

“Breakthrough!” in 2022

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 10.30.2022

Whose Child are You? – John 8:37-59

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

In John 8:37-59, there’s a lot of back and fourth going on in these verses between Jesus and the religious leaders and at the center of the whole debate is Abraham. Abraham’s impact on our world is impossible to overstate. Christians, Muslims, and Jews all trace their religions back to him. He is the father of our faith. When I was a kid growing up in Sunday School, we used to sing a song about that. Father Abraham had many sons.... The thing to note about Abraham is that he was the very first Jew. God made a covenant with Him and promised him that through his descendants all the people of the earth would be blessed. Every Jewish person alive today traces their lineage back to him. This is something the Jewish people take great pride in (as they should). Let’s get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you from this week’s sermon?

Jesus’ problem with the religious leaders in Jesus day is that while they bore a physical likeness to Abraham, they failed to reflect his spiritual DNA. They may have been his descendants, but faith isn’t passed down through blood lines. God doesn’t have any grandchildren, only children. When you stand before God’s throne on judgement day, it’s not going to matter who your parents were or that you came from a godly home. You must have your own personal relationship with Jesus.

Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER JOHN 8:37-47

Disciples are people who believe in Christ and abide in His word. This abiding brings with it knowledge of the truth that will set them free. The freedom Christ spoke of is freedom from sin. The Pharisees, however, did not think they had a problem with sin. They believed they were made right with God because of their ancestral relationship with Abraham. Jesus’ words provided freedom for Jews from this kind of illusion.

1. What relationship does Jesus have with the Father, and what impact does that have on His authority to proclaim truth?
2. What works did Abraham do that the Jews in this passage did not do?
3. Who did Jesus say was the true father of His opponents? What evidence supports His claim?
4. What do these Jews believe about Jesus? What evidence supports their belief? How do the Jews respond to Jesus’ accusation?

The discussion in verses 39-42 includes Jesus’ bold statement that God is His Father, and if the Jews knew Him, they would know His Father. According to Jesus, the father of the Pharisees is the devil, yet the Pharisees refuse to acknowledge this. Jesus’ truth sails over the heads of some people who admit they have no interest in serving God, but they resist the suggestion that they are serving Satan. This text claims that those who reject Christ’s truth and focus on serving themselves are deceived by Satan into believing they are children of God when they are not.

5. How can you show you are a child of God? What would a child of God do?
6. What do Satan’s children do? Do Satan’s followers generally worship and acknowledge him directly? What does this show about Satan’s normal strategy?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER JOHN 8:48-59

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1. How does Jesus respond to the insulting remarks from the Jews regarding His ethnicity and spiritual state in v. 48? Why do you think He responded the way that He did?
2. Jesus’ words enraged the Pharisees as He spoke about Abraham, saying that Abraham looked forward to His coming. Jesus taught that His followers would receive eternal life, all of these claims pointed to Jesus being more than just a man.
3. What did Jesus say that ignited the rage of the Pharisees? Why was it so offensive to them?
4. What was Jesus claiming when He talked about Abraham? Why did Jesus’ “I am” statement enrage the Pharisees?

The “I Am” statement went back to God telling Moses who He was in Exodus 3:14. By saying that He was “I am,” Jesus claimed to be God. Jesus also claimed that He came before Abraham, meaning He was claiming eternity with God. The Jews made no mistake when they attempted to stone Him as a blasphemer. The teaching of the Jews did not just emphasize laws such as blasphemy: the Pharisees raised the bar of rule keeping to unimaginable heights. The laws and rules overwhelmed and burdened everyday life, to the point that one found his righteousness in his ability to keep the law. It’s freedom from this vicious, ungodly cycle that Paul dealt with in Galatians 5.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 5:1-12.

1. How did the false teachers in Galatia inspire Paul to emphasize freedom? How was Paul capable of understanding the bondage that the Law created?

Jesus Himself is the truth that sets people free. The truth of His person and work is what gives a believer freedom from sin and freedom to connect with God. The same truth that Jesus spoke of was the truth that Paul put forth to bring freedom to the Galatian church. The freedom that comes from God’s grace in the death of Christ gives everyone an unhindered relationship to God. The Law cannot do what Christ has done.

2. How did false teaching remove the offense of the cross? How does the cross offend someone who wants to follow the Law?
3. What was Paul’s wish for the Judaizers? How do emasculation and circumcision relate to one another? How did this illustrate Paul’s point about legalism?

Paul, was a man who spoke truth and argued that if circumcision was so effective, then maybe the false teachers should go a step further and emasculate themselves. His point remains true today: If there is a single thing that we can do to earn the favor of God, then the cross becomes irrelevant.

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

When the religious leaders scoffed at Jesus’ claim about meeting Abraham, he dropped the hammer on them and said, ‘Before Abraham was, I AM.’ In that moment, with those words, Jesus declared Himself to be the eternal God and great I AM.

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

1. What are the false teachings about freedom in Christ that you run into most in your everyday life?
2. What rules and laws do you unnecessarily enforce on yourself in an attempt to earn God’s approval? What are the greatest obstacles in your life to freedom in grace?
3. How does your understanding of truth and grace give you freedom?

PRAYER - Praise God for the redemptive work of Jesus Christ that brings you freedom. The wisdom and love that God has shown in Christ’s death is transformative for us. Ask that it would continue to transform.

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