

The Gospel of John
Lesson #77
The Journey
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The Gospel of John

It becomes more than obvious from what we've seen in John and, also in our experiences there must be levels of faith. We see people professing faith in Jesus one day, or one year, and then a day or a year later their lives look no different from the world. This, of course, presents the need for the term I use called, "Saving Faith". Jesus, himself said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" And James writes, "even demons believe and tremble".

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How else can it be that the masses in Jerusalem hailing Jesus as King on Palm Sunday are no where to be found around the cross or in the Upper Room? Why have we seen so many "believe" in Jesus and then some time later they are not even attending church let alone living for Christ? I will show you today some people described by the Apostle John as "believing" that clearly are proven to be still lost in their sin. In fact, they accuse Jesus of having a bastardized birth, of being a demon possessed Samaritan, and are ready to stone him to death. I believe we will discover today there are life situations that mimic salvation, but because saving faith is so unique in its substance that it becomes difficult to define. The faith that saves can only be examined looking backwards in time.

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- A prime example of what I am saying is found in this verse.
- John 8:30 As he was saying these things, many believed in him.
- As Jesus was delivering the message from his Father the 3rd person of the Trinity was involved in almost convincing the hearers that Jesus is the Christ.

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- I said “almost convincing the hearers that Jesus is the Christ” because the next section of John 8 shows us their “belief” was not saving faith.
- John 8:31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” 33 They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’” (see also John 2:23-24)

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- The proof that what they believed in John 8 was insufficient to be “saving faith” is found in their own words as they begin to question and argue with Jesus.
- The one who is saved does not start out resisting the claims of Jesus – all their resistance does is provide additional evidence of the superficiality of their faith.
- When one is saved, God gives us the needed faith to believe him and not resort to what we think is right, but we willingly submit ourselves to the Word of God.

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• John 2:23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. 24 But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people.

• The crowds were “believing” in Jesus, but Jesus was not “believing” in them – so what are we to do with this level of “belief”?

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• There may be no better evidence of saving faith than to remain in that initial posture of belief where we eagerly obey the Lord.

• We eagerly get baptized, we begin to tithe, and we love going to worship with other believers – in general we are quick to obey.

• Then when you can watch the years roll by and you are still eager to obey, well, that life has the aroma of saving faith.

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• There is a certain precision that is required when we teach verse by verse, word by word – and unless you want to duck some things it can be difficult.

• John is writing, being carried along by the Holy Spirit, and he speaks of some who “believed”, and then almost immediately speaks of them in clouded terms.

• He says they believed, but then describes the same people later in the text as picking up stones to stone Jesus so what kind of belief is that? (verse #59)

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- James 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? (implied "can that kind of faith save?")
- James was the first of the New Testament books to be written so it appears that early on there were unanswered questions about the faith that saves.
- So, my question is not new – it quickly became obvious there is a faith that saves and a "faith" that is merely intellectual or superficial.

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- "We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone." Martin Luther
- It's an old question - is it possible to have saving faith and remain unchanged?
- How can a person go from being dead in sin to being alive in Christ and exhibit no noticeable change?

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- There is a condition for knowing the truth and being set free by it - and a promise that comes when we meet the condition.
- The condition is, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples", and the promise is "and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
- To abide in Jesus' word is to remain in it; to hold to his teachings – to abide in the truth is to demonstrate saving faith.

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Perhaps we should think of saving faith as the “I do” in a marriage ceremony. A man and a woman stand publicly and make vows to each other. Sometimes they even say, “to thee I pledge all my worldly goods”. They are committing to each other. They agree to be faithful to each other. They trust each other. And yet these are but words and promises when made – but when they are lived out, they become evidence of their commitments to each other. Then they become more than words, they become proof. Maybe we could even say their “I dos” on their wedding day become their “I dids” years later. What was once just a promise, becomes reality through their actions.

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- Modern evangelism “programs” are at least partly to blame for that person in your life who effectively says, “I believe in God and Jesus, so let me alone”.
- Modern evangelism minimizes the life that is demanded of the believer and maximizes all the fringe benefits that come with salvation.
- We just want them to buy what we are selling – often we want them to tell us what we want to hear and sometimes they do.

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- As we share the message of the scriptures, we should see ourselves in the same fashion as Jesus saw himself.
- We are not carrying our message, but the very message God has for the world – the God who speaks sends us then to repeat what he has spoken.
- The duty Jesus assigned to us is not to make converts, but to make disciples – “teaching them observe all that I have commanded”.

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• John 12:49 For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.

• You would not be wrong to say this is God’s expectation of us as well – when God has given us his words to say, why would we ever try to improve upon that! 😊

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• I do not wish to shake your faith with all my words about saving faith and a level of faith that is insufficient to save – stay with me and any clouds I’ve brought should lift.

• John 8:30 As he was saying these things, many believed in him. 31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples”.

• Saving faith is in the one who “abides” (remains) in the teachings of Jesus and cannot be shaken from him.

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• A spiritual check-up – have you remained?

- Do you believe Jesus is the Christ?
- Do you love Jesus?
- Do you practice sin?
- Do you hate sin?
- Do you love and pursue righteousness?
- Do you seek to follow and obey the Bible?
- Do you regularly worship our Lord?
- Do you serve him?

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We are not saved by what we do, but what we do speaks volumes about who we are. Don't evaluate your life based on perfection – evaluate your desires and your direction.

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- "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
- The word, "abide" appears 29 times in the N.T. and John is the writer of it 27 times.
- When we get to chapter 15, we will talk about what it is to abide in Christ, but for now just know its primary meaning is "to remain".

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"If you abide (remain) in Jesus you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

If you want to be free you must first become a slave of Christ and his precepts. In fact, the more you do as you please, the less pleased you become with what you do. Ask the "sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll" people of the sixties or any of the victims of similar rebellious thinking of any age. God's way always works, and our way always ends in misery and slavery.

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Matthew 13 Parables

- **The Parable of the Weeds** – the devil sows weeds in the field where God’s word is planted. It takes remaining in it and discernment to love the one and hate the other.
- **The Parable of Leaven** – the word of God, when one remains in it, continues its work until it is everywhere throughout the life of the believer.
- **The Parable of the Hidden Treasure** – the word of God is so satisfying it is its own treasure. When we remain in it for long periods, we find it to be all satisfying.

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- The most basic meaning behind “being set free by knowing the truth” is that of John 14:6 where Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life”.
- Belief in Jesus sets us free from sin, and knowing the truth sets us free from error and the consequences that come from error.
- The idea that “truth sets us free” can extend well beyond our spiritual lives – the meaning is obvious and the applications of it are many.

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- I believe we’ve been a culture war in America that has now spanned 4-5 generations and the struggle is primarily over truth – what is true?
- The tactics of the enemies of freedom have been totally consistent because the war on America is not spearheaded by men, but by the devil.
- We have enjoyed a state of life for almost 250 years that is a total outlier of history – a place where people are free.²⁴

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- Most of the people who ever lived have lived under the control of dictators and tyrants – it is most unusual for people to be free.
- Americans, though far from perfect have been the providers of freedom for others, food, medicine, all sorts of disaster relief, and countless Christian missionaries.
- We have done lots of good and the primary reason why we have brought so much good to the world is because we were founded on Judeo-Christian principles.

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- The words of Jesus – “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free” apply to Americans in a particular way.
- For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6)
- We cannot win the fight for the future on our own, we must repent and turn back to God or we will fall.

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- And if we fall, in a short time the entire world will be enslaved because there are always tyrants who will take over.
- It is demonic for any person to want to control and enslave another person – but that is the devil’s goal.
- Two important atheistic books – Brave New World and 1984 were written depicting a world where all are enslaved.

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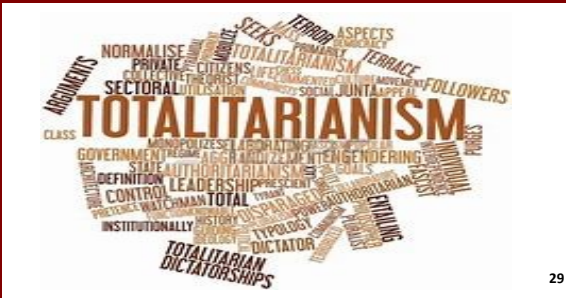
What Huxley and Orwell Agreed Upon

- Create a crisis – to elevate government control.
- Make people afraid – like a pandemic maybe.
- Endorse censorship – control what people can hear.
- Make immorality common and unlimited.
- Make sure the masses are distracted and entertained.
- Allow drugs to permeate the society.
- Isolate people from each other trapped in a single narrative.

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Freedom in America



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Questions?

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