

**The Path to Freedom is accessed through the gate of Truth**

**April 9, 2017 Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins**

**Last week I spoke concerning the value that God places on freedom. He designed us to be sons of God, not bondservants of Satan. The Bible gives examples and simple instructions so everyone can choose which path they will follow. Adam chose to give up freedom and his choice affected every living being and everything that grows from the ground. He gave his position over to Satan and became a slave to sin. However, God made a plan for redemption for his creation from the foundation of the world and in due time, Jesus came to set men free from that bondage.**

**Look at Isaiah chapter 61 beginning with the verse 1. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted to proclaim liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.” That verse was fulfilled when Jesus walked on this earth and chose to die on the cross to secure our freedom. See Luke 4:16-**

**Here we are taken to a scene in the town that Jesus was raised in, Nazareth. As was his custom to go into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, he was there and he stood up to read. Someone handed him the book of Isaiah and when he had opened the book, he found Isaiah chapter 61 and he read the first portion of those verses. Notice what the Messiah would do according to the prophet Isaiah. 1. Preach the gospel to the poor. 2. Heal the broken hearted. 3. Preach deliverance to the captives. 4. Restore sight to the blind 5. The bruised would be set at liberty. 6. He would preach the acceptable year of the Lord.**

**Another important truth to note is the exquisite accuracy in which Jesus handled the word of God. He stopped at the “acceptable year of the Lord” as that was to be fulfilled during the first advent and his gracious offer of himself to the world. The rest of that verse “and the day of vengeance of our God” will be fulfilled at the Second Coming of Christ when he sets up his kingdom. See Genesis 3:15 and Acts 1:11**

**After he had closed the book, he handed it back to the minister and sat down. Every ones’ eyes were focused upon him. Then he added, “This day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears.”**

**The people who had witnessed the graciousness of Jesus wondered at his words and said, “Is this not the carpenter’s son?” Psalms 45 2 says this “You are fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever.”**

**Jesus was meek and humble, yet he was full of grace and truth. He spoke truth even when he knew that he was going to be rejected. He continued his teaching by saying “You will certainly want to say to me ‘Physician, heal yourself.’ You will ask that the things that you have heard about being done in Capernaum should also be done in my own country.”**

**Jesus continued “No prophet is accepted in his own country.”**

**He proceeded to say that he was going to tell them a truth. There were many widows in Israel during the famine that lasted for 3 ½ years yet only one living in Zarephath, a city**

in Sidon got the attention of God who sent Elijah to bless her and her son so they could be sustained and not die of starvation.

Many lepers were in Israel at the time of Elisha but only one man named Naaman, a Syrian, was cleansed by God's power working through Elisha."

When the people heard these words they were filled with wrath (violent resentful anger). They stood up and cast him out of the city and dragged him to the edge of the cliff on which the town was built intending to throw him down from there. But Jesus slipped through the crowd and got away.

Just because these people rejected the truth, did not change the fact that it was the truth. Their unbelief didn't alter the significance of the truth that was spoken to them. It also didn't cause Jesus to withhold the words because of their unbelief. His words were truth regardless of the fact that the people rejected him. In Mark 5:6, it said that Jesus couldn't do miracles there except to heal a few people by placing his hands on them. He was surprised the people didn't have any faith.

These people were depending on their own wisdom and knowledge to guide them to truth. They knew Jesus as a carpenter, the son of Mary. His brothers James, Joseph, Judas and Simon were among them as well as his sisters. Word had spread that Joseph was not Jesus' father. Mary was found to be with child before Joseph married her and he had even considered breaking the marriage contract because of it. This was a stumbling block for them and they refused to accept Jesus as the Son of God. Rather than comparing the Scriptures with what was taking place, they listened to the religious leaders and leaned on their own understanding thus they missed opportunities that could have been theirs.

John 8:12 tells us that Jesus is the light of the world. Those who follow him will not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees argued that Jesus was not the Messiah because he was his own witness. Jesus told them that though he spoke for himself nevertheless his words were true. He knew where he came from and he knew where he was going. He pointed out that they everyone judged him according to the facts they knew concerning his birth and occupation and the fact that they required two witnesses, but that wasn't the correct way to make a judgment. Jesus said that yes he was his own witness and his Father was the second witness. John the Baptist was a third witness. Even though these people confronted Jesus and didn't believe him, they didn't arrest him for his time had not yet come. Later Jesus told the people that if they didn't believe that He is God, they would die in their sins. They needed to have their sins forgiven and it would not happen without faith in Jesus Christ. In John 8:28, Jesus said. "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, you will know who I am. You will also know that I can't do anything on my own. I say only what my Father taught me. The one who sent me is with me. I always do what pleases him and he will never leave me." After Jesus said this, many of the people put their faith in him.

**Jesus told the people to keep on obeying what he told them and they would truly be his disciples. He said, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”**

**They didn’t understand what he meant for they didn’t think of themselves as slaves for they were children of Abraham.**

**Jesus told them that people who sin are slaves to sin. Slaves don’t stay in the family forever though the Son will always remain in the family. If the Son gives you freedom then are you free. He went on to say that he knew that they were Abraham’s children yet they desired to kill him because his message wasn’t really in their hearts. He was giving them the message that his Father had given to him to deliver just as they were doing the things that their father had taught them to do.**

**A few verses further down in this chapter Jesus told them that they wanted to kill him for telling them the truth that his Father had sent him to deliver to them. He pointed out to them that Abraham believed God and followed God. They were following their father, the devil. They were doing exactly as he wanted them to do. Satan has always been a murderer and a liar and there is nothing truthful about him. He speaks on his own and everything he says is a lie. Not only is he a liar himself, but he is also the father of lies.**

**In verse 45 of this chapter, Jesus told the people that everything that he said was true and they still refused to have faith in him. He asked them if there was anyone there who could accuse him of sin. If there were no one who could rightfully accuse him of wrong doing, then why would they not believe on him for he was telling them the truth?**

**He stated that those who belong to God will listen to his message; but those who refuse to listen prove that that they are not his children.**

**In John 14:1 Jesus told his disciples not to be worried but have faith in God and in him. In his Father’s house are many mansions and if it was not true He would have told them. He said that He was going there to prepare a place for them and after he was done, he would come back and take them with him and they would all be together again. He told them that they knew the way. Thomas said, “Lord, we don’t even know where you are going! How can we know the way?”**

**Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life! Without me no one can go to the Father. Those who know me know the Father.” Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father for that was all they needed. Jesus answered, “Philip have I been with you all this time and you still ask to see the Father? If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” Jesus was the exact image of the Father in human form and he did whatever his Father told him to do. He told the disciples to believe that He and his Father are one. Or else believe on him for the things that he did reflecting his Father’s character. He promised that those who have faith and believe on him will do greater things than he did while on earth for he was going back to his Father. Jesus’ desire was to glorify his Father and bring honor to him.**

**In John 3, a ruler of Israel came to Jesus at night by the name of Nicodemus. He made a true statement when he spoke these words to Jesus: “Rabbi, we know that you are a**

teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that you do except God be with him.” Look at Luke 5:21. After Jesus had spent time in prayer, he was teaching in a place where there were Pharisees and teachers of the law present to hear him preach. The power of the Lord was present for him to heal them. Men brought a man who had palsy and the room was so full that they couldn’t get him in the room so they took up the roof tiling and lowered him down where Jesus was standing. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the sick man, “Man, your sins be forgiven you.” The scribes and Pharisees began to reason within themselves, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?” Jesus asked them why they were thinking in this manner. Which is easier to say, “Your sins be forgiven or arise and walk?” He went on to say that to prove to them that he had the authority on earth to forgive sins and to heal the sick, he said to the man, “I say unto you, Arise and take up your couch and go into your house.” Immediately he rose before them, took up his couch and departed to his own house glorifying God. The people were all amazed and glorified God and were filled with fear saying, “We have seen strange things today.”

When Nicodemus made his opening statement to Jesus, he replied to it by the following statement: “Verily, Verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus asked how that can happen when he is old. Can he enter again into his mother’s womb and be born? Jesus answered that a person must be born of the water and of the spirit or he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. You must have a natural birth and you must also have a spiritual birth. He went on to explain that we cannot see the wind, yet we know that it blows for we hear the sound and see the effects of it moving leaves of trees and objects around on the ground. Yet you don’t know from whence it comes or where it goes. It is the same with everyone that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus asked, “How can these things be?” Jesus pointed out that how could he be a ruler and a teacher and not know about these things. He asked Nicodemus how he could expect to believe truths concerning the heavenly realm when he didn’t believe the simple earthly truths that Jesus told him about. Jesus spoke about the fact that he had come down from heaven and as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.”

If you believe the words of these Scriptures, ask Jesus to come into your heart today that you may claim the inheritance that God has for you as a child of the King! To come to Christ, you must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who diligently seek him.

See Hebrews 11:6.