

John 8:31-36 ³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." ³³ They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* you say, 'You will be made free?'" ³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵ "And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. ³⁶ "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

The Inheritance is What Matters

In ancient days your birth parents were not that important. What mattered was who was your legal parents. Often they were the same of course but sometimes they were not.

The Jews would even count their genealogies according to the legal inheritance rather than the birth. The story of Ruth is a good example of this. Ruth married the son of Elimelech. But Elimelech and both his sons died without having any more sons. Therefore if Ruth were to marry the brother of Elimelech and to have his children, those children would be considered children Elimelech. All of this was of course because what mattered was the inheritance. Really that was the only thing that mattered.

Here Jesus reminds the Jews that they had forsaken their inheritance. It was not taken from them, they simply gave it up of their own free will, because they didn't care about it. The inheritance of Abraham was the promises. "I will make you a great nation. All people will be blessed through you."

Yes they were genetically the descendants of Abraham, but that meant nothing without the inheritance.

We have received an inheritance from Luther, which he received from the Apostles, which they received from Jesus, which He received from the Father. We have received it not because we of German blood (those of us who are German) but because we were born again in the waters of baptism.

The laws of this world dictate that the inheritance is given to those who are born of the blood of the father. But the laws of God proclaim that the inheritance is given to those who are born again through baptism and the Word of God.

A Servant is only as good as his work

And because we are sons there is no fear before our Father.

Jesus reminds us that a servant does not abide in the house. His position is precarious. No matter how much the family may love a servant or respect a servant, such a position is based completely on what they do and don't do. Even if a family loves a servant as a member of their own family, even still such a love is based on that servant having been a good a faithful servant.

But a son is different. The position of a son is not based on what we do or do not do but on fact that we were born into the family and that can never change.

Through our baptism by the grace of God we were born into God's family. As Jesus says if the Son set you free then you will truly be free. Jesus has set us free he has made us children of God.

What child ever said to his father, "father let me live with you because I am a good worker." Such a thing would be an insult to a father because it would imply that the father has no love for his own child.

Yet in just such a way we often insult God, saying to our heavenly father, "I will earn my way to heaven." God says, "No, I love you because I love you."

What is this Truth?

This is the truth that the Jews forgot. And that the church forgot at the time of Luther. That we are sons of God. As sons of God the inheritance is ours. The inheritance is the forgiveness of sins, and the word of God that announces to us the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus says the truth will set you free. This is a slogan that is plastered all over the intuitions' of our day. The universities, the politicians, the scientists, judges and lawyers all like to quote this verse. But it isn't all truth or truth in general that sets us free. It is one particular truth, namely that you are the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the truth that sets you free.

Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) wrote a book about two boys. One was a free white, the other a black slave. But they looked a lot alike when they were babies so the mother of the black slave switched the two when they were just little babies. The son of the white man grow up believing he was a black slave, until one day he learned the truth. Learning the truth that he was the son of a free white man set him free. Learning the truth that we are the children of God sets us free.

This is the truth; Jesus has made us sons of God through our baptism.

"He who believes and is baptized shall be saved."

AMEN

THE PEACE OF GOD THAT SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING SHALL KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS

Children's Sermon

What happens if you have a job and you slack off? You get fired.

What happens if you commit a crime? You go to jail. You are not longer free.

What happens if you have a scholarship to college and then you never do your homework? You lose the scholarship and might even be kicked out of the school.

Almost everything in this world is performance based.

What about at your house? If you are naughty at home what happens? You might get punished but you are not going to be kicked out. No matter how naughty you are, no matter what you do at home, even if you steal a cookie every day, or never clean your room, you might get in trouble but your parents aren't going to kick you out of the house.

That is what Jesus is reminding us of. If you are a son you might get disciplined but you will never be cast out. Jesus has made us sons of God through your baptism. Your inheritance and your place in the kingdom is not based on any work you do, but is yours solely because Jesus made you a son or daughter of God.