

## CONNECTING THE DOTS

WILLIS 7/19/09

Jn8:31-32

I have entitled what I want to share with you today “Connecting the Dots.” When I was little I loved the coloring books where you connected the dots to reveal the picture. Without the connecting, though the picture was there, it was just a page of dots until they were connected.

- Connecting the dots didn’t create the picture, it revealed what was always there waiting for someone to make the connections. People are in deep need today of knowing how to connect the dots.
- It concerns me how much freedom is forfeited because people aren’t intentional enough in the manner in which they receive truth.

**The question I want to address today is how do we connect the dots of eternal truth?** When it comes to truth we are not trying to create something on our own, we are seeking to reveal what is already there but is in need of someone or something to connect the dots.

- **How do we process truth in such a way that it connects the dots of God’s eternal purpose and reveals the needed picture of His eternal plan?**
- **Are we set free just by the truth presented or are we set free by the manner in which we receive the truth presented?**

For several weeks now I have been contemplating how we are to process truth. You will remember I shared a few weeks back concerning how we are to receive our full reward. I spoke from 2Jn8 where the Apostle John ties our full reward to abiding in the truth.

- **It is the shed blood of Christ alone that qualifies us for our initial reward but the John speaks of a fuller reward that is tied to our willingness to abide in the truth we are given.** (not just hear the truth but abide in what was heard)
- You will remember we said this word abiding signifies a continuous repeated action where hearing is only the introductory stage. Truth is such that upon hearing it we must continually and repeatedly remain in it through practice, review, application and reproduction.
- **Truth heard doesn’t qualify us for reward nor does it qualify us for freedom. In fact if we only hear truth and don’t do it we qualify for deception.**

Travelling gives me a wider spectrum of seeing how different people interact with truth. Some receive it passively which is a polite way of saying some don’t receive it at all. Whereas some receive it actively in that they are intent to walk out the truth they are receiving.

- For example, it is pretty hard to abide in, practice, review, apply and reproduce a truth you never write down. So those who come to a teaching without the practice of taking notes are already predisposed to not abide in the teaching and thus lose their full reward.

**Over my 37 years of Pastoring people I have come to discover it is not the truth alone that sets people free...it is in the practicing of truth that people get set free.** Our freedom is in the abiding, our freedom is the practicing of truth.

- If we don't practice what we hear we remain stuck in the promise of freedom but never taste the liberty it is supposed to bring.

This is not a contradiction of what Jesus said, only an explanation as to what He meant in the use of the word "know." My dilemma is, I know a lot of things that I don't have freedom in. Does that mean The Word isn't true or does it mean there is a deeper meaning to the word "know" than simple knowledge?

- **Intellectual knowledge of a truth will not set you free. In fact, heart knowledge of the truth will not set you free. We are not set free until we put into practice the truth that we know.**
- Practicing the truth will set you free. Not putting into practice what we know simply makes us "informed captives." What is the difference between an "informed captive" and an "uninformed captive?" Knowledge...but knowledge alone doesn't change the status.
- **Freedom is found in the practicing of knowledge not in the mere possession of it.**

Knowledge: Ginosko; intimate knowledge; a knowledge that comes from experience; a knowledge that requires living, testing and observing. Ginosko is contrasted with another Greek word for knowledge "Oida" which means, intuitive knowledge...no practice needed.

- In choosing the Greek word "ginosko" Jesus was defining our means to freedom. **An intuitive knowledge will not set us free; freedom is the result of an intimate knowledge that expresses itself through practice and experience.**
- So we can see it is the practice of truth that connects the dots and reveals the picture of eternal desire. Passively hearing truth will not make the connections. Passively hearing truth will not turn on the lights.
- Imagine a sports team who only listened to lectures about the sport but never went to practice. Quite obviously this team would never do well in the game. **Practice may not make you perfect but it will make you free.**

This is why the Book of Ephesians calls us co-laborers together with Christ no just co-inheritors. The fullness of our inheritance is inseparably linked to our labor or practice with Christ. As we practice truth the dots are connected and our inheritance is revealed.

Please note what brings about this intimacy of knowledge is a willingness to “hold on to the truth.” V. 31 says, “If you hold on to the truth then you are truly My disciples and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”

- In the Eastern mind the receiving of truth is far more interactive than it is passive. Knowing is a posturing that involves spirit, soul and body not just mind. So Jesus says to know the truth we must hold on...
- **In the time of testing if we trust truth and sell it not we will be set free.**
- It is that predisposition to interact with truth actively that positions us for intimate knowledge. Why? Because God hides Himself from the insincere. “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter...”
- **God often hides Himself from the passive but eagerly reveals Himself to those who hold on and practice what they hear.**

### **Jn14:21**

“He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me...and I will manifest myself to him.” The operative word here being “keeps.” Mere knowledge of the commandments will not demonstrate our love nor will it release the manifestation of Christ.

- According to the verse what demonstrates our love for Jesus is when we put the commandments into practice. **The practice of truth releases the manifestation of Christ.**
- No wonder we are set free. We get set free because Christ becomes manifest.

So I believe Holy Spirit is calling us up to a greater practice of what we know. It will be the practicing of truth that reforms our culture not the knowledge of it. So if you are having a difficult time discerning the picture, you must connect some more dots.

- Examine your level of practicing what you know. If your knowledge of something is not producing the freedom you thought it would, examine your depth of practice.

**“And you shall practice the truth and the practicing of truth shall set you free.”**