

Who Is Your Father?

John 8:31-47 (New American Standard Bible)

³¹ So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” ³³ They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet 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 commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know that you are Abraham’s descendants; 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, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you **cannot hear My word.** 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. ⁴⁶ Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? 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.**”

Introduction

Happy Father’s Day! May the Lord bless all fathers in our congregation.

Today, we are going to listen to Jesus again. We see Jesus engaged in a discussion with His audience, a group of Jews. The topic is “Who is your father?” Of course, He is not talking about our earthly fathers, flesh and blood. Rather, He is talking about our spiritual father. In the spiritual realm, everyone, believers and non-believers alike, has their father to listen, follow, imitate, and obey. We have only two choices according to Jesus. Either God or the devil.

Content

Once again, I am going to lead you verse by verse in today’s text.

V. 31: *So Jesus was saying to those Jews...* Keep in mind. This is a Jewish audience. What's so special about Jews? Many such as a chosen people of God, God's treasured possession, salvation is from the Jews, and so forth. One of them was this: they professed that they were Abraham's descendants. In verse 33,

³³ *They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone--what they meant is that they have never been physically enslaved to any flesh and blood. Yet, in Jesus' eyes, they have been slaves to sin and death. Notice here: Jesus is talking about spiritual bondage, and yet the audience think about physical slavery.*

V. 34: *everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.*---Here, Jesus defines 'spiritual slavery.' Whoever commits sin is the slave of sin, even though they are free in the natural world. Since everyone commits sin, Jesus says, everyone is under the bondage of slavery. E.g. abolition is God's will for humanity. However, don't settle for the freedom in the natural world alone. Be free indeed from your sins, which is far more important than its counterpart in the natural realm. Jesus makes you free indeed (v. 36).

v. 39: **"Abraham is our father."** ---a claim made by the audience repeatedly. It must have been a thing to say in those days among Jews. To such mindset, John the Baptist said, "do not say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham" (Luke 3:8-9). Both Jesus and John the Baptist warn of a false sense of security in faith. E.g. The recitation of the Lord's Prayer doesn't get you into heaven, either.

Don't let Abraham give you a false sense of security, Jesus says. You may claim until your face is blue that you belong to Abraham and that you have never been enslaved to anyone, yet God knows the reality. What really counts, Jesus says, is the action that backs up your claim. *"If you are Abraham's children, says Jesus, 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.* ---Seeking to kill Me is the opposite of what Abraham would do, Jesus says. Abraham listened to the truth. He was most interested in the truth. But, not you. Therefore, you are not the children of Abraham. Jesus continues in verse 41,

⁴¹ **You are doing the deeds of your father.**" Your deeds reveal who your father is. The Jews reply,

we have one Father: God." ---No, Jesus says, that's not true.

v. 42. **If God were your Father, you would love Me.** ---A sure mark of God's children. They love Jesus. Do you love Jesus? Then, you belong to God. You don't? Then, you are not of God. E.g. Islam claims that they revere Jesus as prophet. Then, how come they persecute and kill the followers of Jesus? Jesus says, whatever you do to the little ones who follow Me, is what you do to Me. Whatever you do to Me, you are doing it to your Heavenly Father

who sent Me (Matthew 10:40, Matthew 25:40). In other words, by hating Christians, you hate Jesus, and by hating Jesus, you hate the very God whom you worship. Hating Jesus is an act of hating God. Loving Jesus is a sure mark of those who are of God. Verse 43,

⁴³ *Why do you **not understand** what I am saying? It is because you **cannot hear My word**. --Not understand, not hear. Since you don't understand what I am saying, Jesus says, and you don't hear My word, God is not your Father.* He continues,

⁴⁴ ***You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.** --Those of the devil want to do the desires of the devil their father. *The devil is a murderer and a liar from the beginning* (v. 44). *That's exactly what you plan to do to Me*, Jesus says: you don't believe in Me or My word of truth. You try to kill Me, too. The very thing the devil desires to do. Verse 45,*

⁴⁵ *But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.* ⁴⁶ *Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?* 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**.***---Since I speak the truth, Jesus says, you don't believe Me. If you don't hear the word of God, the truth, you are not of God.

Let me unpack for you what Jesus is saying in today's text:

The theme is "Who Is Your Father?" You are either a child of God or that of the devil. You can't be both. Choose one.

Marks of children in their relation to their father:

Three marks of children in relation to their father.

1. **Imitation:** Children imitate their father. They do what their father does (v. 39, 41). -- E.g. a boy imitating his father's smoking gesture.
2. **Obedience:** Children hear what their father says (v. 43).
3. **Desire:** Children desire what their father desires (v. 44).---E.g. we want to please our father by doing what he desires us to do.

Therefore, the children of God do the following:

1. They imitate their Father in Heaven in words and deeds. They think like God, they speak like God, and they act like God. They do what their Heavenly Father does.
2. They hear what their Heavenly Father says. They want to know more of God in the Bible. They hear what God says. They understand His Word. The Word of God makes sense to them. It is relevant to them. They cherish and love the Word of God. They confess, "The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces" (Psalm 119:72).

3. They desire what their Heavenly Father desires. They approve what God approves and disapprove what God disapproves. They want to please the Lord by keeping His commandments. They do all things to the glory of God.

In this earthly life, the children of God hear, understand, and believe in Jesus and His words (v. 43, 47). They are spiritually free in Jesus and in His truth. In the life to come, they will be together with the Son in the presence of God forever (v. 35)

The same signs apply to the children of the devil.

1. Children of the devil do what their father does (lie, murder, deceive...). They hate the truth. They discredit, distort, or destroy the Word of God, the truth.
2. Children of the devil hear what their father says (lie, hate,...). They listen to the lies. They cannot hear or understand the truth (v. 43). Like their father the devil, they cannot stand Jesus because He speaks the truth. They don't believe in Jesus and His words (v. 43, 47).
3. Children of the devil desire what their father desires (steal, kill, destroy,...). They steal, kill, and destroy. They make miserable not only their own lives but also the lives of others.

In this life, they remain slaves to sin and death. In the life to come, they will never be in God's presence (v. 34).

Conclusion

Jesus clearly set the marks of those who belong to God. Do what the Heavenly Father does. Hear and obey what the Father says. Desire what God wants.

If you believe in Jesus (v. 42) and do what God desires (v. 44), you are of God. If truth and Jesus' words have a place in you (v. 37), you are of God. If you desire what God desires, you are of God. If you keep Jesus' words, you love Him. If you love Him, you are of God. If you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, you are a child of God. If you forgive others, you are of God, too.

If you are unsure of who your spiritual father is, test your faith against these truths. Examine yourself against Jesus' standards. Then, you will know who your spiritual father is. Amen.