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^A Matthew 6:9; Hosea 11:1; Jeremiah 3:19; Hebrews 1:3; John 1:12; Romans 8:14-15

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^C Psalm 51:5; John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11; Colossians 1:13

^D Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19

^E Romans 8:29

A. Introduction

1. The Family Resemblance

- a. in the service at Cobblestone Lodge retirement home this past Tuesday, I had the encouragement of being supported by my son, daughter-in-law Hyewon and grand-daughter Beth. It was interesting that one of the residents commented on David's looking like his mother – something I had not recognised myself
- b. a few weeks ago, the women of the family – Dave and I are hopelessly outnumbered at the moment – were going through an old family photo album and noted the family resemblance between Maureen and our youngest grand-daughter Ruthie
- c. of course the most apparent resemblances that we notice are those that are visual – a likeness in the eyes, the mouth, or the shape of the face – so we express this with such sayings as "like father, like son", "a chip off the old block", and "the spittin' image"
- d. but there are also other marks that sometimes identify children with their parents or grandparents, such as mannerisms and character
- e. our son, Andrew, in recent years has an effective way of deflecting away any criticism that I may make of him by observing, "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree"

2. The Spiritual Family

- a. and what is true in the natural family s also true in the supernatural family
- b. in our service at Cobblestone we have been speaking on the "Lord's" or model prayer that Jesus gave to His listeners in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:9, beginning, "Our Father which art in Heaven"
 - (A) "our Father" – in one sense, God is the Father of all mankind, in that He created man in His own image,
 - (B) and God Himself regarded the nation of Israel as His Son, and thus He as their Father (Hosea 11:1, Jeremiah 3:19)
 - (C) but the Fatherhood of God has been known in its fullest sense only by Jesus Christ, the Son of God who addresses Him, "My Father", and whose resemblance to the Father was perfect (Hebrews 1:3)
 - (D) thus it is, that for those who are in Christ, who in faith have accepted Him as Saviour, become part of the family of God, His children both by the new birth and by His gracious adoption
 - (1) "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name," (John 1:12), and this through the Spirit of God:
 - (2) "14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received

a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:14-15)

c. let us now turn to our ...

« 3. Scripture Reading

1 John 3:1-12 »

a. of this we shall be looking particularly at verses 7 to 10

(A) which encapsulate Test #5 of the Christian: his or her parentage

(B) which can be summarized in this question

(C) "Do I show my heavenly parentage?"

(1) not in mind here is any visual likeness

(2) yet a visible likeness in how I act, how I speak, what I do

b. a spiritual reality which we find in ...

4. Jesus' Teaching

John 8:30-45

a. these verses are a part of a discussion between Jesus and the religious rulers

b. as He spoke there were some present who came to believe (verse 30)

c. but it seems, verse 31, that there were some of those described in John 6:66. "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew ..." to whom Jesus says, in effect, "the faith that saves is faith that persists"

(A) Jesus concedes His listeners' claim: '37 "I know that you are Abraham's descendants;" but continues, "yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father." 39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. 40 But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. 41 "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, ..." (John 8:37-42a)

(B) the first point, which we have already made, is that one's spiritual parentage is determined by our treatment of Jesus Christ

(C) and the alternative to being God's children is then clearly made: '44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.'" (John 8:44-45)

d. and unpleasant as it is, this is the same teaching made in 1 John 3

B. A Marked Difference

1. 7 Dear children, let no one deceive you: ... 10a Hereby are shown (or, 'manifest', this word is repeated several times, so let's define it: it means to make known, clear, apparent, visible, obvious; to appear) the children of God and the children of the devil:...
2. "Dear Children"
 - a. nine times in this letter, John uses this affectionate term, as a parent to a child
 - b. many of his readers came to Christ through John's own ministry
 - (A) so he reminds them of this intimate spiritual relationship
 - (B) so that they heed his warning against false teachers
 - (C) who would deceive and lead Christians astray
 - c. some teach that salvation and a person's life-style are unrelated
 - (A) it was Satan's deceit in NT times; it is Satan's deceit today
 - (B) Satan's lie distorts the truth of Christian assurance to say, 'simply believe, then live as you like and you will go to heaven'
3. The Bible Teaches Differently
 - a. there does exist, there must exist, a distinguishable difference between the one who has been born again (regenerated) and the one who has not
 - b. Paul, in instruct Pastor Titus (3:5) says, 'He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit' going on to the logical conclusion in verse 8: 'This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.'
 - c. salvation changes a person's manner of life
 - (A) his or her habitual activities will change
 - (B) in this chapter, when writing concerning sinning and doing righteousness, John uses tenses of the Greek which indicate, not individual actions, but continuing, repeated, ongoing practices
 - (C) it is the Holy Spirit's indwelling work that brings this about

C. The Mark of the Devil's Children

1. 8a the one who practises sin is from the devil, because from the beginning the devil is sinning. ... 10 Hereby are shown ... the children of the devil: everyone that does not practice righteousness is not of God, as also he that does not love his brother. RGH

2. The Mark Is Sin
 - a. we do not like to think this, to talk about this
 - b. people see a baby and exclaim, 'what a precious innocent!'
 - c. yet every one of us, since the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, has been born with this mark upon us
 - d. not a physical mark, but that of which David speaks in Psalm 51:5, 'Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.' – not a slur on David's mother, but on man's natural inheritance
 - e. in Genesis 1-2 it says God gave mankind the dominion over the earth, but Satan, successfully tempting Eve and Adam, usurped man's authority, so he is called 'the prince of this world' (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11)
 - f. until salvation has 'transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,' (Colossians 1:13), we are under 'the domain of darkness', under Satan

3. Sin, the Devil's Hall-Mark
 - a. the term "sons of God" sometimes refers to God's people, but at others as in the book of Job, to His heavenly host of angels
 - b. in Job 38:4–7, God tells Job that the angels were present and shouted for joy when He laid the foundations of the earth
 - c. Scripture indicates that Satan, the Devil, was such an angel, indeed a chief among them, but that in his pride, he rebelled against God
 - d. so Satan became the author of sin, for rebellion against God is sin
 - e. so sin is the hall-mark of Satan; his calling-card, and,
 - f. with it he marks the unsaved of lost mankind
 - g. therefore, those who are still in under Satan's rule cannot show real righteousness, show true love for brother man – it just is not possible

D. The Mark of God's Children

1. 7 Dear children, let no one deceive you: the one practising righteousness is righteous, according as even He is

righteous; ... 9 Everyone who has been begotten from God does not practise sin, because His seed abides in him and he is unable to keep on sinning because he has been begotten from God. 10a Hereby are shown (manifest) the children of God ... RGH

2. The Mark Is Righteousness

- a. this is the fifth test by which we can check our being a Christian
- b. as God's children we should bear a family resemblance; we should give evidence of the new, spiritual birth, the Holy Spirit birth from above
- c. verse 10 expresses it in negative terms, this righteousness is manifest in the love that Christians will have one for another, for the brother
- d. those having Christ's righteousness put to their account in God's court can show this practical righteousness in their deeds for their brothers

3. Work of the Holy Spirit

- a. how can sinful man manifest such a radical change?
- b. because God has implanted the Holy Spirit in the believer
- c. planted within us, He brings forth fruit in our lives
- d. a plant brings forth fruit according to its own nature – we see that truth repeated all around us in God's creation
- e. so, the Holy Spirit, does not, cannot, give birth to sin but rather must give birth to the fruit of righteousness and holiness
- f. the Bible gives us two commands so that we can co-operate with the Holy Spirit in this His work
 - (A) "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30 NAS95)
 - (B) "Do not quench the Spirit;" (1 Thessalonians 5:19 NAS95)
- g. it is then, the Holy Spirit that enables us to show that our parentage – that we are the children of God

E. Conclusion

1. Don't Be in Doubt!

- a. let the Holy Spirit work in your life
- b. spend time in prayer
- c. spend time in reading and meditating upon God's word
- d. so that He may accomplish in you that for which God's saved you

- e. "... to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;"
(Romans 8:29)
- f. "May the mind of Christ your Saviour live in you from day to day" – that your parentage – that God is your Father
– be evident for all to see

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