

The Gospel of John

Rejecting Jesus

John 8:48-59

INTRODUCTION:

The 8th chapter of John has been a chapter of assaults on Jesus. The harshest human attacks on Jesus did not come from the common people. He got indifference from them, for sure. But the really harsh, aggressive assaults on him came from the religious establishment. They were the self-righteous Jewish leaders who, like all other religions, actually belonged to Satan.

In verse 44 Jesus told these religious leaders who continually said they represented God and spoke for God that, “**You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.**”

All "religion" when not completely based upon the truth of God is part of the kingdom of darkness. And since they were part of a false religion that belonged to Satan, they were enemies of the truth, and therefore they were enemies of Christ, who is the truth.

You may wonder why Jesus would come down so hard on the Jewish leaders? **It was because they would not listen to the truth!**

Error must be confronted with the truth. These children of Satan see Jesus, then, as an enemy. They see him as a blasphemer, a law breaker. They can't contain themselves in dealing with him. They are so full of fury at him.

ILLUSTRATION:

All of us have experienced, at some point in our life, little children in a big supermarket or shopping mall. They come in with mom or dad, but as soon as they see something interesting—toys, candies, pets, or anything else that moves—they go their own way and forget everything else around them.

And then, at some point, they look up and realize that mom or dad is not there anymore. They look around, first carefully walking, then running and checking out places, and when they cannot find their parents, they start shouting, “Mommy!! Daddy!!!” And when even that doesn't help, you see their faces change from hope to fear and they begin to think that they will never see mommy or daddy again. The result is **sheer terror** that will not stop until their parents have found them.

But what we don't see in the supermarkets and shopping malls are the elderly parents that have been rejected by their grown-up children. They wait in vain, day after day, for their children to visit them or to give them a phone call and ask, “How are you? Would you like me to come over? Is there anything I can do for you?”

Most of these parents have given the best years of their lives to their children. They have given what they could, sacrificed their time, their strength, their resources—everything—in order to give their children a chance in life.

But then when they, in turn, start being **in need** of their **children**, they find no gratitude, and no commitment. They are just expected to understand that their children have a life of their own. They need their privacy. They need time and energy to develop their careers. They now have children of **their** own that takes up so much of their time and resources.

And the parents try to understand, I am sure. They explain to others with an air of pride how busy their kids are, how responsible they are at their job, and how they are taking very good care of their own kids. But deep down inside, there is this searing pain of rejection, too great and too deep to describe, and too shameful to share with others.

God is like a rejected parent. He has created us and taken care of us during our life time. Always watching. Always loving. Always supplying our true needs. He understands our dilemma of sin and He was provided a way for us to be freed from that sin. **And, may I remind you, in a most painful way!** He sent His Son to earth to die on a cross for our salvation.

He gave EVERYTHING in order to give His children a chance in life. Not only in our time on earth, but also for eternity. In our passage this morning, despite all that God has done for His people, they have let him down and turned their backs on him. They refuse to listen to the truth, and they **reject** Him. I am sure that **deep down inside God's heart there is also a searing pain of rejection too great and too deep to describe!**

All He wants from each of us is our full surrender to Him. To love Him as a perfect parent with all of our heart, soul, and mind because of Who He is and for all that He has done for us. He wants us to understand and believe that He sent His Son, Jesus, to physically suffer and die on the cross to save us from our sins. God is the **ultimate** Father. **Listen to His truths and obey!**

Despite all that God has done for us, I would like for you to hear the rejection of God's own children in our passage this morning.

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 8:48-59 (NASB)

⁴⁸ The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly 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 But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. ⁵¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” ⁵² The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’ ⁵³ Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom 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 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and 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 born, I am.”⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Prayer

The Jews were in an uproar because Jesus had just told them that their Father was not God. He told them they were of your father, the devil. You are liars and murderers, and you desire what the devil desires.

They respond in verse 48.

BODY:

I. WE ARE SONS OF THE DEVIL?

John 8:48-50 (NASB)

⁴⁸ The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

As with all debates, the Jews start with an **intellectual** argument. It seems clear to them that Jesus must have a demon. The Jews considered themselves as God's chosen people. The **leaders** of the Jews. How could a **man** like Jesus, whose parents they knew, accuse them of being anything but righteous?

Jesus must be out of His mind to even suggest such a thing to them.

Why did they throw the “Samaritan” in there?

They obviously knew that He was not a Samaritan. Joseph and Mary were originally from **Nazareth** which was in Galilee. They went to **Bethlehem**, which was in Judea, for the Roman census and Jesus was born there. After Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary fled to **Egypt** to escape Herod's wrath. When King Herod died, they returned to **Nazareth**. Samaria was geographically between the two. Galilee to the North and Judea to the South. So obviously Jesus was not a Samaritan.

Samaritans were people that the Jews hated. They hated them because they intermarried with the pagan nations that came to occupy the northern kingdom of Israel. They hated them so much that when the Jews travelled from Galilee to Jerusalem, they would cross the Jordan river and avoid Samaria by travelling just East of the Samaria border.

They were using the term Samaritan as an insult to Jesus.

John 8:49-50 (NASB)

⁴⁹ Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.
⁵⁰ But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

Jesus simply replies by saying I do not have a demon and I am not delusional. I am not puffing Myself up as something that I am not. I am only doing the work of the Father whom you dishonor when you dishonor Me.

Each of His responses were actually a gracious invitation to turn from their ways and accept Christ.

II. THOSE WHO KEEP YOUR WORD WILL NEVER SEE DEATH?

John 8:51-53 (NASB)

⁵¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” ⁵² The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’ ⁵³ Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out *to be*?”

The debate now goes to a second level and becomes **emotional**. Since the Jews are unwilling to listen to the truth, they are now certain that Jesus is delusional. He is now saying that we **will not die** if we do what He says? Abraham and all of the prophets did as they were commanded and they died. How is it that You can stop that trend, Jesus?

John 8:54-55 (NASB)

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 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.

Jesus responds once again with the truth. It is God Who is glorifying Me because I know Him and I know and do His will. If I claimed to not know Him, I would be a liar, just like you.

It is all over Scripture that the Messiah will be exalted, and elevated and honored.

Philippians 2:8-11 (NASB)

⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

So there is a judge. There is One who will declare the glory of Christ. He has already declared it. He has already given testimony at the baptism of Jesus. “**This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.**” And He will give further testimony at the transfiguration, “**This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him.**”

But there is more in that. There is One who seeks and judges and will give the final verdict on **you** also. I’m not here to seek honor from men. God will give me glory in time. But God will also judge you. You need to honor Him now or you will face Him in judgment. That is the absolute truth.

This is another gracious invitation to turn from their ways and accept Christ.

III. YOU HAVE SEEN ABRAHAM?

John 8:56 (NASB)

⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.”

Bound up in the very covenant with Abraham was the promise of a seed. That seed was Christ Himself. Galatians says that. Abraham was looking forward to the one true

sacrifice that was symbolized in the ram that was caught in the thicket. Abraham was looking ahead to the day when a final, full, and acceptable sacrifice would come.

Do you remember in Genesis chapter 18 when Abraham and Sarah were at home one evening, and some angels showed up? And one of those angels turned out to be an angel of the Lord that was Christ Himself. And what did Abraham do when the Christ appeared? He received Him and embraced Him. They made a dinner. They had fellowship together. Abraham actually received God into his house when God came down to earth. Just as in Abraham's day, I am God who has come down to earth and I am with you now. But, unlike Abraham, you have rejected Me.

So now we come to the third phase of the debate: sarcasm. They were not successful in their intellectual reasoning or their emotional attack on Jesus so now they resort to sarcasm.

John 8:57 (NASB)

⁵⁷ So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

How do You know what makes Abraham happy? Who do You think You are kidding? You have never met Abraham! How do You know what Abraham rejoiced over? How do You know what Abraham saw? How do You know what Abraham knew? You can't know that. You're not yet 50.

So they just mock Him. What a joke. You know what Abraham saw and what brought Abraham joy? Who are You trying to kid?

John 8:58 (NASB)

⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

Jesus responds with the most shocking truth. "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly,'. Listen carefully! "I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." Not "I was." He always is. "I am" is in present tense. I am always in the present. He is not bound by time. The Jews knew that was the name of God, from Exodus 3:14.

Exodus 3:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Jesus was claiming once again to be God. That's how the Gospel of John started. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and **the Word was God.**"

But this is more than they can handle. This is way over the top. It is one thing to call them children of Satan, but to claim You are God?

The problem, of course, was that they have been debating against God. God is all truth. There was no way to win. They have just been told the truth. They could have asked Jesus to help them to understand. To accept His gracious invitation to turn from their ways and accept Him.

But instead they closed their ears and chose to activate Leviticus 24:16, which called for the stoning of a blasphemer.

John 8:59 (NASB)

⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

So they have gone through the steps of progression, right? They have gone from an intellectual discussion, to an emotional fervor, to verbal abuse, and now they can't take it anymore. They want Him dead. So they pick up rocks to crush out His life.

At this point, Jesus not longer gives them a gracious invitation. **“Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.”**

CONCLUSION:

The warning that we must take from this message is that Satan uses many ways to disguise a true and saving faith. Too many people are convinced that if they just live a moral life, go to church every Sunday to appease God, give to the poor, work hard, and provide for the family then God will reward them with eternal life with Him.

But what He really wants from each of us is to **believe** that Jesus died for our sins. He wants us to fully surrender ourselves to Him. To love Him with all of our heart, soul, and mind because of Who He is and for all that He has done for us. He is the **ultimate** Father. **Listen to His truths and obey!** This requires reading God's Word regularly to **know** God's truth and obey His commands.

I love dogs and almost every dog that I have ever been associated with seems to love me. I am fascinated by their loyalty, faithfulness, and devotion. They think you are the greatest person on the face of the planet. Following is a story of one such dog.

ILLUSTRATION:

Devotion and Faithfulness

Outside the Shibuya (She-be-yuh) train station in Tokyo is a statue commemorating a Japanese Akita dog named Hachiko (Hatch' e-koe). Hachiko is remembered for unusual faithfulness to his owner, a university professor who commuted from the station daily. The dog accompanied him on his walk there in the morning and came back to meet him every afternoon just as his train arrived.

One day the professor did not return to the station. Sadly, he had died at work. There was no way to communicate this to Hachiko (Hatch' e-koe). So for the rest of his life--more than nine years--Hachiko (Hatch' e-koe) showed up at the same time every afternoon at the train station, regardless of weather, anticipating the arrival of his master. Day after day, he would arrive at the station, with his tail wagging and his heart racing, faithfully awaiting his master's return, only to have his heart broken once again.

This is the devotion and faithfulness that God desires of His children. We should be waiting anxiously with our tail wagging and our heart racing for the day that our Master will return again and take us home.

Go Tell it on the Mountain.