

John 8:41-44      “You Are of Your Father the Devil”

JOH 8:41-44 You are doing the things your own father does."  
"We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. 43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

In our passage this morning we come back to the discussion Jesus was having with these Jews who were insisting that their physical lineage with Abraham was the determining factor for their status with God as being children of their heavenly Father.

Jesus doesn't deny that they have a physical connection to Abraham whom God entered into a covenant with and promised many blessings, both physical and spiritual.

But the determining factor regarding Abraham's status with God had everything to do with God's choice of Abraham and his subsequent faith as the Spirit enabled him. This is what we read way back in Genesis.

GEN 15:6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

It was Abraham's faith in God and His promises that allowed him to live in the presence of God in a righteous state. And in this righteous status Abraham then lived a righteous life through faith in his obedience.

The Jews in our text missed this as they assumed their mere physical connection to Abraham was enough. And this is what Jesus is pointing out. And by the way, we see this today in the church.

There are myriad's of people who assume that simply because they were born into a family who goes to church that they are necessarily Christians. There are just as many people who feel that simply because they have made a choice to identify themselves

with a particular church, by showing up on Sunday's, that they too are Christian.

What makes a person a Christian is not a physical connection to the church but a spiritual connection to God through faith in Christ, just like Abraham did, as we are then declared righteous, not because of any righteousness we have but because of the righteousness of Christ put to our account.

Then, and only then, do we find that the physical connection to the church is no mere spiritual exercise in futility but a vibrant and meaningful opportunity to serve Christ in the very institution He established for the advancement of His Kingdom to His glory.

And then, in Christ, for the first time in our lives, we are free from the penalty of our sin, along with the power of sin in our lives, and are able to freely serve and please the Lord in the power of His Spirit.

JOH 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

But the Jews in our text didn't understand the kind of freedom Jesus was speaking of and thereby they couldn't comprehend how Jesus could accuse them of not having a relationship with the Father in heaven.

JOH 8:40-41 As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. 41 You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

This is probably one of the most sobering passages we find anywhere in the word of God. It is here that Jesus makes a black and white statement about those who are in Christ by faith and those who aren't.

There is no gray area when it comes to a relationship with God. As I mentioned last week the world has this idea that all people are children of God. They feel that a loving God, if He created all of mankind, would never ultimately abandon His special creation of the human race.

The fact is that God never abandoned any of His creation. They abandoned Him. And He made the penalty for such abandonment quite clear to Adam and Eve. "In the day you eat of the fruit I have forbid you to eat, you will surely die."

In other words, in the day you commit such a treasonous act of disobedience you will pay the debt for such action which is death, eternal separation from a relationship with God.

Up until Adam and Eve sinned they were considered children of God according to their status, which was perfect. After they sinned their status changed and they became enemies of God because their sin separated them from God.

But of course the beauty of the grace and mercy of God is such that the Lord wanted that relationship reestablished and He established the only way of that being accomplished, which was to personally come into this world, as He took on flesh and pay the debt you and I owe to Him because of our sin.

When a person places their faith and trust in Christ for the redemption of their sins they immediately have their status changed by the Lord from guilty to not guilty, and they are adopted into the family of God and are truly children of God.

Those who have not trusted in Christ remain guilty of their sin and they will receive the just punishment of their sin. It is those who are still in their sin who cannot be called children of God.

And that is what was going on here in our text. Jesus was addressing these Jews with the reality that He alone is the Savior of His people. But instead they chose Abraham and Moses who couldn't save anyone.

And so, Jesus points out that if they choose any Savior but Him they have no relationship with God and therefore cannot call Him Father, nor can they assume they are His children.

In fact, Jesus goes so far as to accuse them that they are doing the works of their real father, not their heavenly Father.

JOH 8:41 You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

These Jews, and most people today, are living in a fantasy world when it comes to spiritual realities. And this is how sin deceives. There is nothing that could convince these people that they didn't belong to their Creator and have the kind of relationship with Him whereby they assumed they were His children.

But Jesus points out that they do not have the kind of relationship with God they claim and He proves it with their very actions.

JOH 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.

Up to this point Jesus has been hinting who their spiritual father is but they don't want to acknowledge this. But you'll notice here that our Lord makes the connection that if a person truly loves the Father then they will love His only Son. Not to do so proves that they really don't love the Father.

These Jews only want to argue with Jesus. They have called Him names, they've accused Him of being out of His mind, and yet what does Jesus do? He just tells them to trust Him as the Messiah who can take away their sins.

To reject the Son of God shows unequivocally that they reject the Father, because the Father has made it clear how He wants to be loved and worshipped by His people. On the day of Christ's baptism when heaven was opened up and a voice from heaven spoke, "this is My Son in whom I am pleased," the Father was putting His stamp of approval on the only one who can save mankind from their sin.

And so, to say you love the Father and yet hate His Son shows the utter insanity of such a statement. And as Jesus has been doing from the beginning He continues to state that He is God in the flesh.

JOH 8:42 ..... I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.

To come from God is another way of saying that Jesus was previously at the side of the Father, and that He had a special place residing with the Father. To be in such a position necessarily means that both He and the Father are of the same essence; God. And yet, in the statement that the Father sent Jesus shows clearly that they are not the same person.

This may be a mystery but it is no less true. There is only one God. The Scriptures make this clear.

DEU 4:39 Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.

And yet what we find from the very beginning of the Scriptures is that this one God has revealed Himself in a plurality of persons.

GEN 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

The word used for God in Genesis 1:26 is the Hebrew word *Elohim*, which is the plural form of God. Again, not a plurality of gods, but a plurality of persons in the Godhead.

It's interesting too that in the very next verse in Genesis after we're told that God said, "let us make man in our image", which of course is in the plural, Genesis 1:27 states this.

GEN 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

He then goes back to the singular designation in the phrase, "in His own image," while still using the name, *Elohim*.

What these Jews in our text didn't accept was that they were talking to one of the members of the Godhead who had taken on flesh. They were talking to *Elohim*. They were talking to Jehovah. They were talking to their very Creator. But they weren't talking to their Father since the Father and the Son are two distinct persons in the Godhead.

But in talking to the Son they were talking to the One the Father sent and in rejecting Christ they placed themselves under condemnation and disqualified themselves as children of God.

The phrase, "like father, like son," is as true in the physical realm as it is in the spiritual realm. And the point Jesus is making is that if you were children of the Father then you would act like sons and daughters of the Father who love the Son of God.

JOH 8:43-44 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

At this point Jesus goes from inferring who their real spiritual father is to being very plain as to what He means. It would be hard for them to miss this.

The first thing we see is that Jesus addresses their spiritual faculties; their inability to hear the things of God as well as to see

with spiritual eyes the one who is standing right in front of them as the creator and Savior of the world.

JOH 8:43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.

A more literal translation can be found in the NASB which says, “Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word.”

Now obviously they could hear the very words Jesus was using or they couldn't carry on the conversation they were having with Him. But the issue is understanding what Jesus was trying to convey.

Every person who has ever shared the gospel of Jesus Christ knows exactly what Jesus was experiencing here in our text. I've been as clear and concise as I can be with people as I systematically go through the gospel. And yet, they still reject it, they still don't understand.

It wasn't because they didn't understand the English language I was using. It was because they weren't willing to come to grips with their spiritual condition and therefore they didn't have ears to hear and understand and accept this spiritual truth.

And the point Jesus is making is that if you belong to your heavenly Father then you would not only speak the same language, if you will, but you would understand and follow Him.

But if you cannot hear you certainly won't listen and respond in the way you must, which makes this a spiritual problem. This was the problem of these Jews in our text.

But then Jesus does something here that most evangelists today would cringe at. He comes right out and calls them children of the devil.

JOH 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Now in all fairness we must understand that Jesus has been very gracious to most of the Jews up to this point. He has been healing them, teaching them, feeding them and pointing them to Himself as the Messiah. And so, in a sense this is a last ditch effort to get their

attention from the impending doom they will suffer if they don't accept Him as Messiah.

And believe me this will get their attention as it would get the attention of people today. Now, we need to be careful not to think that because the Son of God can call people children of the devil that we are at liberty to go around and call people children of the devil.

It doesn't mean that a certain occasion may not require such bold speech, but if you look at the ministry of Jesus Christ throughout the gospels this was a rare response to a very special and desperate situation.

The more normal response for us would be to tell people the truth about their sin and status before God, but not to think that we must always use tactics and language which won't even give us an audience with people so they can hear the truth.

Jesus didn't lead with this statement. He ended with it. The apostle Paul, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit of God gave us a very wise word about how we should deal with unbelievers when it comes to sharing the gospel and the word of God.

COL 4:5-6 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

But having said this we still have to deal with the cold hard facts that unless a person comes to Christ by faith they truly are children, not of God, but of Satan.

What does this mean? Well, from a theological standpoint it has some very important ramifications. First and foremost it shows us that there are only two spiritual positions with God.

We are either with Him by faith, or we are against Him through our unbelief. Again, no gray area.

JOH 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

So, using the language Jesus has been utilizing in our text to describe a relationship with the one we are identified with we come to the conclusion that a father is the head of that household and we belong to the household of our respective father.

In the spiritual realm there are only two households. One household is a house of life and love; the other household is one of death and destruction and condemnation forever.

Jesus says, you belong to your father, the devil. In this one statement Jesus holds nothing back as to what He means in light of what these Jews thought of their status before God, which of course they stated in verse 41 of our text; ""The only Father we have is God himself."

Jesus corrects their wrong thinking and states the truth. Now, it's not as though our Lord is trying to be mean here and say such things because He's lost His temper and wants to put them in their place.

In reality, Jesus is loving them enough to give them such truth. If He were simply trying to be mean, when they said that we have only one Father, God Himself, He would have just nodded and smiled and agreed. That would be cruel, to let them continue to believe a lie.

And so, the motivation for Jesus saying this, oddly enough, is because He loves them. But the truth is the truth. You belong to your father, the devil and you want to carry out your father's desire.

What desire is that? Murder. Remember, that the Jewish leaders have been trying to kill Jesus for some time now. But because His time has not yet come He has not allowed them to carry out their will, which by the way tells us something of how Satan can and cannot work.

If their will is to murder Jesus, then by extension it is the will of Satan to murder Jesus, since they are desiring to do their father's will. If Jesus does not allow Himself to be murdered before the appointed time then He has complete authority over Satan's will, along with all who come under Satan's dominion.

This idea that Satan is running rampant and doing whatever he wants is false. He is a creation of God and therefore infinitely less powerful than God. You'll remember that when Satan wanted to harass Job, Satan had to get permission from God before He would allow Job to be tested in his faith.

What that means is that, even if Satan is allowed to be used by God to test the faith of one of God's people, God is fully aware of every plan of Satan and nothing is put into action unless it first passes

through the will of the Lord who does all things for our good and His glory.

But back to our text. We're told that Satan was a murderer from the beginning. Well, in what way was he a murderer? A murderer is one who schemes and devises to take someone's life.

If we go back to the Garden of Eden we find two people who were created perfect and whose desire was to love and worship their Creator God. In this sense they were completely innocent as Satan schemes to take life in the presence of God from them.

Now Satan didn't become a murderer when he successfully tempted Adam and Eve to sin. He was already a murderer as he essentially committed spiritual suicide by rebelling against his Creator. He took his own life. He murdered himself, and those angels who followed him.

And so, when these Jews are trying to murder Jesus they are only doing what their father has been doing since his own fall. In fact, the very existence of Satan since his rebellion has been a life of destruction.

Imagine that. There is not one thought or action of Satan which is not centered on someone's destruction. If you'll pardon the pun, he would be hell to live with. If you've ever worked with someone who is always negative, always looking on the worst side of a situation, it's very difficult to be around someone like that.

Imagine a person who doesn't sleep and every thought at every moment is devising how to destroy anything that has to do with God and His people. In fact, the very names of Satan bear this out.

REV 9:11 They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.

Both Abaddon and Apollyon mean destroyer. Imagine having that as your name. But that's not just Satan's name, that's who he is. And so, it should come as no surprise to us that we are on the receiving end of his abuse and schemes to try to get us to dishonor our God.

Every waking moment of Satan is spent on our destruction, but the eternal God who sent his Son to die for us will not let that happen. Satan must bow to the will of God whether he likes it or not. And so, when Jesus says, that of all who come to Him none will perish,

He means it. No one can snatch us out of His hand or the Father's hand.

But along with being a murderer, what also characterizes Satan is that he is a liar. Jesus says that he doesn't hold to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (Joh 8:44)

On one level even the most hardened criminal will admit to some truth. On one level even Adolph Hitler had some affection for his parents and admitted to the truth that he wasn't perfect.

This doesn't make up for him being a monster, but Satan can't even admit to that. On no level can one say that there is any truth in Satan. In his own mind he has deceived himself into believing that he is right and God is wrong. His entire existence, after his rebellion against God, is made up of lies and destruction.

Lying is Satan's truth. This is why it is essential for you and me to distinguish between truth and falsehood and the only place where we can get this kind of truth is God's word. Satan not only lies, but is the embodiment of falsehood. He can't be trusted which is why we must flee from him and his ways. He doesn't have your best interest in mind.

This is the father of all who reject Christ, who is the truth. This is the father who has not only lied to the world about their futures, he has lied to them so as to destroy them. Misery loves company and he is all about trying to get as much company as possible.

But believe me that is not his motivation. He doesn't need company in hell. His motivation is to hate his creator above all and to destroy those very people for whom Christ came to give His life as a ransom.

Unfortunately, Satan has been very good in appearing as an angel of light deceiving the nations and keeping people in the darkness, which is why we should be all the more motivated to bring people the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But Satan isn't content to glory in his deception of the world, he wants to discredit Christ and His church by attacking you and me in Christ. He wants us to go back to the ways of the world. He wants us to deny Christ. He wants us to look only at the problems in the world and forget about what lies ahead in Christ.

Don't give him an opportunity. As James says, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Peter puts it this way.

1PE 5:8-11 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.