

Wednesday with the Word

Wheat Street Baptist Church

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Servant Pastor

Marks of a Mature Disciple of Jesus Christ

Vision:

We exist to develop mature disciples of Jesus Christ who make a real difference in the world by actively seeking the justice, freedom, liberation and peace of God.

Mature Disciples: Marks of a Disciple

John 8:31-32

31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” NRSV

John 8:31-32

31 Jesus told the people who had faith in him, “If you keep on obeying what I have said, you truly are my disciples. **32** You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” CEV

Mature Disciples = They Obey God’s Word + They Know The Truth + The Truth Gives Them Clarity and Freedom to live the way God would have them to live. They speak truth to power and call a lie a lie! They don’t tolerate untruth.

When you obey God’s word it empowers you to see the truth, hear the truth, recognize the truth and live a life in truth. When we continue to root ourselves in God’s word, when we abide in the word of God it guides to live a life in the way of God and we are formed to be the disciples of Jesus Christ that God calls us to be. You will find in most churches the folk who cause the most trouble are those who have the less word. They don’t come to study, they don’t study and it is about what they think and not what God said or what God thinks. “I think...” versus “According to God’s word....” True disciples live according to God’s word. You have to know the word to live according to the word.

When you know the word you know the truth and you are empowered to speak and tell others the truth. When you know the truth and share the truth the truth will not only set you free but it will set others free. This is why those who know

the truth have to tell the truth. Even when you see someone who is deceived and they believe their lie, we are obligated to tell them truth because it sets them free and it sets us free. If we love them we tell them the truth.

1. How are you staying in touch with God's word?
2. How much time do you spend with God's word?
3. How much time do you spend meditating on God's word?
4. How is God's word acting as a guide and corrective in your life (can you share a story or an example)?
5. How are you speaking truth to yourself and others?
6. How are you responding to the truth God is speaking in your life?

John 8:33 - Focus

31 Jesus told the people who had faith in him, "If you keep on obeying what I have said, you truly are my disciples. **32** You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

33 They answered, "We are Abraham's children! We have never been anyone's slaves. How can you say we will be set free?"

Questions:

What do you observe about their response?

What do they think of themselves?

Why do they think they are already free?

Who do they think they are (is there a hint of arrogance in their response)?

Are there any parallels in the church?

John 8:34-36

34 Jesus replied:

I tell you for certain that anyone who sins is a slave of sin! **35** And slaves don't stay in the family forever, though the Son will always remain in the family. **36** If the Son gives you freedom, you are free!

What does it mean to be a "slave to sin"?

Note: Most of our slaveries are from inside us, not outside.

1. To what are we (Wheat Street) enslaved?
2. To what are you enslaved?
3. Do we (Wheat Street) want to be free?
4. Do you want to be free?
5. How does God set us free?

John 8:37-38

37 I know that you are from Abraham's family. Yet you want to kill me, because my message isn't really in your hearts. **38** I am telling you what my Father has shown me, just as you are doing what your father has taught you.

The Confrontation: Are You a Disciple or Not

The story now moves to a point of confrontation. They are saying they believe and Jesus is challenging them. Jesus is putting before them what a disciple does, how he or she, embraces God's word and God ways. Mature disciples of Jesus Christ know the truth, live the truth, speak the truth and walk in truth. They have no fear. They defend the truth.

1st Timothy 1:7

7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Who are these people in this story?

Are they children of Abraham?

Are they Disciples of Jesus Christ? Can you be both?

How do we know the difference (for them and for us)?

Am I _____ a mature / maturing disciple of Jesus Christ?

John 8:39-47

39 The people said to Jesus, “Abraham is our father!”

Jesus replied, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do what Abraham did.

40 Instead, you want to kill me for telling you the truth that God gave me.

Abraham never did anything like that. **41** But you are doing exactly what your father does.”

“Don’t accuse us of having someone else as our father!” they said. “We just have one father, and he is God.”

42 Jesus answered:

If God were your Father, you would love me, because I came from God and only from him. He sent me. I did not come on my own. **43** Why can’t you understand what I am talking about? Can’t you stand to hear what I am saying? **44** Your father is the devil, and you do exactly what he wants. He has always been a murderer and a liar. 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 all lies.

45 Everything I have told you is true, and you still refuse to have faith in me.

46 Can any of you accuse me of sin? If you cannot, why won’t you have faith in me? After all, I am telling you the truth. **47** Anyone who belongs to God will listen to his message. But you refuse to listen, because you don’t belong to God.

So what is Jesus saying are the signs of those who are his disciples and those who aren’t?

Those Who Are His Disciples Do What?

Those Who Are NOT His Disciples Do What?

Why would someone think they were following God when in actuality they weren’t?

**The Confrontation Continues:
Jesus Never Backs Down, Doesn't Bite His Words and Neither Should We**

"You don't play with the devil and the devil does not need an advocate."

John 8:48-49

48 The people told Jesus, "We were right to say that you are a Samaritan and that you have a demon in you!"

49 Jesus answered, "I don't have a demon in me. I honor my Father, and you refuse to honor me. **50** I don't want honor for myself. But there is one who wants me to be honored, and he is also the one who judges.

Mature Disciples of Jesus Christ: Disciples of Jesus Christ honor God, respect God, revere God, serve God and love God by loving others. They don't blaspheme by calling what God is doing of the devil.

John 8:51

51 I tell you for certain that if you obey my words, you will never die."

Note: You have to know the word to obey the word!

John 52-58

52 Then the people said, "Now we are sure that you have a demon. Abraham is dead, and so are the prophets. How can you say that no one who obeys your words will ever die? **53** Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

54 Jesus replied, "If I honored myself, it would mean nothing. My Father is the one who honors me. You claim that he is your God, 55 even though you don't really know him. If I said I didn't know him, I would be a liar, just like all of you. But I know him, and I do what he says. **56** Your father Abraham was really glad to see me."

57 "You are not even fifty years old!" they said. "How could you have seen Abraham?"

58 Jesus answered, "I tell you for certain that even before Abraham was, I was, and I am."

Questions:

What is going on here?

Why are they so confused?

Who do they think they are?

Why are they comparing Jesus to Abraham and thinking that Abraham is greater than Jesus?

Who are these people?

Is it us?

Do we recognize people like this in the church today?

What are we called to do when conversations like this is going on?

Do we speak up or do we remain quiet?

NOTES: