

16. John 8:12-59

Like Jesus' first hearers, we all must decide whether to accept or reject the offer of freedom through Jesus.

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Getting started

If you were going to gaol tomorrow and could take one object with you, what would it be?

Observation

>> Tweet wall exercise

This is a complex exchange, in which Jesus and his opponents (the religious leaders, called Pharisees) are debating lots of related issues. Divide the five main sections of the debate between the group and try to summarise what each side is arguing into one tweet per side of no more than 140 characters (including hashtags).

It can work well to put the tweets on a whiteboard or big piece of paper.

Verses 13-20	
Verses 21-30	
Verses 31-36	
Verses 37-47	
Verses 48-59	

Interpretation

Read verses 31-32. Jesus says that if we know the truth the truth will set us free. What are some of the things Jesus could mean by this?

Read verse 34. Jesus says that everyone who sins is a slave to sin. We usually think of freedom as a lack of constraint, and sin is often unconstrained. So what is it about that sin that Jesus is trying to help them see?

Read verse 39. Why might it be so significant for these people that Abraham is their father? (You might like to read Psalm 105:5-11)

Read Exodus 3:13-14. What light does this shed on Jesus' highly controversial statement in verse 58?

Application

Why are Jesus' listeners incapable of receiving his message of freedom? What roadblocks are there which stop modern Australian listeners from hearing the message about Jesus?

This might be a good opportunity to talk about:

- Intellectual roadblocks – beliefs which seem incompatible with Christians, or doubts we might have; as well as:
- Heart roadblocks – things we love more than God, which get in the way of receiving Jesus.

This passage contains a stark contrast between those who think that they are God's children because of their membership in the religious community, and those who really are God's children.

- Is there any risk that people today might wrongly think that they are God's children? On what basis might they assume it?
- What might some of the marks of God's true children?
- Is it possible to have assurance that we won't end up like the Pharisees (thinking that we are God's children but being tragically misguided)? If so, how?

Prayer suggestions

This week, rather than share prayer points for each other consider spending some time giving thanks for our adoption as children into God's family, and all the blessing which come from it. Then maybe pray for people who we can share this good news with.