

## John 8:48-59

In our passage tonight Jesus is defending His claim to be the source of living water and the light of the world. Both terms in Jewish culture meant the spiritual source of truth and eternal life with God. He is speaking to those who thought He might be the Messiah, but He doesn't pander to them. He speaks the truth to wake them up to their condition.

*48 The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?"*

48 Now that Jesus has told them the truth about their condition (they are of their father the devil), they slander him as a demon possessed Samaritan – meaning half breed. (Proverbs 10:18). That was about as vile a slander as they could come up with.

*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.*

49,50 Jesus patiently gives them reason upon reason to believe. Jesus is unlike any of the false messiahs. He does not say things men want to hear. On the contrary, He speaks the truth even when it angers them. In everything He does and says, He seeks to glorify God. How could that be anything but godly? If He honors God, why do they dishonor Him with this slander? In rejecting the messenger, Jesus, they were rejecting the One who sent the message, God. It was a call to repent and a warning that God will judge. Jesus then moved back to His original instruction and added a promise. Last week we saw Him challenging them to go on to discipleship by living by His Word.

*51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."*

51 What a promise! If He can't break through with these reality checks, maybe these incredible promises will jar some of them into receiving His words or at least giving them a try to see if they are valid.

*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?"*

52,53 Instead of considering this amazing claim, they throw more curses at Him. If Abraham died, who was Jesus to make such a claim? Again, they are taking a spiritual expression and making it physical. Did not they realize that when Adam and Eve ate that fruit that they instantly died a spiritual death (Genesis 2:17)?

Finally, they asked, "Who do you think you are?" Jesus knew perfectly well who He is. He is their Creator. He is the Son of God. He would be their Savior if they will receive Him.

*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.'"*

54 Jesus claimed that God glorified Him and that He obeyed God. To deny that would make Him a liar like them. And since they brought up Abraham, Jesus made one last effort to get them to see who He is.

*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.*

55 Jesus must speak the truth. They do not know the Father. Jesus knows the Father and perfectly obeys His Word. He does what He is asking them to do, obey His teaching. This is another round about way of declaring His divinity. He is asking them to obey Him as He obeys God.

*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?"*

56,57 When did Abraham see Jesus? He met Him outside his tent with a couple of men who were angels (Genesis 18:2). The text refers to Him as YHWH, the name that will be uttered to Moses at the burning bush encounter, the I Am (Exodus 3:14). The people responded with something like, "That is ridiculous! You are not even 50 (the age Jews considered a man fully mature). What are you trying to say?" And then He just came out and said what He had been hinting at and saying in various ways,

*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.*

58,59 That was it! Telling them their father was the devil and that they were liars was one thing. Clearly claiming to be the Eternal God is another. They picked up stones to stone Him for blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16). But blasphemy is only when mere men claim to be God (Deuteronomy 17:2-4). Jesus was no mere man. He had given them the proof that He was more than just man in the discussion they just had. He pointed to His sinless character. He pointed to the source of His actions. He reminded them He always sought the Father's glory and not His own, and that the Father was the One who glorified Him.

Their wounded pride could not receive it. They were about to attempt to stone their Creator whose outstretched hand was offering to pull them from the face of the eroding cliff they clung to in pride. What a picture of enslavement to sin (Matthew 3:15)! Miraculously, Jesus slipped away in the throngs of people who had gathered for the final day of the feast (Luke 4:30). He had not left the city yet. He will perform a miracle that will give evidence that His words are true. It will be a miracle that will show the people a physical illustration of their spiritual need.

Jesus confronts us with who we are in all our weakness, tells us how desperately we are enslaved to sin, and that our Father is Satan. That is pretty hard to take, especially

when we have convinced ourselves that we are good. We have decided this eroding cliff of a life of sin is a nice park to play in.

Along comes Jesus with a reality check. His hand reaches out and He tells us to take hold and jump. We ask, "Why?" and sometimes He answers by opening our spiritual eyes and giving us a glimpse of where we really are as seen through His eyes. We take His hand and declare, "I will believe Your word. I will live by Your words." And then we let Him swing us to safety. If we did not see it before, we then see where we were. Whew! He rescued us just in time. It was not just the rocks at the bottom of that cliff, but also the roaring lion waiting to devour us if we fell (1 Peter 5:8). That lion was our father, but now we have a new Father. Now we have a guaranteed seat at His table (Revelation 19:7). We can tell because we have room in our hearts for His Word and love His Son, Jesus. Now our lives begin to reflect our new Daddy. Who's your daddy?

#### Questions

What did Jesus say that upset the crowd?

What reasons did Jesus give them to believe Him?

How does that apply to us?

What amazing claim did Jesus then make?

What death was He referring to?

How could Abraham have seen Jesus?

Who did Jesus claim to be?

Can anyone else make that claim? Why or why not?