

A summary of John 8:12-36

- 1. We speak the things that we hear from the Lord (8:26, 28-29):** Jesus had many things to say and to judge concerning us, but everything that He said was what He heard from the Father. Even though He was God, as a man, He still needed the Father to teach Him and lead Him. At the beginning of chapter 8, He went up to the Mount of Olives at night time (v.1), to pray to the Father and be one with Him before returning early in the morning to speak to the people in the temple (v.2). As ones serving the church (relative, in whatever capacity), we need to be in fear and trembling when we speak to the brothers and sisters, or contact people, or serve or initiate anything. Are we close to the Lord? Do we hear from Him? Do we do or say things according to our previous experiences, according to previous blessings that the Lord gave us, however good and spiritual they may have been? Do we do things only out of a good and sincere heart? When we read the Bible, do we only seek to understand it, or do we really look for the Lord's speaking to us personally? The word, or the Bible (the *logos*, which is the constant or written word) must become *rhema* (the instant word, inspiration, revelation), to touch us and become relevant and applicable in our daily life and church life. In v.28, Jesus did nothing from Himself, according to His own authority or His own decision. He still needed the Father's instruction. Do we have such a learning heart, or do we rely on what worked in the past? Even if we prepare to speak or serve (and we must indeed do so), we still need the Lord to speak to us. In v.29, the Father was always with Jesus, never leaving Him alone, and Jesus always did things that were pleasing to Him. He sought to please the Father, never men. When we serve or interact with saints, do we seek to please them and not offend them? If we know God's heart's desire, our speaking and our testimony will seek to be faithful to His burden for the church, and not to please people or offer them something that will merely make them happy or satisfied. We speak only what the Lord has taught us, to please God, even as Jesus, though the Son of God, was taught of God. For this, we need much prayer, individually, with companions, and with a service team, along with much fellowship with brothers and sisters. Then, the Lord may be able to speak to us and lead us.
- 2. Many may believe because of our testimony or speaking that is one with the Lord (8:30).** Surprisingly, many believed into Jesus, even though Jesus' words were "hard to understand!" This is our experience today. Even though the Bible is hard to understand, even to us, many still believe. This shows us the value and effectiveness of a testimony that is initiated by the Lord. If we hear the Lord's words to us, our speaking and our living will reflect an intimate union with the Lord that will touch others, and cause them to believe into Him. This should be an encouragement to us. While many say that the Bible is hard to understand (v.27), we can be encouraged that we can still come to the Bible, and that the Lord can still speak to us, even though we may not understand everything. This living will attract others, who will desire Jesus and believe into Him, even as we speak to them (v.30).
- 3. Abide in the Lord's word, not just believe (8:31).** Even though we may believe, we must come to the "word." The word here, in Greek, is *logos*, which is the constant word, the same word used in John 1:1, to convey something that is spoken with a thought and a reasoning. In other words, to believe in the Lord, the *logos* word must become *rhema* to us, to cause our lives to change. Once we believe, having tasted the *rhema* word, we now have a greater appreciation of the *logos* word (the Bible). We realize the Bible is marvelous, divine, that there is no book like it. We realize we must come to it again and again. We would never let a day go by without coming to the Bible. We begin to abide in the word. Now, when we handle the Bible, we are no longer afraid of coming to it because we may not understand everything. The Bible (*logos*) also begins to become truth. This word, or truth, will eventually become our faith to cause us to follow the Lord as His disciples (v.31). During the hard times, during times of dryness, failure, weakness, and disappointment, the *logos* word, or truth, will keep us and perfect us to be His disciples to follow Him wherever He may lead us. Outward circumstances, inner success or failure, blessings or loss, will not cause us to depart from the Lord or the church life. How can we practically abide in the Lord's word? Two ways may be helpful. Firstly, we can develop a habit to **write down notes** in our Bible. When we read the Bible (*logos*), the Lord may speak to us (*rhema*). We can write down what He speaks to us. At a later time, especially when we are going through a difficult period in our life, we may come back to read what we wrote. This may help solidify our faith and trust in the Lord. We may then realize what a living and trustworthy God we have. Rather than blame God or blame the environment or people, we can be led to thank Him and praise Him for His mercy and faithfulness. Secondly, when we hear a brother or sister say that he or she cannot understand the Bible, we need to realize the seriousness of the consequences. It is a guarantee that people will leave the Lord if they do not understand His words. What should our attitude be? Rather than condemning them, we need patience to find time to accompany one or two to pray and fellowship with them. Together, we can come to the word. Encourage them to come to the word with a companion or in a team. This will help them to abide in the Lord's word, and this will perfect us also to abide by serving and taking care of people.

- 4. The Lord will not judge us, but He will judge what we do (8:15-16, 26).** In v.15, Jesus says that He judges no one. This is absolutely true. He does not judge us because, indeed, He has judged sin, Satan, the world, our self and the flesh on the cross, once for all. He never condemns the world, but desires to save the world (John 3:17). He certainly has the right and the authority to judge us. How many times do we depart from the Lord? How many times do we forsake Him when it is convenient for us? And we certainly deserve to be judged! We are sinners. Yet God will not judge us. Likewise, no one in the church life will, or should, judge us. But in 8:16, Jesus says that He does judge, and that His judgment is true. What is the difference between His not judging in v.15 and His judging in v.16? In v.15, Jesus never judges us because He has already judged our sin and sinful nature on the cross, so we can turn to Him, believe in Him, receive eternal life, and follow Him. He can never judge us again. However, He does judge the sinful things that we do. For example, He will judge murder, adultery, robbery and lies, to name a few of the “blatant” sins. He will never overlook our sins or condone sinful behavior. Otherwise, we would live lawless lives, and even the church life would become lawless. Therefore, we need to be alert, and in fear and trembling, how we live our lives. It is not a small thing to sin, and even more to abide in sin. We continually need the Lord’s mercy to forsake, and even flee from sin so we can be well pleasing to Him. We should never think that because we believe in Jesus and are saved, we can live anyway we want, and that our sins will be forgiven. Yes, they are forgiven, but we will have to account for what we have done (2 Corinthians 5:10). At the same time, we should not fall into self-condemnation or self-pity. Our weaknesses and failures, and even our sins, are not for us to wallow in self pity, but for us to come back to the Lord and follow Him joyfully and peacefully, because He has indeed forgiven us and saved us, and He is saving us and perfecting us day by day.
- 5. The truth will set us free (8:25, 32, 36).** The Jews asked Jesus, “Who are you?” This is actually a good question that we should ask the Lord. “Lord, who are You?” Who is the Lord? He is the truth, or the word (*logos*), which, when becoming *rhema*, can set us free. We need to know the Lord’s speaking to us (the *logos* becoming *rhema* (inspiration, revelation) so we can come back to the *logos* and have faith in the *logos* word. From what are we freed? We are free from sin, sins (v.21, 24, 34), darkness (v.12), self (v.28), the flesh (v.15), the world (the fleshly, material and religious world) (v.23), and earthly matters or attractions (v.23). When we come to the saints, we must be free from all these things. We need to be free from condemnation of others. Never use others as a negative example, but always use ourselves as an example. We are full of failures! If we think we have revelation, or that the Lord spoke to us, but not to others, we are actually in darkness, we may be a slave to sin, and eventually we will die in our sin (that is, we will not enjoy the eternal life) (8:34). To be free is not just to be freed from the negative things, but to be free to exercise and operate in the spiritual and heavenly realm. We are free to speak, to flow out the rivers of living water, but always one with the Son and with His word. This is the most free life, yet at the same time the most restricted life. Why?
- 6. We need to go through death and resurrection, just like Jesus (8:28).** In v.24, Jesus referred to Himself as “I am.” Again in v.28, He referred to Himself as “I am.” However, the second time, He specified a condition to knowing Him in this way: “When you lift up the Son of Man.” This means that it was only when He was crucified, that we would know Him as the “I am.” Jesus had to go through death and resurrection in order to become the “I am” in our experience. We also have to pass through the same process so others may know Him as the “I am.” How can people know Christ? We have to be “lifted up on the cross.” If we speak without going through death, our speaking will have no value. A reality check is to find out how many people actually listen to what we are saying, and know what we are saying. Very, very few, according to our observation! The receptivity level is very low! Surprisingly, in the past, we were never concerned. As long as we spoke and we felt we were in spirit, we were satisfied. What about others? We need to pay attention. We should never blame others. Rather, we must “die” to ourselves, to our “good or living” speaking. We like to speak to many saints, and we are satisfied. Do we know the people we are talking to? Maybe we need to speak to one or two saints. Perhaps we like to speak for 10 minutes. Maybe we need to speak less, maybe only 5 minutes. How? We need to live a crucified life, a life of denial of the self, of our propensity to speak high things or show how much of the Bible we know. We may need to die to that, so we can speak a few words that can become the *rhema* word to a few, and cause them to believe into and know the Lord. Maybe we need to have coffee with one brother or sister, and get to know them, their family situation and their job situation. Then, perhaps, the Lord may give us a *rhema* word to speak, that may set a brother or sister free. Finally, we need to check with the ones to whom we speak. How much did they listen? How much did they receive? If not much, we need to go back to the Lord and listen to Him again and again, so He can show us where we are lacking. This is to live a crucified life.