

“Only The Beginning”
John 8:31-36

Introduction:

1. There Are Many Things:
 - In This Life:
 - That Start Out Well:
 - But - Finish In A Worse Place:
 - Than They Started:
 - Because They Were Not Tended To Enough - Or:
 - In The Right Way!
 - Gardens Are Like This!
 - Saw Tim Carry In A Seed Catalog On Wednesday!
 - Making Plans For:
 - His Garden:
 - In The Spring!
 - Some Of You Might Be:
 - Making The Same Kind Of Plans:
 - To Help Get You Through:
 - The Cold & Dark Days:
 - Of The Winter That Will Begin In Just A Few Days!
 - But - No Matter How Good:
 - A Garden Is - When:
 - The Ground Is Tilled!
 - The Rows Are Furrowed! And:
 - The Seeds Are Planted!
 - If You Don't Tend To It:
 - By Watering & Weeding / Fertilizing & Doing Pest Control!
 - In The End:
 - Weeds Will Take Over!
 - And All Kinds Of Pests & Animals:
 - Will Enjoy Whatever Did Come Out Of The Ground!
 - And - All You Can Do Is:
 - Start Making Plans For Next Year's Garden!
 - Or - Not!
 - Again - It All Started Out Well:
 - But - It Finished In A Worse Place:
 - Than It Started!
 - Relationships Are Also Like This!
 - How Many Couples:
 - Start Their Lives Together Out Well!
 - Even Christian Couples!
 - And Yet - Over Time:
 - Because They Did Not Keep:
 - Tending To & Fostering Their Love For Each Other - In The Lord:
 - They Fell Out Of Love Or Fell Into Sin:
 - And - Their Relationship Ended Altogether!
2. This Can Be True:
 - Not Only:
 - Of Gardens & Relationships - But Also:
 - Of Faith!
 - And - We Can See This In The Next Several Verses We Come To:
 - In John 8!
 - So - Please Turn Back There With Me:
 - In Your Bibles:
 - John 8 - Where - Jesus Continues:
 - One Of His “Talks In The Temple!”
 - And - In This Talk:

- He Has Addressed:
 - Not Only The:
 - Faithlessness Of His Own People!
 - But - Especially - His Own:
 - Faithfulness - To His Mission & Message From Heaven!
 - And - As Jesus Was Speaking:
 - We Found In 8:30 That:
 - “As He Spake These Words, Many Believed On Him!”
 - Now - These Are Some Exciting Words!
 - After All - Isn’t This What:
 - Jesus Was After:
 - When He Came:
 - With The Gospel?
 - And - Isn’t This What:
 - John Was Also After:
 - When He Wrote:
 - This Gospel?
 - 20:31 - “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name!”
3. And So - Starting In:
 - 8:31 - John Tells Us:
 - “Then Said Jesus To Those Jews Which Believed On Him!”
 - And - He Does So:
 - To Make Sure:
 - That They Understand:
 - What Their New-Found Faith Will Entail!
 - For Some There - Jesus’ Words:
 - May Have Served To:
 - Confirm Their Faith - And:
 - Bring Them To:
 - A Fuller Faith In Him!
 - However - For Others - Perhaps Even Most:
 - As We Will See In The Rest Of This Chapter:
 - Jesus’ Words May Have Served To:
 - Challenge Their Faith - And:
 - Cause Them To See That:
 - Their Faith Was Only A Superficial Faith:
 - That Didn’t Come From Their Hearts!
 - 4. But - Through It All:
 - We Will See That:
 - Faith Is Only The Beginning!
 - It Is Certainly How:
 - The Christian Life Begins! And:
 - By Faith In Christ - It Starts Out Well!
 - But - How Will It End?
 - And So - Jesus Says:
 - “To Those Jews Which Believed On Him!”
 - 8:31b-36 - “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; / And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. / They answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? / Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. / And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. / If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed!”
 - From These Words We Can See Once Again:
 - That Faith Is Only The Beginning!
 - And That Is Why - In 8:31–32 - Jesus Teaches Them And Us About:

1. *The Direction Of True Faith!*

- A True Faith & A Full Faith:
 - In Christ - Is A Faith:
 - That Will Grow!
 - **IE:** Just Like A Healthy Plant - Will Grow In The Direction Of The Primary Source Of Its Vitality - The Sun! This Too Will Happen To A True, Saving Faith!
 - And - Jesus Gives Us The Direction:
 - Of Faith's Growth In These Verses!
 - Again - 8:31b-32 - "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; / And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free!"
 - So - Faith Is Only The Beginning:
 - Because - True Faith:
 - Will First Grow Into:
- A Greater Focus - On The Word Of Christ!
 - "If Ye Continue In My Word" - Jesus Says:
 - "Then Are Ye My Disciples Indeed!"
 - To "Continue" Here:
 - Means - To Remain & Abide In:
 - **All** The Teaching:
 - **Of** Jesus - And Even:
 - **All** the Teaching:
 - **About** Jesus:
 - As Found In God's Word!
 - Now - Some Of What We Find:
 - In The Bible:
 - Can Be Very Difficult To Hear - And:
 - Even More Challenging To Believe!
 - As We Will Soon See!
 - But - The Direction Of True Faith:
 - Is A Greater Focus On:
 - The Word Of God As A Whole!
 - And - To "Continue" In His Word:
 - Involves Much More Than Just:
 - Listening To It - Or:
 - Looking At It! (Reading)
 - It Involves:
 - Truly Loving It!
 - Remember Psalm 119:97 - "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day!"
 - This Means That:
 - You Saturate Your Mind & Heart With His Word!
 - Which Means - It Also Involves:
 - Truly Learning From Christ:
 - Through His Word!
 - Remembering That:
 - He Is The Teacher & You Are His Student! (**IE:** Mary!)
 - And - You Are To Submit Yourself To His Word & Not The Other Way Around!
 - "Continuing In His Word" - Also Involves:
 - Truly Living For Christ:
 - Through His Word!
 - Seeking To Apply & Obey:
 - **Every** Word - Because:
 - His Word Alone Is "A Lamp Unto (Your) Feet, And A Light Unto (Your) Path!" (Psalm 119:105)
 - So You See - Faith In Christ:
 - Is Only The Beginning!
 - It Will Grow Into - And:
 - It Can Only Grow Through:

- A Greater Focus On The Word Of Christ!
- But Then - It Will Further Grow Into:
- A Greater Following - After The Lord Himself - And His Will!
 - Because - 8:31b - "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed!"
 - To Be A True Disciple Of Jesus - Or:
 - A "Disciple Indeed!"
 - Means That You Will Follow Jesus Wherever He Leads You!
- So - Wherever Jesus Takes You:
 - In Your Life - According To His Will:
 - You Will Follow Him!
 - Even If It Goes Against:
 - Your Natural Instincts As A Fallen Person!
- But Also - Whatever Jesus Tells You:
 - Through His Word:
 - You Will Follow!
 - Even If It Goes Against:
 - The World & The Wisdom Of Age!
- Leon Morris - "When A Man Abides In Christ's Word, *Then* He Is A True Disciple!"
 - Is This True For You - And:
 - Your Faith?
 - Faith Is Only The Beginning!
 - Because - Then It Will Also Grow Into:
- A Greater Fellowship - With The Truth & Wisdom Of God!
 - As Jesus Goes On To Say:
 - In 8:32a - "And Ye Shall Know The Truth!"
 - This Is Where True Faith In Christ:
 - Will Lead!
 - "Ye Shall Know The Truth!"
 - And - The Truth That Truly Matters!
 - Here - Jesus Does Not Mean That:
 - You Will Become An Expert:
 - In Earthly Truths - Like The Truths Of History Or Science Or Philosophy!
 - Though Still Important! And - May Even Know These Truths Completely One Day!
 - But - You Will Become:
 - An Expert In:
 - Heavenly Truth!
 - The Reality Of Things According To God's Perspective!
 - And - Even This Knowledge:
 - Of The Truth - Comes Through:
 - Faith In & Knowledge Of:
 - Jesus Himself! Who Is:
 - "Full Of Grace And Truth!" (1:14)
 - So - True Faith Will Grow:
 - Into A Greater Fellowship With:
 - Jesus Himself - Who Is "The Way, **The Truth**, And The Life!" (14:6)
 - But Then - This Faith Will Continue To Grow Into:
- A Greater Freedom - In The Lord!
 - Because - Again - 8:32:
 - "And Ye Shall Know The Truth, And The Truth Shall Make You Free!"
 - Now - At This Point:
 - Jesus Does Not Explain:
 - What This Freedom Was **From Or For!**
 - But - Whatever It Was:
 - It Was A Positive Thing!
 - **IE:** Still Is Even In The World!
 - Of Course - We Know That:
 - This Freedom Is:

- **Freedom From Sin! And:**

- **Freedom For Service:**

- *To Christ!*

- But - This Freedom:

- Can Only Come Through:

- A Growing Faith!

- With A Greater Focus On His Word!

- With A Greater Following Of His Will!

- With A Greater Fellowship In His Wisdom & Truth!

- Especially The Great Truths About:

- The Gospel! About:

- The Holiness Of God!

- The Sinfulness Of Man!

- The Exclusivity If Jesus!

- But - This Is Where True Faith In Christ:

- Will End Up!

- True & Lasting Freedom!

- And - Jesus Wants Them & Us To Know:

- That - You Need This Freedom!

- Do You Enjoy This Kind Of Freedom? Do You Want This Kind Of Freedom?

- Sadly - Those New Believers:

- Didn't Even Know They Needed:

- This Freedom! And So - Through Their Response To Jesus:

- We Can See:

2. ***The Deterrent To True Faith!***

- Which Is Pride!

- And We Can See This In:

- 8:33 - "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

- Through These Words:

- Those Who Believed In Jesus:

- At Least On Some Level:

- Reveal That They Were Not Willing To Go:

- Where True Faith Would Lead Them!

- Instead - In Pride - They Were:

- Offended At Jesus Words!

- When Jesus Said To Them:

- "The Truth Shall Make You Free!" (8:32)

- In Effect - Jesus Was Telling Them:

- "You Are Slaves!"

- But - Instead Of:

- Receiving What Jesus Had To Say:

- With A True Faith:

- Focused On Jesus' Word!

- They Rejected What Jesus Had To Say:

- And Their Faith Faltered:

- At Jesus' Word!

- Because - They Did Not See:

- Their Need For Freedom!

- And - This Offense:

- Stifled & Prevented:

- Whatever Faith They Had:

- From Moving Forward & Going Further!

- But - What Happened To Them:

- Can Also Happen To Us!

- Is There Anything About God's Truth:

- That Offends You?

- Whatever That Is:
 - May Be Right Where:
 - Your Growth In Faith & Freedom:
 - Comes To An End!
- God's Truth:
 - Requires Absolute Surrender & Submission!
 - Even If It Challenges Long-Held Preferences & Beliefs!
 - Need To Be Willing To Go Where God's Word Takes You!
- But - Because They Were Offended:
 - They Went A Step Further:
 - And Made An Open:
- Objection To Jesus' Words!
 - 8:33 - "We Be Abraham's Seed, And Were Never In Bondage To Any Man!"
 - The Jews Took Pride:
 - In Their Great Pedigree:
 - As Members Of Abraham's Family & House!
 - And - They Took Pride:
 - In Their Great Privileges!
 - From God's Covenant With Abraham!
 - And - They Saw Themselves:
 - As Completely Free!
 - Both Nationally & Spiritually!
 - Even If They Had Been:
 - Subdued Or Oppressed By Others:
 - In Their Past - It Was Only A Temporary Chastisement!
 - And They Were Still Free To Worship God!
 - But - They Were Blind:
 - To Both Their National & Spiritual Bondage!
 - Because - Even If At Times:
 - They Were Forcefully Brought Into Bondage By Other Nations!
 - At Other Times - They Willingly Put Themselves Into Spiritual Bondage:
 - By Worshiping Other Gods!
- And So - Any Kind Of:
 - Offense Or Objection:
 - To God & His Word:
 - Becomes An Obstacle:
 - To Any Faith That You Might Have In The Lord & His Words!
 - And - The Only Way:
 - To Overcome These Obstacles:
 - Is To Be Teachable:
 - When It Comes To God's Word!
 - To Be Willing To:
 - See Things As Jesus Sees Them!
 - To Possess:
 - "The Mind Of Christ!" (1 Corinthians 2:16)
 - This Is Why Faith Is Only The Beginning!
 - It Needs To Grow!
 - Without Offense! Without Objection!
 - But With Surrender & Submission:
 - To God's Truth!
 - But - Even This Can Only Come:
 - Through Jesus! And That Is Why:
 - Next - In 8:34-36 - Jesus Patiently Replies - To Give Us:

3. ***The Difference In True Faith!***

- The Difference Between:
 - A True Faith That Grows - And:

- A Temporary Faith:
 - Is Grace! God's Grace! Christ's Grace!
- And That Is Why - In 8:34-36:
 - "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you!"
 - Twelfth Time In John! Out Of 25!
 - A Truth That Is Certain & Changeless & Consequential!
 - So - Listen Up!
 - "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. / And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. / If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed!"
- So - In Order For You:
 - To Have A Faith That:
 - Grows - In The Direction Of:
 - Greater Freedom:
 - You Need The Son Of God To "Make You Free!"
 - Which Is His Own, Gracious Act:
 - For Slaves To Sin:
 - Like Them & Like Us!
 - There In 8:34 - We Find:
- God's Gracious Purpose Of Freedom!
 - And That Is To Grant Us Freedom:
 - From Our Slavery & Bondage:
 - To Sin!
 - 8:34c - "Whosoever Committeth Sin Is The Servant Of Sin!"
 - This Is The Truth:
 - That They Needed To Hear & Believe:
 - About Themselves!
 - And - This Is The Truth:
 - That We Need To Hear & Believe:
 - About Ourselves!
 - And - When You Accept This Truth:
 - Without Offense Or Objection:
 - Only Then Will You Be Able To Grow:
 - In Your Faith - Even Unto:
 - Gracious Freedom Offered To You By Jesus!
 - Now - Commentators Are Quick To Point Out:
 - That This Describes Those Who:
 - Are Living Lives That Are:
 - Habitually "Characterized By Repeated, Continuous Sin!"
 - But - How Does One Know This?
 - How Can You Tell In Your Own Life?
 - Is It A Matter Of:
 - How Many Times You Do The Same Sin? Or:
 - How Much Time Lapses Between Sins? Or:
 - The Degree Of The Sin You Commit?
 - Perhaps We Ought To Just Take These Words:
 - As Jesus Gives Them To Us!
 - Whenever You Are Sinning:
 - You Are - At Least At That Moment - A Slave To:
 - That Sin!
 - And - You Are Not Living:
 - As Free As You **Can** Be:
 - If You Do Believe In Christ!
 - Nor Are You Living:
 - As Free As You One Day:
 - **Will** Be!
 - So - Remember That:
 - The Purpose For Which You Are:
 - "Saved - By Grace Through Faith!"

- Is So That You Can Be:
 - Free From *Any* Kind Of Slavery / Bondage To Sin!
- And That Is Why - In 8:35 - We Find:
- God's Gracious Potential Of Freedom!
 - Because - "The Servant Abideth Not In The House For Ever: But The Son Abideth Ever!"
 - Here - Jesus Uses A Proverb:
 - To Explain To Those Proud Jews That:
 - Just Because They Were Of The Natural Seed / Family Of Abraham:
 - It Did Not Mean That They Were The Spiritual Sons Of Abraham!
 - Instead - Even In That "House" / Household:
 - They Were Slaves! And:
 - Slaves To Sin - No Less!
 - And So - They Had No:
 - Guaranteed Right Or Future:
 - In The House Of Blessing That God Promised Abraham!
 - But - What *They* Were *Not*:
 - *Jesus Was! And Is!* And:
 - He Was Not Just:
 - "A" Son! He Was:
 - "The" Son!
 - And - As "The" Son & "The" Seed Of Abraham:
 - Who Was At The Same Time:
 - "The Son Of God!"
 - He Abides In The House Of Blessing Forever!
 - And So - There Is Potential & Hope:
 - For Freedom - If You Are:
 - A Slave To Sin!
 - You Do Not Have To Be Held In The Grip Of Sin's Power Forever!
 - Because Of What Jesus Says Next:
 - In 8:36! And That Is:
- The Gracious Promise Of Freedom!
 - Because - "If The Son Therefore Shall Make You Free, Ye Shall Be Free Indeed!"
 - This Is The Difference Between:
 - A True Faith & A Temporary Faith!
 - True Faith That Leads To Freedom Can Only Come From:
 - The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - And So - A True Faith:
 - Rests In The Promise Of Jesus:
 - Who Is The Only One:
 - Who Can "Make You Free!"
 - Because - As "The Son" - Jesus Alone:
 - Has Both The Authority & The Ability To:
 - Free You From:
 - Your Service To Sin!
 - And Employ You In:
 - The Service Of God!
 - And - This Is True Freedom!
 - A Freedom That Flows From:
 - A Growing Faith:
 - In The Words, Will, & Wisdom:
 - Of Jesus!

Conclusion:

1. And That Is Why:
 - Faith Is Only The Beginning!
 - True Faith Will Grow:
 - As You Feed It:
 - Through The Word Of God!

- Continuing & Abiding In It!

2. And - The Result:
 - Of This Kind Of Faith:
 - Is Freedom:
 - To Live As God Designed You To Live!
 - A Freedom To Live:
 - Without Doubt & Defeat & Despair & Even Death!
 - And Even:
 - A Freedom To Serve:
 - With Faithfulness & Fervency & Even Fearlessness!
3. Do You Enjoy:
 - This Kind Of Freedom?
 - Do You Want:
 - This Kind Of Freedom?
4. Remember:
 - Faith Is Only The Beginning!
 - Let Your Faith Grow:
 - Into This Full Kind Of Faith:
 - That Will Result In:
 - This Kind Of Freedom! B/C:

* “If The Son Therefore Shall Make You Free, Ye Shall Be Free Indeed!”

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