important,) my word finds no place in you. (You might consider underlining that in your Bible.) 38 I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."* And they said, what do you mean our father? *'39...Abraham is our father."* Jesus said to them, *"If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works of Abraham (works Abraham did), 40 but now you seek to kill me, a man who (and this is important,) who has told you the truth. (that's what Jesus said,) that I heard from God. And, This is, He says, "not what Abraham did"*

In other words, He's saying, Abraham was told some truths. And he didn't get all angry and offended and have hurt feelings and say, well, I don't believe that. But that's what we do today in our culture, don't we?

I was reading a news headline just this last - I don't really read the news, I just read the headlines. That's enough to you know, bum me out. But I was reading a headline, maybe you saw it, about a championship swimmer who was making a speech, a statement about all of the, well, about competition in swimming. And she was making the point that she felt that it was unfair for biological males who identified as women, to compete against biological women because it just created an unfair advantage. And I don't know if you read, but after her speech, the University president where she had given this talk, apparently made the statement that this woman's comments were, and I quote, "deeply traumatic to the Trans community."

May I suggest to you that the truth is deeply traumatic. The truth is offensive. Now, I'm not saying that to give you permission to go and be a jerk. And to be cruel to people when you share the truth. We're told in the word to, speak the truth in love. (Ephesians 4:15). Right? And I believe that's what Jesus is doing. But still people are going to be offended when we share the truth.

So Jesus goes on here, you can tell He is not letting up. Verse 41. He says, *"41 You're (you are) doing the works your father did." They say (said) to him, 'We weren't (were not) born of sexual immorality. We have one Father...It's God.'* And *42 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. 43 Why do you not understand what I say? (And here, this is so important, the end of verse 43, again guys, may be something to underline in your Bible) It is because you cannot bear to hear my word'"*

People, do you understand that there are folks in the world today, and maybe you were one of them at one time, who cannot bear to hear the word of God.

They can't bear it. Have you ever been in a situation where you just said, I just can't bear this. Maybe it's like anxiety, or fear, or just noise, or something you just said, I just can't bear this. Well, there are people in the world that can't bear to hear the truth. They can't bear it. They're like, no, I'm not going to hear it.

Well, Jesus doesn't back down. Verse 44, He says, "You're (⁴⁴*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 (check this out people) *does not stand in the truth, because there's no truth in him.* (In fact, Jesus said,) *When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*"

Now, Jesus is giving you and me some pretty valuable insight into the character of the evil one. And he says here that he's "the father of lies." You know, I hope, that when the Bible says that someone is the father of something, that he is the originator of it. He's the source.

So some people will say to me, pastor Paul, where does sin and deception and all that stuff come from? Well it comes from Satan. He's the source. Jesus told us that, he's "the father of lies." There's no truth in him. When he speaks, he can't help but speak lies. He can't help it. I would encourage you not to have a conversation with Satan, or any of his minions. Because they cannot speak truth. They are unable to speak truth. There's no truth in them. Whereas, Jesus says, *"I am the truth."*

Well, the point that Jesus is making is that they, the Jews that were listening to Him at that time, are acting in a manner that was consistent with the character of the devil, not with the God they claimed to believe in, okay? And the reason is because they have no room in their hearts for the truth.

I want you to notice what He goes on to say in verse 45. He says, "⁴⁵*But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me.*" In other words, what He's saying here is, you are reacting to my telling the truth by your rejection of it. You with me? He's saying that's how you react to the truth.

It's kind of like how your body reacts when the doctor hits that little spot on your knee with his little rubber hammer. And your leg goes "boing" completely without you even trying. It's just, we call that a "knee-jerk reaction." Well, Jesus is telling them, your "knee-jerk reaction" to the truth is to say, nope. Rejected. Because they have no room. No room in their heart.

If I wanted you to finish a statement made by Jesus, and I'm not asking you to speak out, but if I said to you, that Jesus once defined why He came to earth

what was his purpose of coming to earth, what would you say? What would you say? I'm willing to bet that 9 out of 10 of you would say, well, He came to die on the cross for our sins, that's easy. But do you know that's not what Jesus said that was His purpose. Let me show you on the screen. This is later on in our study of John,

John 18:37b (ESV)

"For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world - to bear witness to the truth."

"For this purpose (Jesus said) I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world - to bear witness to the truth." That's why Jesus came. To bear witness to the truth. And that statement itself underscores what we're really looking at here in John chapter 8 in this study of John. About all the things that Jesus is saying to the people about truth, and how it has a liberating element, or characteristic to it, when we embrace it. But how some people can't bear to hear it and will in fact reject it when it is spoken. And this is why I came, He says, to bear witness to the truth.

But there's something else about the truth that is very important too. And it's found in a quote that Jesus actually read in the synagogue from the prophet Isaiah. Do you remember this when they handed him the scroll? Let me show you on the screen. From Isaiah, or I'm sorry, Luke I beg your pardon. Luke chapter 4. The passage is in Isaiah that He is reading.

Luke 4:17-21(ESV)

...the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

It says, "the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll, found the place where it was written. (Okay, here's what He reads) The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. He read that portion, rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, sat down, (because that's what they did back

then before they taught.) *And (it says) the eyes of all the people... were fixed on him.* And He started talking and He said, *"Today in your hearing, this prophecy is fulfilled."*

Now, Jesus made it clear that, that prophecy that He read from Isaiah was about Him. Because He said it's "fulfilled in your hearing." But that prophecy spoke of what Jesus would come to do. And I want to highlight, for just a moment, a portion of that on the screen. Look what it says.

Luke 4:17-21(ESV)

*...the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. **He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives** and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

Here's what He came to do, *"to proclaim liberty to the captives."* People, what are people captive to? The lies of the devil. That's what we're captive to. And that's why we enter into sin. It all begins with the captivity of hearing, you know, the voice of the enemy, believing it, and then having that begin to just rule our lives. Before we come to Christ, that's really all we know.

You remember what the Apostle John said, in his first Epistle about how we are all under the power of the enemy? Let me show you on the screen. 1 John 5:19,

1 John 5:19 (ESV)

We know that...the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

Well, what is the power of the evil one? Jesus told us. He is "the father of lies." That is his greatest power, is to get you to believe a lie. And this has been going on since the very beginning. We all, I think we all know the story of Genesis in chapter 3 when it all started. Here's Adam and Eve in the time of their innocence. And then we're told here up on the screen,

Genesis 3:1-5 (ESV)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit

of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

...that "the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, No, 'we can (may)eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that's (that is) in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" (look at this.) But the serpent said to the woman, (bald-faced lie) "You will not surely die."

What did he do? He contradicted God, didn't he. God said this, the enemy said no, that's not true. I know you heard God's truth statement, but I'm giving you my own truth statement. And He didn't tell it to you the way it was really true. You're not going to die. In fact, He just knows that when you eat the fruit, you're going to be like Him. And He doesn't want that. Do you see what's going on here?

So the man and the woman were faced with this conundrum. They had to grapple with this very simple sort of a situation. Are we going to trust what God said, or are we going to consider what the enemy said, and believe that perhaps the enemy has given us an inside track that we needed, to really look out for ourselves? In other words, they were faced with the decision of whether or not they were going to question God.

And you guys know how the story goes. And mankind has been questioning God ever since. Ever since. Did God really say... Now we don't need an enemy to whisper in our ear. Oh, it's just, it's in us through our sinful nature. We read something in the Bible and then we go, is that really, is that true? Did he really say that? Is that really the truth? We all think Satan's attacking us all the time. He did his damage a long time ago. He's been able to watch that rock roll down the hill for millennia. He doesn't have to push it anymore. It picks up speed as it goes.

And so, we have been questioning God's truth. But Paul the Apostle, tells us we don't just question God's truth, we've gone deeper than that. Look what he says in Romans chapter 1:8 (Correction 18) on the screen,

Romans 1:18 (ESV)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness (look at this) suppress the truth." Oh no no we're not just questioning the truth, we are actively, and I say "we" in the general sense of mankind, right, because we're all...you know. Mankind is actively suppressing the truth. Actively. And it's been going on for a long time.

Of course, we're seeing, I think we're seeing... We all think that we're living in the worst day and age. But I think we're living at a time when the suppression of truth has hit new heights. I really do. I mean, we're living in a day when people's social media accounts have been suspended, because they posted that "men can't get pregnant and have babies." And the social media goes, that's it you're done. How dare you say such a thing.

Hey, we're living in a day and age when truth is being actively suppressed. The vast majority of experts today refuse, on camera, to define a woman. A three-year-old can define a woman. But they're afraid. And whether some are willing to do it or not, they're afraid of you know... And rightly so probably. The fear of the backlash that's going to happen if they presume to make a definitive statement is overwhelming today. I mean, the bullying that goes on in our culture today is absolutely epidemic. It's just as epidemic as the suppression of truth. Where people literally are like, well, I'm not going to weigh in on that challenge. I'm liable to, you know, lose my job or whatever. Lose my income... When are we going to say, enough is enough?

So you know, this is the deal, suppression of truth is what's going on. Doesn't help to get angry about it. It doesn't help to, you know pound your fist and shake a bony finger in the eye, in the face of people who are caught up in that whole sort of a thing. Doesn't help. God's Word has told us what's going on, you know. They've succumbed to the lies and they are actively suppressing the truth and so forth.

So there's this passage in Isaiah. I've showed it to you several times. It is a perfect commentary on our world today. Up on the screen,

Isaiah 59:15a (NIV84)

...truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found...

Truth has stumbled in the streets. Honesty can't even enter the room. And truth is nowhere to be found. It was happening back then, it's happening today. We're perhaps seeing it on a more global scale, but it's all the same junk. And so, how are we as believers to respond to all of this suppression of truth and all this ridiculous stupidity that's going on in our world today? Well, Paul has a word for us from Colossians chapter 2, up on the screen, he says,

Colossians 2:8 (ESV)

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

"See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, (and you know what deceit is, deceptive language and lies. He says that are,) according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, not according to Christ."

And I love this verse, not just because it's a great exhortation to you and me about how to hold fast, but it also explains something very important about what's going on in the world. Did you notice he said, *"See to it that no one takes you captive."* What is Paul saying? He's saying it's possible to be taken captive.

In fact, we look at the world and what do we see? They've been taken captive, right? They have been taken captive. It's as simple as that. To what? To the lies of the enemy. Because "he is a liar and the father of lies."

Our source of truth is God, Himself. It's never going to come from the world. So we don't listen to the world. Because the world has been taken captive. And they believe ridiculous things today that all of us know are untrue. But they want us to embrace it as the truth.

Do you know it's interesting, I didn't put this in my notes, but back in the 1800s Webster's dictionary used to define the truth when you looked up the... it doesn't say this anymore, let me just tell you that. But back when men were thinking rightly, it defined truth as "that which was keeping, in keeping with reality." Isn't that interesting? Truth is that which is in keeping with reality.

Now, so somebody walks along and you're obviously talking to a biological man, but he tells you, I want you to, I identify as a female. Is that person talking to you and keeping with reality? Well, not scientific reality, not biological reality by any means. And yet you are to accept that as truth. That is not the truth. That is a lie, and that is spoken by someone who's been taken

captive to the truth. But can I share something very important with you about that captivity? Jesus came *"...to proclaim liberty to the captives."* And that is the good news.

And I think had we, if we were given the opportunity, many of us could stand up right where we are and talk about how we were once captive to the lies of the enemy. But how we opened our heart to His truth, and we were set free. Because that's what Jesus said. But remember, it's not just hearing the truth and kind of saying, yeah, okay, it's abiding in the truth.

Remember what we started off reading, Jesus issued that challenge. If you abide, stay, endure, don't get offended, don't get angry, don't say, oh no, I'm not going to hear that. But if you remain in My Word, then you will know the truth. And the truth will release you from your captivity, right? That's what Jesus came to do.

You know, one of the first issues that He has to convince us of, I guess, or open our hearts to, is that we are sinners, you know, in need of a savior. And that's a tough one for a lot of people to get past, you know. There's nothing I can do. Nothing I can do to go to heaven in and of myself. There's nothing I can do. I have no power to elevate myself into God's presence. I must rely 100% on Him. But that begins by understanding and recognizing my personal bankruptcy, you know.

Remember how Jesus started the beatitudes? *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, (which means destitute of themselves) for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 5:3 (ESV)) Now everything's open to them after they understand and embrace the truth, that they're destitute. And have nothing to offer, nothing to give, nothing to bring themselves to God with, you know. So important.

Well, so anyway, we got this final conversation that goes on here in John in verse 48 and following. And this all kind of centers on who Jesus is, which is also very important. But it says,

"48 The Jews answered him, 'Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?' 49 Jesus answered. 'I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. 50 Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. 51 Truly, truly. I say to you, if anyone keeps my word... (Now, that's another word that's very closely related to abide. Okay? To remain, to keep, stay, hang on, hold on to, and so forth. He says,) if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. 52 The Jews said to him, (Okay) 'Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, (and) yet

you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham who died? (or) ...the prophets (they) died!... (Who do you think you are? (Correction - Who do you make yourself out to be?)) 54 Jesus answered, (Verse 54). '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. (In fact,) If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar (just) 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're not even fifty years old, and you've seen Abraham?' (Correction - You are not yet fifty years old, and have seen Abraham?) 58 Jesus said to them. 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, (and that means before Abraham was born,) I am.' 59 So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple."

I've always loved this conversation. Just because it's so cool. Jesus is talking to them about Him, Himself. I know the Father, you don't know the Father, and you know how I can tell, because you have no room in your heart for His Word. You reject it.

If you keep My Word, you'll never taste death. Really? Our father Abraham died. And you say, if somebody keeps your word, and I love this statement, He says, Abraham long to see my day. And he saw it. He saw My day, and he was glad. Abraham got to see the day of the Messiah. Just because you have ceased to live in this world, doesn't mean that you're cut off from God's redemptive program. And they said, yeah, right. Abraham saw your day, right? You've seen Abraham?

And I love His statement, before Abraham even came onto the scene, I Am. And make no mistake about it people, He's using the divine name. This is the name that God gave to Moses when He appeared to him in a burning bush, told him to go to Egypt, that he might secure the release of the people from their slavery. (Genesis 3:14) And Moses said, who should I say, sent me? God said, tell them I Am, sent you. I have no beginning. I have no end. I simply Am. I Am God Almighty. And so Jesus, and make no mistake, the Jews knew exactly what He said.

I've heard people say, well, Jesus never once claimed to be divine. I'm like, have you ever read the Bible? He said here, before Abraham was born I Am. "Ego eimi," in the Greek. I Am, the divine name. And they knew what He meant. That's why they were picking up the closest rock they could find to throw at Him. Because they believed He was guilty of blasphemy. But Jesus was not guilty of blasphemy. But they didn't know that. Do you know why they didn't

know that? Because they had no room in their hearts for the truth. And that's what it comes down to.

And so, Jesus issues this challenge to all who have come into His presence. And He says, if you will abide, if you'll hang on and stay, and endure, keep on and don't, don't sit in judgment of My Word, you let the Word sit in judgment of you.

Too many people are out there judging the Word of God, well, I don't think that's true. The Word is supposed to judge us, but don't be afraid of that. It's not a judgment unto condemnation. It's a judgment unto Christ likeness. If God is using His Word to challenge us and even offend us from time to time, it's because His desire is that we would be made more into the image of His Son. And so the Word becomes the hammer and the chisel, that He uses to take off those rough edges. And all those things that the world delights in and celebrates.

And God says, oh, that needs to go if you're going to be like My Son. And I'm going to use My Word to do it, but you need to abide in it. You need to stay and endure even when it's hard. Even when you don't like what you hear. Even when you get offended. Because I'm here to tell you, My Word is going to offend you, God says, right? His Word is offensive. The cross is offensive. Paul talks about the offense of the cross. (Galatians 5:11) The truth is traumatic.

But we need to say, Lord, whatever You say, I'm going to hear You. I'm going to hear You. I want to be open to everything You have to say, even if I don't want to hear it. Because I need to hear it. Amen.

Let's stand together. If you need prayer this morning for any reason, just come on down. We'd love to pray with you.

Father God, forgive us for the times that we have bristled at Your Word, and we have not abided in it. We have not remained faithful to it, but we've ignored You. We've ignored the truth, and we've chosen just like Adam and Eve, to embrace the lie of the world, the lie that comes from the enemy. And Lord, we know because we've seen it today, that the whole world is under the influence of the enemy, and all the lies that he has perpetrated over the years. But Lord, we know also that is not our destiny. Our calling is to abide in the truth no matter what. Not to judge the Word, but to allow the Word to judge us. That we might be formed into the image of Your Son. It is in His name that we pray, in the name of Jesus, and all God's people said, amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your Sunday.