

Who is Your Daddy & What Does He Do?

John 8:37-59

I. Intro

- A. John is filled w/ a tension between the physical and the spiritual (being born again, light and darkness, bread and wine). The whole of Scriptures are like this.
- B. Abraham had two children: a child of flesh and a child of faith
 - 1. Both were children of Abraham; Both carried his genetic code; But only one is acknowledged as the true seed of Abraham; Only one receives the blessing, the promise of the covenant, the other does not. Same physical ancestry; different spiritual ancestry.
- C. When Emma was born... "I hope you like your husband's face..."
 - 1. Earthly DNA. But there is spiritual DNA too.
 - 2. Be fruitful and multiply... physically, spiritually.
- D. It doesn't matter what family you were born into - that's no guarantee for your spiritual future. You need to be reborn. New DNA.
- E. "I've been Christian my whole life" = My family is Christian. Is that a reliable thing to bank on? That you come from a long line of Christians? Pastors? Is your heritage (no matter how amazing or terrible) a determining factor in your future?
- F. My hope today is to show you that your heritage, although extremely important and formative in your life, is neither a ladder you can climb to reach Jesus nor a backpack of rocks weighing you down. This is not the way that God works.
- G. Last week: If the son has set you free, you are free indeed. Why? Because you are a son. IDENTITY. New DNA. Part of the family now. Cannot be taken away regardless of how you feel.

II. John 8:37-59

- A. *[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."*
 - 1. Jesus isn't afraid to polarize a crowd.
 - a) He's not looking for fans, he wants followers. He wants committed disciples, not lazy false converts.
 - 2. Look at some of his words:
 - a) Yes, you are offspring of Abraham, physically, but you aren't acting like you are related to him at all. You reject his WORD & his WORK
 - (1) Ex: Yea, you are sitting in a church building that's been around for 500 years - doesn't mean you're christian!
 - (2) You reject his WORD. You don't do his WORK
 - 3. Jesus is saying that they are related to Abraham, but not really. This is fightin' words for Jews, b/c they relied on their ethnic ancestry

B. [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.*

1. Abraham is our father. This was their big defense in the midst of Jesus' accusations and polarizing statements. Why?
2. The common belief at that time was that Abraham was so godly and had stored up such a vast treasury of merit that if his descendants would draw upon it, they would attain righteousness.
 - a) This isn't too far off from the way many people think and act today.
 - (1) My family has been a part of this church for generations...
 - (2) Others rely on the faith of a grandparent or the philanthropy of a family member...
 - (3) Still others rely on their parents, their spouse, or a solitary good deed that hopefully acts as a safety net
3. Jesus' response to them is that yes, they are physically descended from Abraham, but they aren't Abraham's children.
 - a) Paul expounds on this later in Romans when he says, *28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.(Romans 2:28-29)*
 - b) Jesus is implying that Abraham's true children are the ones who believe in Jesus.
4. Jesus said if they were of Abraham they would do his works, they would be in the family business. What were Abraham's works?
 - a) When Abraham heard the truth, although he lived in an idolatrous, pagan world, he responded with obedience. That was his distinguishing mark. He heard the truth, took it to himself, and became obedient.
 - b) But the Jews who confronted Jesus were doing no such thing. They were trying to kill the bearer of truth. They were not spiritual descendants of Abraham.
5. The point is, we may be the descendants of a godly line, but that fact will not bring us eternal life. (ex: CBB's)

C. [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."*

1. What are they saying? Essentially, they are saying, "Look, we've heard stories about you, Jesus - stories about how your mom got knocked up out of wedlock. We aren't concerned about OUR heritage. We aren't the one born out of wedlock, like you. We are children of Abraham, of spiritual pedigree. We are children of God!"

2. It is so easy to be wrong about our spiritual state when we have a godly heritage. The blessing of that heritage can become a curse.
3. Many believe they received Christ as children because they had godly parents.
 - a) Parents may even recount w/ fond detail stories of how little Johnny prayed to ask Jesus into his heart. But is there any fruit to prove it was real? Do we do the works of Abraham or do we do the works of a different father?
4. As parents, we can be guilty of desiring spiritual life for our children so much that we imagine they have virtues they never had.

D. [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.

1. Do you know what the first test is of true salvation? Love for Jesus.
2. Jesus is saying, "Look, Abraham might be your ancestor, but you aren't a child of Abraham, a child of faith. Abraham loved me, believed me, obeyed me. If you were really Abraham's kid, you'd have his DNA."
 - a) Are you really a church, a christian, a disciple if you don't love Jesus? How can you be a Christian who doesn't follow Christ?
3. As if that weren't enough, he continues by saying, "Instead, I can tell you who your dad is b/c his DNA is all over you. Your father is the devil. You desire to do his work, work in the family business. He is a murderer, and you want to kill me. He rejected truth and you are rejecting my truth. He is a liar, and so are you."
4. You can tell a lot about a person by their actions, their responses to stress, b/c it flows from the inside out → like a tube of toothpaste.
5. If the first test of salvation is love for Jesus, the second test might be obedience - the truth of our lives.

E. [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."

1. Straightforward. I tell the truth, but you don't want to hear it. You would rather hide behind false accusations b/c then you don't need to deal w/ what I am saying.

F. [48] The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" [49] Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. [50] Yet I do not seek my own glory;

there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. [51] Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

1. Smokescreen b/c they don't have a response. This is what people do. If I don't know how to respond, I will just make fun of you.
2. Again, Jesus is telling them that if they reject him, they reject his Father. He represents his Father, the family business. You cannot reject Jesus and accept the Father, but if you accept Jesus the reward is eternal!
3. Ex: When people tell Gina off at the family business and then ask for Steve, like he's going to back them up instead of her

G. [52] The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' [53] Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?" [54] Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' [55] But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. [56] Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." [57] So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" [58] Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." [59] So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

1. If there had been any uncertainty about Jesus' identity in other passages where he said, "I am" (e.g., 6:35; 9:5; 11:25), there was no confusion here
2. Jesus outright says that he was alive before Abraham, more than 2,000 years earlier. As the ESV Study Bible says, Jesus does not simply say, "Before Abraham was, I was," which would simply mean that he is more than 2,000 years old. Rather, he uses the present tense "I am" in speaking of existence more than 2,000 years earlier, thus claiming a kind of transcendence over time that could only be true of God.
3. This is the same Greek expression used in the Greek version of the OT when God names himself in Exodus. 3:14
4. Even if you aren't convinced that Jesus is claiming to be God, the Jews thought he was b/c they decided to stone him

III. CONCLUSION

A. What does this teach about Jesus?

1. **Jesus claims to be God.** (Not a good man, teacher, prophet, etc - God)
2. **Jesus is ushering in a new spiritual humanity.**
 - a) Physical vs. Spiritual → Ishmael vs. Isaac → Old Covenant vs. New Covenant → Jews outwardly vs. Jews inwardly → be fruitful and multiply vs. make disciples

B. What does this teach about mankind?

1. **"While a godly heritage is of inestimable value, it does not guarantee spiritual health." - R. Kent Hughes**

- a) Abraham → Isaac vs. Ishmael
- b) Cape May → Christian Admiral, Christian Beacon.
 - (1) The past doesn't guarantee the future
- c) Some of you are relying on your parent's faith → doesn't work that way. Parents, don't encourage it.

2. You have a physical ancestry, but need to be spiritually reborn. Your spiritual birth is infinitely more valuable than your physical birth.

- a) To be proud of... to be ashamed of...
- C. What do we do? **Ask yourself, "Who do I resemble?"**
 - 1. This is John's letter of 1 John in a lot of ways. Do you look like your Father? This is honest introspection!
 - 2. Are you becoming more like your Father in heaven?
- D. When you fail, repent and believe. *1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- E. Summary: Just because you have a lofty (or terrible!) heritage doesn't mean that your future is written in stone and determined. In this volatile passage, Jesus explains to the crowd following him that they may be born of Abraham physically, but they are born of the Devil spiritually. They need to be reborn into a new family if they are to be with their ancestor, Abraham, in eternity!