

Two Different Fathers
John 8:31-47

July 10, 2016

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^A John 2:23-24, 6:60, 66, 8:30; Philippians 3:7-8

^B Romans 3:1-2

^C Matthew 10:22

^D 2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11

A. Background Thoughts

1. A Study in Contrasts – of black & white

- a. earlier in this chapter Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world" – and here, as elsewhere there is the contrast between light & darkness
- b. there is the contrast between intellectual belief and saving faith that commits one's whole being in dependence upon Christ
- c. of bondage and freedom
- d. of human ancestry and spiritual ancestry
- e. of Satan's children and God's children
- f. of truth and lies
- g. all these are to be found in this passage in John before us today

2. Stages of Believing

- a. earlier in this gospel we read, "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men," (John 2:23-24)
- b. but not all who believed continued to follow Him for later we read, "Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" ... As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore." (John 6:60, 66)
- c. and our passage last week concluded with this verse, "As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him." (John 8:30)
- d. for some of those, however, their belief was not a long-term trust, for when challenged with the hard truths of the gospel, they reverted to a trust in their Jewish heritage, of which Paul recounted and said, "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ," (Philippians 3:7-8)

B. Enslaved or Liberated? **8:31-36**

1. The Freeing Effect of Truth (vv 31-32)

- a. 'Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly

disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

- b. they had started well: they had heard Jesus speak, as no other man had ever spoken, and they had believed Him
 - (A) but to be truly a disciple of Jesus, is not simply intellectually giving assent to the truth, admitting that He is the Messiah
 - (B) but a trust in one’s innermost being that results in committing oneself heart and soul into His saving and keeping power
 - (C) and this takes an abiding, a continuing paying attention to His words in order to follow him
 - (D) this is why we continue to preach the gospel of salvation to us believers: so that we may grow in faith & knowledge of Christ
- c. perhaps this little outline help you remember these words:
 - (A) Condition: “if you abide in My word” – Doctrine Learned
 - (B) Consequences:
 - (1) “you are truly disciples of Mine” – Discipline Practised
 - (2) “you shall know the truth” – Discernment Given
 - (3) “shall make you free” – Deliverance from Sin ^{-{2}}.

2. The Enslavement of Sin (vv 33-34)

- a. ‘They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You shall become free’?” Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.”’
- b. How could they say that, when as a nation they had been in bondage to one nation after another ... Egypt, Chaldea, Persia, Greece, Rome?
 - (A) but those they considered to be punishments from God
 - (B) but as a nation, whose King was God, they could claim that He alone had been the real ruler from Abraham’s time until then
- c. so, even though Palestine was a province of the Roman empire, still these very men could rule the nation almost independently
- d. but Jesus knows that they are in a deeper and more depressing form of slavery: the enslavement to sin
 - (A) Messiah was not come to deliver from Rome but from sin
 - (B) the words here are not “commits a sin” nor “commits sins”
 - (C) like an enslaving habit, that which beset these Jews, was that they could not free themselves from sin itself
 - (1) for it was a continually emerging barrier between them & God

- (2) all their righteous acts performed before men could not get them across this barrier
- (3) all the loop-holes enacted by their lawyers could not set that barrier aside
- (D) their religious practices proved Jesus' words were true

3. The Delivering Power of the Son (vv 35-36)

- a. "And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."
- b. Jesus gives a short parable as an illustration: a slave has no control over his own situation – he can be moved at the will of his master; the son controls his own situation – he has a right in his household
- c. Jesus, the Son of God, has a right in His household: so when he frees a person from their sin, He does so without limitations
- d. and one proof of the Christian being free indeed, is that he or she is placed in God's own household as one of God's children!

C. Marks of Parentage 8:37-47

1. In Relation to Abraham

a. Abraham's Ears (vv 37-38)

- (A) "I know that you are Abraham's offspring; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."
- (B) Jesus concedes the obvious, that as Jews they have descended from Abraham – therefore they have the natural benefits of being a Jew, or as Paul says, "Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God." (Romans 3:1-2)
 - (1) yet they seek to kill him – that has been tacitly admitted
 - (2) and such an act is contrary to those same oracles of God
 - (3) their hearts are so full of murderous plots against Himself that there is no room in them for Jesus' words – words of life
- (C) but Jesus' words are from God – received by Him in the very Presence of His Father God
 - (1) they fail to recognize his words as from God
 - (2) because they are busy doing – ongoing, continuing, present – things that are from their father
 - (3) things contrary and opposed to the words of Jesus Christ

- (D) Jesus' conclusion is that, therefore, their father – their spiritual ancestor – cannot be Abraham but must be some other father
- b. Abraham's Deeds (vv 39-41a)
 - (A) '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. 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. You are doing the deeds of your father.'"
 - (B) the opposition denies the implication of Jesus' words
 - (C) they claim Abraham as their father in every sense – are they not all heirs to the promises of God made to Abraham?
 - (D) Jesus refutes this claim
 - (1) His response can equally well be translated, "If you are Abraham's children, you would do the deeds of Abraham."
 - (2) but these translations are really equivalent: the thrust is that they are not acting as Abraham acted
 - (3) quite the opposite, for when Jesus tells them the truth from God, they do not respond by listening & obeying
 - (4) no, instead their doings are murderous towards Jesus, and in an understatement, He says that was not Abraham's doings
 - (E) again Jesus conclusion is that their spiritual ancestor cannot be Abraham but must be some other father

2. In Relation to God

- a. Their Claim (vv 41b)
 - (A) 'They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication (or, 'were not illegitimate'); we have one Father, even God.'"
 - (B) The Jewish opposition really doesn't have an answer to Jesus' words – they are not acting like Abraham
 - (C) but they strongly deny that they have some other father – they are denying that they are illegitimate, with the sense that this is used in the OT as being those who pursued other gods than the one, true God of Israel, Yahweh. – they recognize now that Jesus is talking about spiritual ancestry: surely He cannot accuse them of being idolaters, right here where they worship in the temple!
- b. Their Reality (vv 42-43)
 - (A) 'Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word.'"

- (B) Jesus is the Son of God
 - (1) He entered the world because God the Father sent Him
 - (2) His mission on earth was to reveal God to man (John 1:18)
- (C) If they were God's children
 - (1) they would recognise His kinship
 - (2) they would feel at one with His language and message
 - (3) they would fall in love with Jesus
- (D) but the Jewish opposition to Jesus failed to recognise Him, hated Him, and ultimately killed him as they had sought to do.

3. In Relation to the Devil

a. Jesus' Charge (v 44)

- (A) "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."
- (B) consider those words, "a murderer from the beginning"
 - (1) you could consider that being the devil's leading Cain to murder his righteous brother Abel
 - (2) now, the word murderer is literally "man-killer"
 - (3) and it was when Satan tempted Eve, and denied God's words, saying "You surely shall not die" – and she yielded and ate of the forbidden fruit – that Satan was "mankind-killer"
- (C) not only a murderer but a liar
 - (1) he is utterly devoid of truth; he is the deceiver
 - (2) He does not stand in the truth – the idea being that through all time he has kept setting himself against the truth
- (D) this is the point to which Jesus has been headed all the while

b. Jesus' Evidence

- (A) They Cannot Receive Truth (vv 45-46) – "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?"
 - (1) Jesus is the truth and speaks the truth
 - (2) yet they refuse to receive and to believe the truth
 - (3) they bear the same character as their father the devil
- (B) They Do Not Hear God's Words (v 47) – "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you

do not hear them, because you are not of God.”

- (1) the one who is part of God’s family – who is of God – has had his spiritual ears attuned to the voice of God
- (2) the sheep know the voice of their shepherd (John 10:4)
- (3) but these Jews do not hear, nor understand, the voice of the Good Shepherd who speaks God’s words – so they cannot be God’s children

D. Applications

1. Jesus’ Words are Crucial

- a. literally so, for the word ‘crucial’ is derived from ‘cruX’ – cross
- b. and Jesus went to the cross to carry out His words ... the gospel
- c. so His words cannot be ignored nor lightly dismissed
- d. how we treat His words – the truth – shows the difference between merely professing to be a Christian and truly possessing His salvation
- e. continuing in Christ’s words can be costly, but not as costly as failing to do so, for Jesus said: “And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.” (Matthew 10:22)

2. We Have a Deadly Enemy

- a. Satan is carrying out his slaughter of mankind – a murderer
- b. he will have nothing to do with truth
- c. he is the liar, the deceiver, through & through
- d. let us flee whenever we may hear his voice
- e. beware “in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.” (2 Corinthians 2:11)
- f. so, “Put on the full armour of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.” (Ephesians 6:11)
- g. that armour involves God’s word; involve yourself in that word by setting aside time to read it and pray over it

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

- Bruce – *The Gospel & Epistles of John*, by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
- EBC – *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, MI:
John, by Merrill C. Tenney
- NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*
The Gospel according to John, by Leon Morris
- NTC – *New Testament Commentary*, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
- RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson
- TEC -- *The Gospel according to John*, by George Allen Turner & Julius R. Mantey, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; ca 1965

2. Adapted from TEC, *in loc*