



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor  
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## JOHN 8

### John Series

So you had some challenges to face as you got up this morning. I'm just going to tell you my story. Yesterday I was teaching in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Joanne Miller and I teach parenting seminars all around the country every week so this week we just happened to be in Green Bay, Wisconsin where they were having a snow problem in Chicago which was our pass-through place. So when we went to the airport to try to get there, our connections weren't working, it didn't look like it was going to work.

I was just so disappointed a couple weeks ago when I couldn't get back here because whatever happened, the last flight out of wherever it was, I couldn't get here. I did not want to miss again. So I rented a car and drove 16 ½ hours yesterday all overnight to get here this morning. I arrived at 9:30 here, went to the bathroom, changed my clothes so that I could be with you this morning. I'm really grateful. This is my church. This is where I want to be.

I just want you to know we have a backup plan. There are weeks when I will not be able to drive from wherever I am to get here and that backup plan is Ed Miller as he taught before. He was ready to teach this morning. He came ready to teach and present a message from the book of James. So he don't get to teach this week, but he will be teaching next week because I'm planning to be away next week.

I won't be here next week. I'm teaching in another church in Dallas, Texas next week. So Ed will be teaching here next week and I'll be eager to hear reports. Please send me reports on how things went on Sunday morning. You all have my email address. Tell me what's going on around here. I love to be in contact with everyone and see what's happening.

Alright. Let's pray as we open God's word today.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we thank you for this gospel of John that you've given to us and the insight that it provides for us. Today as we open up your word we do so with anticipation, recognizing that as we open up your word we know that this might be the moment when you communicate something very valuable to our hearts, that you may call us to do something new and different or something old that needs to be done again. We don't know what that's going to be, Lord, but we open our hearts to you asking for you to use your Holy Spirit to illuminate your word so that we can understand fully and apply it to our lives. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Open your Bibles to John 8. Now you've got to have a Bible here. You've got to open your Bible. I want you to see what it says right in your passage. I don't think you'll get it on an online

Bible because I want you to see right down in the Bible in this passage of John 8:1-11 it says, *Not found in the earlier manuscripts* – I want to describe what that’s for. So if you don’t have a Bible, I know some of you have online Bibles, I have my iPad that I use for my Bible, but if you open this Bible I want you to see in there that this passage we’re about to read today from John 8:1-11 it says they are *not found in the earlier manuscripts*. Do you see that written in your text there?

If you have a King James Version it won’t say that because the King James Version was translated with a limited number of manuscripts, but since then there have been the Qumran caves they found with more manuscripts. They found other manuscripts since then and they take all of those and they put those together.

I want to explain to you what that means in this particular passage because I want you to understand it. We as conservative Christians believe the Bible is trustworthy, we believe the Bible is inspired by God, we believe that it’s an arrant. That’s what we believe about our scriptures. When we make that statement what we’re saying is we believe those things about the original manuscripts that were written. When Paul wrote it down, when God gave it to Paul, and he wrote it down, when God used Peter to write down the message that He wanted in the books that he wrote, those original manuscripts are the ones that are inspired. They are authoritative.

The reality is we don’t have any of the originals. All we have is a lot of copies. But the beautiful thing about the study of scriptures is that the copies that we have, thousands of them are so much alike. They are the same. Occasionally there’s a T that isn’t crossed or an I or a little word ‘a’ is missing or ‘the’ – anytime something isn’t exactly the same as the others, it’s noted, not always in your English translation, but it’s noted when we go and study the word just because we want to be sure. We believe the Bible is trustworthy, we believe the Bible is God’s word for us and we want to know what it says.

As they take all the manuscripts and lay them out, what they discover is that this particular passage is not found in some of them. Along with a couple of verses at the end of the gospel of Mark, they’re not found in some of the manuscripts. As conservative evangelical Christians we want to hold God’s word with integrity so we acknowledge that fact. What that means is we don’t know whether these particular verses were originally written by John or Mark. So we want to recognize that.

I also want you to know there’s nothing in these two passages at the end of the gospel of Mark and this passage containing significant doctrine that would be questioning our faith or something. The amazing thing is that all of these documents that we have demonstrate tremendous authority for us so that we can rely on God’s word as reliable for us. We can trust that this is the word that God wants us to have.

There are some liberal scholars who look at God’s word and they take it apart and do things to it that are not good. There are some liberal scholars, for example, who would say about the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, “It could not have been written during that time because he obviously knew a lot of information about the future that he could not have known then and so

we have to late-date the book of Daniel.” So they date it 500 years later so that all that history could take place.

We don’t believe that because we believe in the supernatural whereas many of the liberal scholars do not do that. What we believe is that God gave those things to Daniel, the Daniel of that time, not somebody who was pretending to be Daniel later on. He gave them to Daniel and Daniel prophesied and he knew about things that would happen in the future. So there are liberal scholars who would seek to discredit God’s word in a number of different ways. We want to be careful of that. We don’t want to allow that to happen.

I want you to know that what we’re saying here in this passage is this isn’t a liberal scholar problem. I don’t want you to go away from God’s word when you look at this passage and say something like “well the translators of the New International Version or New American Standard or the ESV, those translators were trying to warp the text somehow.” I just think that is unfair. Those translators of the NIV, the ESV, the New American Standard Version in particular, maybe some others too, they’re conservative Christians. They’re people who are committed to God’s word as authoritative inspired word of God. So we want to be careful of the conspiracy theories that would lead us to believe.

Now there are translations like the Mormon translation of the Bible, the Jehovah Witness translation of the Bible that do mistreat it and they don’t handle it properly. But that’s not what we’re talking about. I just want you to see what we’re talking about here. As conservative Christians we have an issue here with transcription.

I look at this passage and I say, “This is a great story about Jesus,” and I treat it as God’s word myself. It’s a great story that we learn some valuable things about Jesus and what’s going on. So I’m going to take you through this story and help you understand it in that fashion. But I wanted you to understand what the footnote means in your Bible; not to be alarmed by it, but to understand what it means.

Let’s go and read the story starting in verse 1. This is a takeoff from last week when it says the people *all went home*. Verse 1: *but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives*.

Verse 2 says, *At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.*

The setting is the temple courts. Remember the temple courts, thousands of people could be up there at the same time. There are covered porches all around in the temple area. The main parts of the temple are in the center where the holy of holies and the holy place are and the altar and all the different things that are there. They are all in that center. But all around the sides are the places where people would sit and they would fellowship. They are places where teachers would

come in and explain some things or they would talk to the people about certain things. Jesus was one of those. And we see in the story that's the setting.

The scene is He's sitting down and He's got some people around. Notice it says there He sat down to teach some people who were *gathered around him*. So He's having this conversation or some teaching, some dialogue going on in the Temple Mount. In the midst of that, these Pharisees brought a woman who was caught in adultery. Because they want to challenge Him. And notice it says the reason they're doing this is to trap Jesus. They want to try to catch Him to get Him to do something with this information that will get Him in trouble.

I think that He has three choices they're thinking and any one of these is going to get Him in trouble. One, He could excuse her. If He excused her then He would violate the Jewish law and that would justify the hatred of the Jewish leaders.

Number two, He could be harsh with her and if He was harsh with her He would alienate the crowds, many of whom were sinners who were very intrigued by Him, common people. There's this woman caught in sin.

Thirdly, He could say, "Stone her," and take a stand for justice, but then you'd have a problem with Rome because Rome did not allow the Jewish people to execute anybody. They were in charge and they didn't allow that to take place. So those are the three choices. Any answer He gives it's going to be a trap.

Now Jesus is not only going to avoid the trap but He's going to teach us some things about humility, about grace, about forgiveness, and how to handle sin. I think the principle in this passage is just really significant for us in our own personal lives, particularly if we're tempted to condemn others. How do we handle the sin in someone else's life.

I imagine in another passage He's in bed at night thinking, "I've got to teach these guys about forgiveness, they've got a problem with this. When I was growing up in my father's carpenter's shop and working around there, we had sawdust that would get in your eyes sometimes." So He says to His disciples, "Let me tell you a story about forgiveness. If sometime you see a speck of sawdust in someone else's eye, first take the plank out of your own eye before you get that person." That's the same principle that's coming into this passage as Jesus is going to talk about and deal with this woman and the Pharisees that are around. Let's look at it some more.

*Verse 6: But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.*

What did He write? I can't believe John put this in here and didn't tell us what He wrote. There's so much conjecture about what He wrote on the ground. Was He writing their sins? And so each one of them is going to disappear because they saw their sin on the ground. I don't know. We don't know for sure what He wrote. Maybe He wrote "stay cool" to the woman. "I'll take care of this." I don't know what He wrote on the ground, but He's writing something down on the ground. He's stooping and writing something on the ground.

It's interesting because I was just thinking about the things that were written by the finger of God. If you think about in Exodus 31:18 it says that *when the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.* That must have been quite an etching that He did, inscribed by His very finger.

In Daniel 5:5-6 this is the party where Belshazzar's just having a great time until *suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking.*

I just think that's humorous. It says *the fingers of a human hand*, but somehow God is writing a message on the wall using this idea of writing. Psalm 56 tells us that all of our tears are written in a book describing God's personal care for us.

My favorite thing about what God does, His handwriting and what He does with it is in Jeremiah 31:33. He says, *"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts."*

So God's promise is that instead of just having the tablets of stone that He engraved there for Moses, He's going to write those laws, He's going to write them on our hearts. That's a powerful statement of the new covenant that God has designed for us.

Back to John 8:9. *At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.* Why the older ones first? I don't know. But I do want you to look at verse 9 and see what it was that caused them to leave. Was it the writing on the ground which Jesus did? Which I often thought it was, until I saw in verse 9 that it says, *At this, those who **heard** began to go away one at a time.*

Maybe it was just the statement that Jesus made. Whichever one of you is without sin, you go ahead and cast the first stone. And the older one left and then the next oldest one and they all just dissipate and leave the crowd.

It's interesting that something happened inside of their hearts that caused them to turn back and not keep pursuing them. I would suggest it's something that we need in our lives too. We need to be able to evaluate our own hearts before we come and we condemn someone else or before we judge or criticize them. I'm not saying this is just of someone who's committed adultery, I think this is really important for us even in a marriage relationship. Sometimes we're really quick to point at the other person and we really need to evaluate ourself first. Maybe if we had a little more humility in our own lives we would be less likely to be on the attack of the other person.

Verse 10 – everybody's gone. Jesus was on the ground, everybody's left. Verse 10: *Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."*

In other words, there were no legal witnesses. In order for someone to be charged of a crime there needed to be a presence of two or three witnesses. They're gone! And so Jesus is saying, "The witnesses are not there." But I want you to see that Jesus is not soft on sin. He doesn't say, "Well forget it then." What does He say to her? "Go and leave your life of continual sin." Stop continuing to sin like you're doing presently. So He's not soft on sin. Sexual immorality is wrong and Jesus is making a statement about her sin. It's a problem that she needs to address it, she needs to stop that.

But I want you to see the external guilt that's present here is different from the internal guilt that's the reality in her life. They are two different kinds of things. The external guilt is not present now. They're gone. The accusers are gone.

The reality is sometimes you and I don't get caught, but we're still guilty. There's that internal witness of the conscience the Bible talks about, the Holy Spirit that provokes us, that prompts us to deal with the sin, the wrong that's in there that needs to be addressed in our own hearts. And so we need to be careful to even listen to this. Just because we didn't get caught doesn't mean we don't need to deal with it. We're not just out there and free, we still have an issue that needs to be addressed. So Jesus is approaching her and He's describing that.

I just appreciate how Jesus handles sinners like me. The most harsh words Jesus had were not for the sinners, they were for the Pharisees who were the religious leaders. He's pretty firm with them and we'll see that later on in this passage.

Forgiveness is just such a beautiful thing. I think this woman went away and she must have remembered this later on in her life. As she's loving her husband and just thinking about "Wow. I escaped that thing that was going to kill me. And now I'm doing the right thing." Or just thinking about her kids and how important, how valuable it is for her to do the right thing. I just think that forgiveness that she experienced is a beautiful thing.

This story that takes place of them bringing this woman into the place where Jesus is is an interruption to Jesus' teaching. You see that, right? He was there teaching all these people in the porticoes in the temple and they interrupted Him.

Let's go back now as we continue on through the story. But just having looked through this story we get an insight about Jesus and we go "Wow. I like Jesus." We go "Wow. I like forgiveness. I appreciate God and who He is and how He handles people like me." But let's go on and look at some more teaching that Jesus is trying to communicate to the people who are listening.

*Verse 12: When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

So He turns back to the people and He starts talking about light. It's a newer idea than He's talked about before. He's talked about the bread of life, He's talked about being thirsty as we talked about last week. Now He's talking about being the light of the world. He's not just the light of the world. See they already knew there was light. Remember in the Old Testament – *the*

*word of God is a lamp unto my feet – so they knew that the prophets were lights that shown the way. So we had lights before, but now He’s saying I am the light of the world.*

There’s real power in this because Jesus is able in the light that shines from Him to offer forgiveness for a woman who’s in sin. That same light helps the hardhearted Pharisees disseminate and move away. Powerful light that we have here. It’s that light that God allows to live inside of us that Jesus says don’t let your light be hidden under a bushel but let it shine. God has allowed us to have that privilege. He is *the light of the world*.

Verse 13: *The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”*

*Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me.*

He’s going to be talking about Himself and the Father as we go forward. *In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”*

*Then they asked him, “Where is your father?”*

Before we get to verse 19 though, as we go through the rest of this chapter I want you to see the hardness of the Pharisee’s hearts, how difficult it is for them to grasp the truth. They’re not open to it and I think it’s a good lesson for us, a good message for us because sometimes we harden our own hearts, we argue with God, or we don’t accept the word that He wants for us. We really want to be receptive to that message that He has for us.

Watch what happens to these guys as they go through the dialogue. Now we’re going to talk about fatherhood. It’s going to get kind of heated here. They throw the first punch and they say, *“Where is your father?”* Jesus, as you know, was born of Joseph and Mary before they were married. They know that information. They’re going to draw attention to that.

Look at verse 41 – just skip down there real quick. He says, *“We are not illegitimate children.”* There’s kind of a punch going on here and it’s going to get a little bit nasty going down here with these guys. I just want you to see they’re trying to challenge Him. *“Your father? Oh yeah. I’m glad you brought that up, your father. Let’s talk about your father. Who is your father anyway?”*

Notice what He says. *“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.*

I don’t know exactly why John decides to write that. Everything John’s writing in here has a purpose. It may be that we’ve just talked about the Feast of Tabernacles. In the Feast of Tabernacles everybody goes out and they come in and have these celebrations. We talked about

that all last week. The Feast of Tabernacles is all over now. But when they set up all of the props, so to speak, for the Feast of Tabernacles, one of them they put out was a big menorah right in this area.

A menorah is the lamp with all the little lights on it. Maybe He's taking this idea of light, like He often does, and He's pointing to the fact – we don't know this for sure – but maybe He's pointing out the menorah, they're taking it down, He says, *"I am the light of the world."* So He's talking about that idea. Maybe that's why John included it here. I'm not quite sure.

Verse 21: *Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come."*

*This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?"*

*But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."* Now you can imagine the people looking back and forth, the Pharisees trying to figure out what He's talking about just to see if they can make sense out of these words.

Verse 24: *"I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins."*

That's got to be the saddest and worst news that they could hear, that if you don't believe in Jesus as the light, as coming from the Father as He's describing here in the passage, if you don't recognize His authority and understand why He's come to provide life for the world to take care of the sin problem that we have, if you don't recognize that, you will die in your sins. That's what He's saying. And that's how important it is. There's an urgency here.

Jesus is talking to these Pharisees, the crowds are listening, and He has a point He's trying to make. He's trying to get them to make a commitment to follow Him and to receive Him into their lives so they'll be a changed people, that they'll get saved. We use that word 'saved.' That's what he's trying to communicate to them. If you jump down to verse 30 you'll see *many believed in him*. That's his goal. He's trying to help people come to this saving knowledge of Jesus Christ to accept Jesus Christ.

So if you're here today and you're not saved, you've never accepted Jesus Christ in your life you want to look at this passage and see it as a personal invitation for you. God's calling you out, He's helping you see that you do not have to die in your sins, that Jesus is the Savior of the world, but He's also the Savior of you. And you must receive Him into your life. That's the motivation. And that's why it says in verse 30 *many believed in him*. Many trusted Him. Many accepted Him. And that's what you want to do if you haven't made that commitment today.

Verse 25. Let's continue. *"Who are you?" they asked.*



*“Just what I have been telling you from the beginning,” Jesus replied. “I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.”*

*They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.”*

When He’s *lifted up*. The idea here is lifted up on the cross. When He’s lifted up on the cross and you recognize who He is you’ll just be drawn to Him as a Savior. In our own lives we need to lift Jesus up on that cross in the sense that recognize He’s the Lord, He’s the one who saved us from our sins.

Verse 29: *The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” Even as he spoke, many believed in him.* Because they’re saying, “Wow. This guy says He pleases the Father. Everything He does pleases the Father. None of us can say that. All of us have sin in our lives. We can’t say everything we do pleases the Father.” But that’s what Jesus said. And so the people riveted on Him and they just recognized that He had something in Him. It was a spiritual thirst, this spiritual light, the spiritual bread – it’s all coming together and people are saying, “Wow. I need this.”

And so verse 31 says, *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.”*

That’s one of the evidences of salvation. Some people will make a claim. They’ll say, “I asked Jesus into my heart when I was a teenager,” but they do nothing with that. Do you think they’re really saved? It’s really up to God whether they’re saved or not. But I think some people with just that mental assent may not really be saved because there’s no fruit that’s produced out of that.

One of the fruit, or parts of the fruit here, is just this: *you hold to my teaching*. There’s a hunger for God’s word.

I love verse 32. It’s one I use a lot. It says, *“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* Oh I love that.

We underestimate the power of the word of God. When we understand the word of God then we’ll know the truth and that truth will set us free. That is just so powerful. And I think many times we’re malnourished spiritually. We need the freedom that comes. “I’m free” – that’s what we want to be able to say. There’s something very special that satisfies our soul, satisfies our heart when we make that statement.

A study of Christian freedom is really a good study to do. To understand what it looks like, here’s just a few verses you’re going to want to consider.

Galatians 5:1 says, *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.* That freedom is ours.

1 Peter 2:16 says, *Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves.*

Take that idea of living as God's slaves now into verse 33 as we move forward because he says in verse 33, *They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"*

Now I don't know what they're talking about because they were slaves in Egypt and they were slaves in Medo-Persia, they were slaves in Babylon. They've been slaves many a time, so I don't know what they're talking about here trying to say they're not being slaves. The reality is it's not so much the external slavery that's taking place, but He's talking about the internal slavery that happens in our lives when sin starts to control us in our own lives. That's what He's talking about as He's moving forward here.

Look at verse 34. *Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.*

Now Paul is going to really elaborate on this slavery to sin idea in the book of Romans. But Jesus is saying here, *"Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."*

There are some people who say, "I don't want the church. I don't want Christianity. I want to be free." What are you talking about? What do you want free? Do you want to have as much sex as you want? You want to have as much alcohol as you want? You want to have as much drugs as you want? You ever see a person who has as much alcohol as they want – do they look free to you? No, they're not free.

It's exactly what's happening here. Jesus is saying that person's a slave to that in their lives. It's only through the Son that we experience this freedom that comes in our lives. And when we experience that, God just does something really deep inside of our hearts. That freedom is a beautiful thing and He's talking about that here. The greatest freedom that we can have is that at night you can put your head down on your pillow and know that if the trumpet sounds tonight, I'm right with God, I'm ready to go. Because you have a personal relationship with God.

Verse 37: *I know that you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father."*

Uh oh. Watch this now. Who is their father? He's going to get very pointed with them here. *"And you are doing what you have heard from your father."*

They say, *"Abraham is our father."* So He says, *"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do what Abraham did. As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who*

*has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the works of your own father.”*

Now they say: *“We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.”*

*Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God.”*

Paul is going to take off on this spiritual seed of Abraham versus the genealogical seed. So not everybody who's born of Abraham is really the seed of Abraham. It's those who've accepted the Lord into their lives that experience this special spiritual fruit.

Let's go on in verse 42: *I have not come on my own; God sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because [here we go] you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires.*

Now this is getting kind of heated. In the midst of this the people are watching. We here are talking about spiritual fatherhood? He continues to talk about the devil as He continues in verse 44.

*He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! How can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”*

You've got to picture this. We are in the temple courts. This is their backyard. He's talking to them about this thing about spiritual fatherhood and they're missing the whole point here. And so they are just so upset they start talking illogically.

Look what they say in verse 48. *The Jews answered him, “Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?”* Where do they get the idea that He's a Samaritan? I don't know where that comes from. And demon-possessed?

Verse 49: *“I am not possessed by a demon,” said Jesus, “but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death.”*

Wow. That's great news. I'm going to read it again because this is really good. I told you about really bad news earlier – you're going to die in your sins. Well, here's the really good news. *Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death.*

If you're not a believer today, first step. Accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. This is the passage for you. And I'm sure God is speaking to you in the midst of this.

Verse 52: *At this they exclaimed, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?”*

*Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”*

What is that day that He *saw and was glad*? Now you have to realize that they’re on the Temple Mount. The Temple Mount is an area that was built on top of a mountain, the mountain called Mount Moriah. That should bring back the story to you of Abraham because when Abraham came up the mountain with his son, Isaac, Isaac is saying to him, “Dad, we’ve got the fire and we’ve got the wood, but we don’t have a sacrifice.”

Abraham says, “God will provide, son,” because God had told Abraham, “Go up there and sacrifice your son.” But Abraham doesn’t want to say that to his son. He gets up there, builds the altar, gets the knife ready to kill his son, and God says, “Stop.” The Bible says the angel of the Lord tells Abraham, “Look over there in the thicket. There’s a ram provided there.” And Abraham says, the Lord provides. Jehovah-jireh – the Lord provides.

Here’s the sacrifice that you need over here. Who’s the angel of the Lord? Maybe it’s just a regular angel. I don’t know. But maybe it’s really the incarnate Jesus, Son of God. When He came to earth He became a man. But He’s really a spiritual being and maybe He’s the one who spoke in the fire to Moses. Maybe He’s the one who spoke there. Maybe Jesus is the one who is manifested here in the statement. So when He says there, “*Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad,*” maybe Abraham’s getting this idea that there’s a sacrifice that replaces me killing my son and just a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ Himself.

Verse 57. Let’s finish the passage out there. “*You are not yet fifty years old,*” they said to him, “*and you have seen Abraham!*”

“*Very truly I tell you,*” Jesus answered, “*before Abraham was born, I am!*” Now that is a really powerful statement.

Here’s why. It comes from another Bible story, the story of Moses. Because Moses is being told by God, “Go and tell Pharaoh that he needs to let my people go.” Moses thinks of five excuses and one of them is, “God, if I go and tell them, they’re going to ask me, ‘Who is this God?’ They’ve got lots of gods too. ‘Which god are you talking about?’ They’re going to ask me that. What am I supposed to say?”

And God says, “You tell them, *I am* sent you.” The idea is the all-existing one, the to-be verb, *I am*. Always existing from the past, always existing in the future, and the *I am* becomes the word Yahweh or the word Jehovah (it’s the same thing). And so when we call God by His personal name, it’s Jehovah, it’s Yahweh. It comes from the idea *I am*.

So now Jesus is saying, *“before Abraham was born, I am!”* Well they knew exactly what He was saying. That’s why in verse 59 it says, *At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.*

What an amazing story as we go through here to see the hard-heartedness of the Pharisees, that they just don’t have their hearts in the right place. They don’t have their hearts opened up.

I just want to suggest that I find myself in that position sometimes where my heart is hardened and I’m just not open to the Lord. I want to be open. I want God to be able to speak to me at any time. I don’t want to be in this dialogue wrestling with God saying, “Yes it is. No it isn’t. Yes it is. No it isn’t,” which seems to be going on in this passage. I want to be the one who’s saying, “God, just fill me. Help me understand what I don’t understand. Teach me. I want to follow you one hundred percent.”

That’s where I want to be and I trust that’s where you want to be as well. We just want to dedicate ourselves to the Lord wholeheartedly and say, “God, just come into my heart. Open up my heart so that I can understand the words that you have for me. I don’t understand it all, but I want to. I want to accept you, I want to trust you, I want you to reign in my life.”

That’s the message that Jesus is presenting to these people. But some of them we see are hardhearted and we see that others believed in Him. There’s a choice that happens. We each make that choice in our own lives.

I would suggest that’s a decision that we want to make today and we want to say, “Lord, I just dedicate myself to you again today. Today show me how you want me to serve you, how I can love you more.” And God will do that in our lives.