

Sermon Series: *The Gospel of John*

Whose Your Daddy?

John 8:33-47 (ESV)

33 They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’”

34 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. **35** The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. **36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. **37** I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. **38** I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”

39 They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, **40** but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. **41** You are doing the works your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.” **42** Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. **43** Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. **44** You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. **45** But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. **46** Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? **47** Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”

Why Return to the Gospel of John?

This morning we return to the Gospel of John. There are two reasons for this.

- 1) Because the Lord led us to John and has not told us to leave it
- 2) Because we believe the Bible is the word of God and salvation is found through faith in the person about whom it is written.

HCC Statement of Faith

2. We believe that God has revealed Himself and His truth in the created order, in the Scriptures, and supremely in Jesus Christ; and that the Bible, containing the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, is the Word of God, verbally and plenary inspired by God; and that the Bible is fully trustworthy and of supreme and final authority in all that it teaches.¹

¹ See Hope Christian Church Statement of Faith available at <http://www.hopechristianchurch.org/who-we-are/our-beliefs>.

America is not a free country. Slavery exists on American soil. And Jesus came to set the captives free.

Introduction: To Whom Was Jesus Speaking?

We step back into the text of John in the middle of a dialogue between Jesus and “the Jews who had believed in him” (8:31). But Jesus and John both knew that in every crowd of people who say they believe, there are always some who truly do not. There are disciples and then there are true disciples.

We need to hear what Jesus has to say because he is talking about about people you and I will meet this week. He is talking about our neighbors and our coworkers. We need to see people the way Jesus sees them.

John 8:31 (ESV)

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “*If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples...*”

The Gospel of John has a category for ‘belief’ that is partial and incomplete. It’s the kind of faulty ‘belief’ that accepts true facts about Jesus, but fails to transform the heart. We saw this kind of ‘belief’ when Jesus fed the 5,000 (Jn 6). They ‘believed’ he was “the prophet” foretold by Moses (Jn 6:14), but on the very next day when Jesus began talking about offering his own body as a sacrifice, all of them, except the twelve, walked away from him (Jn 6:66). Jesus’ brother, James, would later call this kind of ‘faith’ a demonic faith.

James 2:19 (ESV)

19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

The doctrine of demons is accurate in many ways. They know who God is and they know his power so intimately that they tremble at the thought of Him, yet they do not love him, nor do they have a heart to obey Him, nor trust Him. Saving faith must go beyond mere accurate doctrine.

So Jesus is very aware of this faulty, fickle kind of ‘faith’ because he knows what is in the human heart.² Therefore, he is not content to allow this faulty faith to remain unchallenged. There was something very faulty with their world view and those faults needed to be exposed.

APPLICATION: When you are in conversation with your coworkers and you hear statements that reveal faults in their worldview (i.e. that it is contrary to the truth), then should you remain silent and allow them to continue believing a lie or should you **lovingly** explain the truth to them?

When power, possessions, and sex is praised around the watercolor or the coffee pot, do you go along with them and agree? Or will you with a brokenhearted compassion loving plead with them and say, “Friends, that is not true?”

What were the faults that needed to be exposed? First, they believed themselves to be free, when, in fact, they were slaves. Second, they believed themselves to be in a place of spiritual privilege

² See Jn 8:31; Jn 2:23-25.

when, in fact, they were not. Third, they thought they were the sons of God when, in fact, they were the sons of Satan. They thought they knew the truth, when, in fact, they have swallowed a lie. This was the situation in 30 A.D. and it is still the case in September of 2012.

1) They Thought They Were Free, When In Reality They Were Slaves (v. 33-34)

Verse 33 reveals that his Jewish listeners are baffled by Jesus' assertion that they needed to be set free.

John 8:33-36 (ESV)

33 They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

Even though they were living under the political dominion of the Roman Empire at the time, these Jews see themselves as 'free.' This must be understood in a spiritual sense. Even though they lived in political subjection to Caesar, they viewed themselves as spiritually free given their descent of Abraham. They were stunned that Jesus would suggest that they were not free.

I imagine they were as stunned as any American today would be if the announcement was made, "American's are not free." The dazed answer would be, "You must be confused, because of course we are free!"

Jesus then explains what kind of slavery he was talking about.

John 8:34-35 (ESV)

34 Jesus answered them, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.**"

In the mind of Jesus, the worse kind of slavery against humanity is not political or economic, or even physical, but spiritual. **Truly, truly** conveys the earnest solemnity with which he is speaking. The greatest slavery in the world does not come from tyrannical dictators, greedy Wall Street CEO's (as the Occupy movement would have us believe), or radical religious extremists. **The blackest kind of slavery in this world comes from the dominion of sin.**

But, the question is, who is affected by this kind of slavery? Answer: **Anyone who sins!**

Anyone who practices sin, "the Greek is literally is 'the one who does sin'³ (cf. 1 Jn. 3:4, 8, 9), is a slave of sin. Who 'does' sin? Everyone. Everyone on the face of this planet has sinned, will sin, and does sin. Therefore, everyone is a slave of sin. *This has implications for the whole of humanity.* Americans sin. Canadians sin. South Americans sin. Europeans sin. Arabs sin. Australians sin. Asians sin. Africans sin. Every human being sins. Sin is a global problem and everyone on the planet stands under slavery to sin. This is not merely, theological sensationalism. These are the words of Jesus spoken 2,000 years ago and relevant today because people still sin today.

³ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: InterVarsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 350.

True Freedom Is Found Only In Jesus (35-36)

So what is the solution? How can one escape from this slavery?

John 8:35-36 (ESV)

35 *The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

True freedom is found only in Jesus. God will not allow slaves to remain in the house forever—they have no right. Slaves have no right to remain in the house, only sons do. God will one day decisively bring an end to the slavery of sin. The only people who can be free from slavery to sin are those whom the Son sets free. Jesus is of course the Son of whom he is speaking. Freedom from sin comes only through Jesus. Jesus is the only person strong enough to break the dominion of sin because he alone never sinned. Jesus quite clearly teaches that he alone possess the ability to free one from sin.

2) Good With God Through Privileged Parentage?

The second fault in their worldview that need to be exposed is that they thought they were in a place of spiritual privilege, when, in fact, they were not. They were counting on their heritage to provide them spiritual security. They assumed their connection with Abraham would get them into heaven. Jesus will not allow them to continue believing this lie. Abraham will not open the gates of heaven for anyone.

John 8:37-41 (ESV)

37 *I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. 38 I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”*

39 *They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, 40 but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did.*

41 *You are doing the works your father did.”*

They had mentioned being offspring of Abraham. So Jesus takes issue with their confidence in their privileged paternal ancestor. They assumed because Abraham had received incredible promises from God that his descendants would be a ‘chosen people, who would be God’s own treasured possession,’ [REFERENCES??) that that would gain them automatic acceptance with God. They assumed that because they were in Abraham’s family they were then necessarily in God’s family. Jesus blows that assumption away.

APPLICATION: How many people today take great comfort in the fact that grandma used to pray for them? Or mom and dad used to be a member of a church? Or how many other people believe the piety of their ancestors will accrue to their own spiritual benefit?

True salvation is a personal salvation. Surrogate spirituality will save no one. “If you were [truly] Abraham’s children, then you would be doing the works that Abraham did.” If you truly have the faith of Abraham, then you too would be doing the works that Abraham did. Don’t allow people the false comfort of trusting in what grandma did. Compassionately press the question, “What are you doing with Jesus? How are you responding to Jesus?”

Jesus reveals the incongruity of their heart with the heart of Abraham. Jesus knew what was in the hearts of some of those standing there listening to him. Some of them wanted to kill Jesus. Some of them were at that moment plotting his death. Murder was in their hearts. Evidently, their hearts were so full of murder that there was no room left then for the word of Jesus. What Jesus was saying was not just the words of a man, but the very words of God. Jesus was claiming to be speaking on behalf of God. *“I speak what I have seen with my Father...”*

Jesus was declaring to them what he had learned from his Father, who is God, and they were responding to this divine revelation with plots of murder. Jesus was telling them **the truth** and they were rejecting the truth. Abraham did not do this. When God spoke to Abraham, he believed God and obediently trusted His word. These people were not doing this. God, through Jesus, was speaking to them, and yet they were refusing to obey.

Jesus refutes the idea that Abraham was their father. He openly claimed God as **“my Father”** (v.38). He then twice makes reference to *their* ‘father’ (v.38 & 41) which clearly implies that their father was different father than his. Thus, their father was not God. Though they were indeed offspring of Abraham, they were not Abraham’s children (v.39).

Well then whose children were they? If Abraham was not their father, then who was?

3) Sons of God, or Sons of Satan?

This is third fault that needed to be exposed: they thought they were sons of God when, in fact, they were sons of Satan. Of course, insinuating that Abraham was not their father did not go over well.

What happens when you realize that the rock you thought you were standing upon is actually water? What happens when you tell a religious person that the foundation of his religion will not save his soul? What happens when you tell the truth to a person who is believing a lie? What happens when someone confronts a political candidate with the truth that their budget and economic recovery plan has been based upon faulty math? They get very angry and the *ad hominem* attack begins. When you are failing in attacking the argument, then start attacking the man. This is exactly what happens here.

John 8:41b (ESV)

41 *They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.”*

They effectively say to Jesus,

“So you presume to tell us who *our* father is? Well, we’ve got a question for you—why don’t you tell us who *your* father is—you bastard! We were not born of sexual immorality unlike you! Yes, Jesus, since you’ve walked onto the political stage and have become so popular, we’ve done a little digging into your past and we’ve discovered some irregularities surrounding your conception. We understand that some people, who have a knowledge of the situation, believe that you were born of sexual immorality! The timing of Joseph and Mary’s wedding is a little fishy. It appears your mother was pregnant *before* she married Joseph. So don’t talk to us about who our father is, because our Father is God!”

I wish I could have seen his face just then. Those words had to have hurt. Jesus was a man and subject to all the emotional responses we would all expect to face. I have never met a young man

yet who wasn't willing to fight when base and vile comments were hurled against the virtues and purity of one's mother—even if they were true, not to mention when they were false. Insulting momma can cause some serious problems. And then looking him in the eye and telling him that God was their Father while at the same time in their hearts plotting his death!

The Children of God Love Jesus

Jesus is undaunted. He sticks to the point.

John 8:42-43 (ESV)

42 *Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. 43 Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.*

So the question to ask in order to assess where someone stands with God is not, "Do you believe in God?" Many different religions can answer 'yes' to that question. You may begin with this question, but don't stop there. The more telling question to ask is, "Do you love Jesus," because, Jesus says, only those people who love him are truly the children of God. This claim highlights the problem with Jesus—he emphatically and repeatedly identifies himself with God. He constantly makes these kinds of claims. He will even go so far as to say, "*If you have seen me, then you have seen the Father*" (Jn 14:9). He makes response to himself the litmus test of response to God.

And even Jesus' own people could not bear to hear him talk this way. There are millions the world over who cannot bear to hear this either. This brings us to painful truth.

They Did Not Know Their Own Father, But Jesus Did

They thought God was their father, but, in fact, they were sons of Satan.

John 8:44 (ESV)

44 *You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

Sin is so deceptive (Heb 3:13). The devil is so deceptive. Of course, none of these people would have believed what Jesus had just told them. They did not believe they were following Satan. They firmly believed they were God's children. I doubt that any of those listening to Jesus would have claimed the devil as their father, but Jesus tells them the truth—that they were actually sons of Satan.

No one believes this today, yet pay attention to what Jesus is saying because he is speaking the truth. No one today believes this. The 2012 remake of the 1985 hit "We Are The World," contains the following line,

we are all a part of
God's great big family
and it's true
love is all we need

It's not true. We are not all part of God's family. It is true we are all created by God, but not all who are created by Him are His children.

How can this be known? By what evidence does Jesus offer to discern the difference, between the children of Satan and the children of God? We need evidence because we obviously cannot take someone's word on who their true father is because they would have reported that God was their Father.

APPLICATION: How many people around the world today would claim to be children of God and followers of God? How many would claim to be children of the devil? So how can we tell the difference? Jesus points out three things.

1. First, of all is the person's **response to Jesus**. Jesus has already made this clear that those who are the children of God are the ones who love Jesus. Do you love Jesus? Jesus tells us in Jn 14:15 that those who love him keep his commandments. Those who love Jesus are the ones who do his will.
2. Second, Jesus brings up **murder**. Those who plot and commit murder in the name of God are actually fulfilling the will of Satan. *"You are of your your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires."* Satan was a murderer from the beginning and his children continue to do his will. Any religion which calls for the murder of innocent people or people who bear the name of Jesus, is a Satanic religion.
 - i. Remember Jesus warned us of this. *"Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. 3 And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me" (Jn 16:2-3).*
 - ii. People who murder (the unlawful taking of human life), especially people who bear the name of Jesus are not followers of God, but are unwittingly fulfilling the will of Satan. They do not know God.
3. Third, Jesus points out **lying**. Jesus says that Satan is a liar and he is the father of lies. Jesus says there is **no truth in him** and every time he opens his mouth he is speaking lies. He is unable to speak the truth. His character is defined by his will to lie. Those whose lives are marked by continual lies Jesus would call children of Satan who are doing the will of Satan. Anyone who lies is doing the will of Satan.
 - i. **Application:** If we were to stop and listen to or review our language over the past week, what would we find? Did we speak the truth or were our words peppered with lies? When you lie at work or at home whom are you acting like? Do we take seriously the significance of this fact, that when we lie we are obeying the will of Satan?
 - ii. Isn't very easy to lie, despite what George Washington said?⁴ Washington was lying when he said, "I cannot tell a lie." Of course, he could and so can you and I. It's not difficult, it's really quite easy. Isn't quite convenient to just slightly shade the story just a little in order to make yourself look good? Isn't it very easy to pad the expense report just a little because you deserve it? Isn't it easy to get your coworkers to cover for you with just a little lie? We can lie very easily and others are often quick to join us. John

⁴ Six year old George Washington (1732-1799), when questioned by his father, is reported to have confessed to chopping down a cherry tree and saying, "I cannot tell a lie, I did cut it down with my hatchet."

Edwards' staffers joined him in covering up his mistress and their child. Elliot Spitzer had staffers who knew what he was doing, but helped him hide it. More than 11 secret service agents together came up with the motto "[wheels up, rings off.](#)"

- i. The Wall Street Journal reported, "According to current and former officials, "wheels up, rings off," has long been a running joke among men in the agency, meaning that for some agents, wedding rings were optional after the plane took off, particularly for foreign travel assignments."⁵
- iii. Lies do not flow from the will of God. Lies flow from the will of Satan. So when you contemplate lying, stop for a moment and ask yourself, "Whose my Father, God or Satan? Who am I—a child of God or a child of Satan?"

John 8:45-46 (ESV)

45 *But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.* **46** *Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?*

Jesus drives the truth of his argument more painfully deep. He just told them they were children of Satan. Now he reiterates the truth that this is the reason why they were not believing what he was saying. He was telling them the truth, but they were not believing him and the reason they were not believing him was because their character was similar to the character of their father, Satan, and this is demonstrated in the fact that 1) they did not love Jesus, as true children of God would do, but instead they were plotting to murder Jesus, and second, they could not receive the truth because they were characteristically more comfortable with lies than with truth.

To prove the truthfulness of his claims before their deceived minds, he says, "*Which one of you convicts me of sin?*" If I am lying, then prove it. If anyone can even prove I have ever sinned, then do it now. If you have proof that I was born out of wedlock, then present your evidence now.

I believe he waited for someone to speak.

No one spoke. No one said a word. The implication is, Jesus is telling the truth!

Then Jesus said, "*Then if I am telling you the truth, why do not believe me?*"

What a perilous place to be in when your mind knows the truth, but for some reason you cannot embrace the truth from the heart.

Jesus then lays the truth of their souls bare.

John 8:47 (ESV)

47 *Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.*"

One must be 'of God' before one can 'hear the words of God.' The ultimate reason why people do not 'hear the word of God' (i.e. believe it, embrace it from the heart, trust it, cherish it) is because

⁵ Laura Meckler and Keith Johnson, "Secret Service to Get a Closer Look," *Wall Street Journal*, 16 April 2012 available at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304818404577346260235734298.html> accessed 22 Sept 2012.

they are not 'of God,' that is, they do not belong to him. A person must belong to Him, before he can believe in Him (for salvation).

God is the decisive actor in the salvation of man (Rom 9:16). God must give you ears to hear before you hear and believe unto eternal life. One must be given a new heart before that heart can willingly embrace the truth of who Jesus is. The old heart of stone—dead from sin—must first be removed and a new tender heart given, before anyone can become alive to God and in love with Jesus. And evidently God chooses to grant this miracle to happen through the shocking explanation of the dire truth of our spiritual condition.

Here is the truth that we need to remember from these verses.

1. The whole world is presently enslaved to sin. "Anyone who practices sin is a slave of sin." There no free people in this world. The whole planet is under slavery to sin.
2. Freedom from slavery to sin comes only by and through the resurrected Jesus of Nazareth. The only free people in the world are the ones whom Jesus has set free. And he will set you free if you ask him to.
3. The faith of parents or ancestors will save no one. The only faith that will save anyone is personal faith in Jesus. Don't let people retain a false sense of security in privileged parentage.
4. There are two kinds of people in this world; children of God and the children of Satan; those who do the will of God and those who do the will of Satan.
5. The liar, Satan, deceives his children into believing that they are the children of God. We will expose this lie or remain silent about this truth?
6. The first test of whether or not someone is a child of God is whether or not they love Jesus and the second is whether or not they hear (i.e. obey) God's word. Jesus connected the two when he said, "*If you love me, you will keep my commandments*" (Jn 14:15).

Whose your daddy?

Whom are you obeying? Whose will are you doing?

How will you communicate this truth? Will you shout it or loving and compassionately plead with them?