

Connecting the Sunday Sparkle at Hearsall Baptist with the Daily Dust of Life

Welcome

Do you ever do something on 'autopilot' and then later wonder what made you act the way you did? Share your stories.

Worship

Read Isaiah 25: 6 - 8

- Give people three minutes to look through the text silently.
- Read the same passage aloud again, with a different reader.
- Give people three more minutes to ponder these words silently.
- Share which words, phrases or verse struck you the most. What thoughts, memories, hopes, feelings or desires came into your mind?

Word

Read John 8: 31 - 36

Verse 31 starts with a condition: 'If you hold to my teaching...' The Greek is literally, 'If you remain in my message' or even 'If you abide in my message...'

- How should we live our lives today in order to meet that condition?

Three things follow from this condition:

1. *'You are really (or truly) my disciples.'* A disciple is one who continues to learn from a teacher.
 2. *'You will know the truth.'* The 'you' here is plural - so could be translated 'you all'. 'To know' here refers to acknowledgment of facts, familiarity, understanding and learning.
 3. *'The truth will set you free.'* To understand what Jesus means by 'freedom', we must first understand what he means by slavery. Look at verse 34. Jesus is saying that everyone who commits a sin is no longer free.
- Discuss what Jesus could mean by each of these three claims. What does each one mean for us today?

Consider verse 35. Literally it could be read as ‘... and the slave does not remain in the house forever, but the Son continues to exist forever.’ So Jesus links slavery with the question of belonging - the temporary belonging of a slave and the permanent belonging of a family member.

- Discuss the link between freedom and belonging. What is it about belonging or not belonging that makes us prone to behave well or behave badly (sin)? Compare with verse 47.
- After all these discussions, try to come up with a group rendering of verses 31 - 32 in modern language. Can you express it in a way that someone unfamiliar with Christian tradition could understand?

Response

- So what? Discuss together how you as a group can help each other to live in Jesus’ message and enjoy a secure life of belonging to God and wholesome, healthy, liberated living.
- Please work hard at coming up with some actual development ideas for your group. You could be mainly a talking shop - or you could be a cradle of belonging, love and freedom!