

Pastor B. J. Froiland
Judica Sunday
John 8:46-59
March 21, 2010

In the Name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Christ said, "... [Y]ou will know the truth and the truth will set you free." But the truth didn't set Him free. Jesus was the truth. He spoke nothing but the truth before Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas the high priest, the scribes, and the Pharisees. They sought false testimony against Him to put Him to death. They found none. Many false witnesses came forward. Two of them said that He said He would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. How very appropriate is this testimony, since in mere moments the temple of Christ's body (the only temple and dwelling place of God) would be ravaged, beaten, and destroyed yet in three days, resurrected. Christ made no answer to the false charges. When asked if He was the Christ, He said He was the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power. Caiaphas tore his robe and was convinced this truth was blasphemy. Christ was sentenced to death and bound in chains. He remained silent. "This Lamb goes uncomplaining forth, the guilt of sinners bearing, and laden with the sins of earth, none else the burden sharing; goes patient on grows weak and faint, to slaughter led without complaint, that spotless life to offer, He bears the stripes, the wounds, the lies, the mockery and yet replies, 'All this I gladly suffer.'" The truth didn't set Him free; not this time.

In today's Gospel reading, Christ would speak to more of His own people accusing Him of lying; accusing Him of not speaking the truth. "Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." Christ said earlier that they were not the sons of God, but the sons of the father of lies, the devil, and that they do only his desires. So I ask you, have you spoken lies about your neighbor? But you say, "I've only spoken the truth." Have you gossiped about your neighbor and hurt his reputation? Have you allowed others to do the same and not defended him? The Psalmist says, "There is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness. Their throat is an open sepulcher; they flatter with their tongue." This kind of truth never sets free. These actions are indicative of children of the father of lies, the devil. Repent.

Your flesh and the devil are murderers. Christ says as much when He calls Satan, "a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him." The devil murders and takes away life. On the other hand, Christ justifies and makes alive. He does not murder, but creates and sustains. From Him, all life flows. To create and give life are exclusive

works of God. The Lord is a Lord of life and His very nature is life. The words He speaks, yes, the words which you hear are life themselves. How? Christ speaks it Himself in this very Gospel: "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death."

You will never taste death. Even though, one day, you will lie down on your bed and die, you need not feel anxiety; you need not taste fear and trembling. In you, dear Christian, God grants peace, hope, and eternal life. Much like the Israelites passing through the Red Sea, free from death to receive life, so you will pass through death to eternal life in Christ. Even though death will overpower your body, it cannot overpower your soul redeemed by Him. At the Last Day, your body and soul will be resurrected and reunited. No longer will sin plague you as it does in this wretched existence. Christ has overcome your sin, the devil, hell, and death. Your enemies are swallowed up in Christ's victorious resurrection.

"Abraham rejoiced that he would see My day. He saw it and was glad," Christ said. Abraham rejoiced in the day that his son was spared and a ram was sacrificed on his behalf. Abraham also knew that from his Seed, all mankind would be freed from their sin. In his Seed, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. How could this be? Just as his son Isaac was flesh and blood, so would the Messiah be flesh and blood. God became man and dwelt among us. He died a death by crucifixion for you. He was the long-promised Seed of Abraham and the Offspring of Eve who would crush the serpent's head.

When the appointed time had come, He was sent from the Father in human form, even the Offspring of a virgin's womb. After 30 years of His life ended, after seeing 3 decades, He willingly met the cross and it all became clear: He was born to set His people free through death. The rules and regulations of the Old Testament sacrificial system were made clear: a lamb pure and blameless died for the sins of the people. By a sacrifice or atonement, it was possible for man to stand in the presence of God and live. A sacrifice was a reminder of the serious consequences of a man's sin, but also a comforting assurance that this sacrificial animal would take his own place. On the cross this Lamb was lifted there to be the final sacrifice for the sins of the people. He died a real death, but was resurrected after three days and maintained His divinity and humanity. The union of God and man in the person of Christ continues today as He still dwells in flesh and blood. He still lives, breaths, and speaks to you by His Word.

Christ speaks a saving word for you, even when you lie and gossip. When you are faithless, He is faithful. Abraham's Seed intercedes for you at the Father's right hand and makes you to be true children of the Heavenly Father. Dearly Beloved, the Truth has set you free. Amen.

The Peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in
Christ Jesus. Amen.

✠BJF✠