

## Who's Your Daddy?

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John 8:31-59

The Jews of the first century believed an expression that we use today, "Like father, like son." Though there are rare exceptions, we have come to recognize the influence of a father to mold and shape their son. Jesus claimed we have a spiritual father that shapes the way we act. In fact, He claimed that our actions prove who our spiritual father is. Who's your daddy?

Our passage today continues the discourse at the end of the Feast of Sukkoth. Jesus had declared that He is the Living Water and the Light of the World. Many believed in Him. They believed that He was the predicted Messiah. But their expectations of the Messiah were of a physical nature just as many today. So Jesus confronted them to help them move to a real belief.

*<sup>31</sup> To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

This was to those who believed in Jesus as Messiah. Jesus is instructing them how to go from a distorted initial belief to genuine discipleship. It's a step every believer should take. (Luke 14:27) Jesus invites us to go on to discipleship but to do that we must hold to His teaching. Are you going on to discipleship? Are you holding on to Jesus' teaching? Is He the living water to you today? (John 7:37-38) Is He the light of the world to you today? (John 8:12)

A common Jewish belief of the time was that they had been freed from slavery in Egypt to take on the yoke of the Law, but in doing so they were truly free. For Jesus to say this was to put His sayings equal to the revelation of God to Moses, their most sacred Scriptures! He implied that they needed more than the Law to be truly free.

If we look back to the immediate teaching Jesus had done during this feast, it was mostly about who He is and what He means to us. He has just taught them that He makes us whole. (John 7:23) He came from heaven to reveal God's will to man. He speaks God's judgments. We will die in our sins if we do not believe He is I AM. He always pleases God. He is the living water and light of the world. Continue in those truths and you will know truth and truth will set you free. Those teachings are the foundation to greater revelation, revelation that will transform our life. (2Corinthians 5:17) Freedom is not just the liberty to do as you please, for pleasing self can be its own form of slavery. Most addictions are about pleasing self. True freedom is knowing the truth, and truth includes an honest look at the sinful nature of man.

As is often a theme in John, those listening took a spiritual metaphor in a physical way, misunderstanding what Jesus was saying. (John 3:4) John seems to point this out to show us how carnal minded we can be. (Romans 8:7) They responded, "We were never slaves of men!" Well, that just isn't true, unless they considered that when they served Egypt, Babylon, and Rome, that they were free in their hearts.

Jesus explained exactly what He meant. "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." One rabbi described evil impulses. "At first it is like a spider's web, but

**Commented [notes1]:** 27 And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:27 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." John 7:37-38 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 23 Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath? John 7:23 (NIV)

**Commented [notes5]:** 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Cor 5:17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** 4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" John 3:4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes7]:** 7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Romans 8:7 (NIV)

then it becomes like a ship's rope." (Gen. Rab. 22:6) This is truth that everyone needs to hear. Sin enslaves us if we let it.

We come to Jesus and begin to believe that we have a Savior, and that His cause is worthwhile. We offer Jesus our assistance. Then He helps us recognize just how hopeless we are without Him. We're like a rock climber clinging to face of an eroding cliff. When a helicopter comes by to rescue us, we have the audacity to offer the one in the helicopter our help. He's there to rescue us, not to get our assistance. (Romans 5:8)

Jesus is telling them they are in hopeless servitude to sin. The Day of Atonement had just reminded them that they were sinners. Jesus reminded them of that and of the final end in judgment. We tend to ignore this fact today, even though we see it all around us. Sin enslaves and that enslavement ends in death. (Ephesians 4:19) Jesus says, "Take my hand and I'll get you off that cliff!" They say, "Who's on a cliff? Not us! You must be looking for my neighbor. He's really messed up."

There is a term for that. It's called self-righteousness. Most of you recognize you are sinners and that sin is enslaving and destructive. Our culture is teaching every new graduating class that sin is an antiquated idea and you are just fine with whatever inclinations you might have. "That's how you were born. It's all good. Snuff out the life in your womb if it's inconvenient. Addiction is just a genetic defect. Perversion is just a different life style." Jesus cuts through all that and says the person that sins is a slave to that sin. Something rings true about His statement. It fits what we observe. In fact, we've all experienced the slavery of sin. (Romans 3:23) Reason your way out of it, around it, over it, and it's still there. Our culture just hates the idea of bowing the knee to Jesus and recognizing how weak we are, how desperately we need that hand. We call this eroding cliff of materialism and pleasure seeking, "self-actualizing". Jesus calls it what it is, enslavement.

*35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.*

*36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.* Jesus is speaking to the Jewish concept that to be descended from Abraham meant having a reservation in the coming kingdom of God. He is declaring that if you are slave to sin, how could you expect to be a permanent member of the family of God? If the Son of God makes you into an adopted son of God and frees you from bondage to sin, only then do you have a guaranteed seat at the family table! (Galatians 4:30)

I want you to notice that this passage declares that it is the Son that sets us free in the eyes of the Father, giving us that guaranteed seat at the table as a family member. The sacrifice that He was soon to make on the cross made us righteous before God. It is the Spirit of God that transforms our actual daily existence and frees us from the evil in this present life. (Galatians 1:4)

*37 I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word.* Jesus knew their physical lineage, but He is saying their actions reveal their spiritual lineage. (Matthew 7:20) The first and major clue of our spiritual lineage is if we have room for Jesus' words. (1Corinthians 2:14) We are back to where we started. They believe He is the Messiah, but do they cling to His words

**Commented [notes8]:** 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes9]:** 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. Eph 4:19 (NIV)

**Commented [notes10]:** 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23 (NIV)

**Commented [notes11]:** 30 But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Gal 4:30 (NIV)

**Commented [notes12]:** who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, Gal 1:4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes13]:** 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Matt 7:20 (NIV)

**Commented [notes14]:** 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor 2:14 (NIV)

and live by them? (Hebrews 2:1) They are ready to kill Him because He suggested they are enslaved to sin. Obviously this crowd doesn't have room for Jesus' words. Do we? Did you open your Bible this week? Do you hunger for His word?

**Commented [notes15]:** 1 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.  
Heb 2:1 (NIV)

Then the discussion turned to a back and forth about who was their father. Jesus said it could be seen in our actions. They were thinking of murder, and so they were of their father who was a murderer from the beginning. They claim Abraham as their father, but Jesus counters with the fact that they are not living like Abraham. Abraham welcomed the manifestation of God. They are slandering Him. Abraham obeyed God.

We act like our father. What do your actions say about your spiritual father? Hatred, envy, selfishness, pride and accusations are a part of the normal actions of Satan. (John 10:10) Love, joy, peace and patience are the normal actions of God. We exhibit the actions of our spiritual father. You exhibit the character of your father.

**Commented [notes16]:** 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.  
John 10:10 (NIV)

They just wouldn't hear it. They had no room for His words. They insisted their father was God in spite of the undeniable evidence that they were acting like their father the Devil. Very few think they are children of the Devil. Most believe they are children of God, destined for heaven. Yet, an honest look at their own heart would reveal they are acting very differently than those whose father is God. It takes revelation and a willingness to face reality.

*<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. <sup>43</sup> Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. Here is another clear statement that reveals who our father is. If God is your Father, you would love Jesus. Why? Because He is sent from God to express the heart of God. It is impossible to reject the person of Jesus Christ and be a child of God! (Malachi 1:6) We know we are children of God if we have room for His word and a love for Jesus.*

**Commented [notes17]:** 6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. "But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'  
Mal 1:6 (NIV)

Why couldn't they understand what Jesus was saying? It is one of the great frustrations of ministers of the Word. (Hosea 14:9) We preach our hearts out and then hear comments that make us know our words have not been heard. Our desire is that the word we deliver, the word that is carefully prepared and prayed over, will go straight to hearts and transform them. We pray that conviction will bring about life transformation. When we see it happen, it is our greatest joy. When we see the word ignored, it is our greatest sorrow because we know the consequences. (3John 1:4)

**Commented [notes18]:** Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.  
Hosea 14:9 (NIV)

Some are unable to hear. It doesn't matter how clearly it is preached. Some hearts have been hardened against hearing things that would call us to account. We insist on being the lord of our own life in that area and so we are unable to hear what Jesus has to say to us. The helicopter hovers, a hand reaches out and offers to save us, and we respond, "I'm just fine, thank you!" We see the Savior inside mouthing the words, but we can't understand a word He's saying. He's pointing down, but we won't look.

**Commented [notes19]:** 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.  
3 John 1:4 (NIV)

Then Jesus dropped the metaphors and just declared it as plainly as it could be said. *<sup>44</sup> You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of*

*lies.* Boom! There it is. Sometimes when we won't hear, He has to shout it. We're insulted! We lash back. But He is trying to get through our hardheartedness. He is risking rejection to get us to see the danger we are in. Look at what you are doing. Is it godly or devilish? Don't justify it if it is ungodly. Repent. Take the hand. Jump in the helicopter. Get off that cliff! (Matthew 8:25)

<sup>46</sup> *Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?* No one but Jesus can make this kind of argument. If He is heaven sent then He will act like His Father. He is asking them to point out some sin in His life to prove their point. If they can't, He's just proved He is right in saying He is from His Father God. If that is so, then He is speaking truth. (Isaiah 53:9) If He is speaking truth then why won't they believe Him? It's a powerful argument. (Hebrews 7:26)

To some extent it is the same argument we use in claiming that the Gospel is true. Our life should testify to the fact that it is true. The lack of habitual sin, the fact that we are not in slavery to sin, should testify that our belief in the truth setting us free is real and effective. If we live a life that demonstrates the love, joy, peace and patience of God, then people have a hard time denying our witness is from God.

<sup>47</sup> *He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.* Another powerful declaration of truth! God's children hear what God has to say. Those who are not God's children refuse to hear His words. When you share, you can soon recognize those that are so set on being their own lord and master, they just can't hear. (Isaiah 44:18)

Now that Jesus has told them the truth about their condition, they slander him as a demon possessed Samaritan. (Proverbs 10:18) That was about as vile a slander as they could come up with. <sup>49</sup> *"I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. <sup>50</sup> I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge.* Again, Jesus patiently gives them reason upon reason to believe. Jesus is unlike any 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 that 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. We began with Him challenging them to go on to discipleship by living by His word. <sup>51</sup> *I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.* 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.

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. Didn't they realize that when Adam and Eve ate that fruit they died a spiritual death instantly? (Genesis 2:17) Finally they asked, "Who

**Commented [notes20]:** 25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"  
Matt 8:25 (NIV)

**Commented [notes21]:** 9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.  
Isaiah 53:9 (NIV)

**Commented [notes22]:** 26 Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.  
Heb 7:26 (NIV)

**Commented [notes23]:** 18 They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand.  
Isaiah 44:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes24]:** 18 He who conceals his hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.  
Prov 10:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes25]:** 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."  
Gen 2:17 (NIV)

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.

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. <sup>56</sup> *Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.*"

When did Abraham see Jesus? He met Him outside his tent with a couple of men that were angels. (Genesis 18:2) The text refers to Him as YHWH, the name that will be uttered in Moses' burning bush encounter, the I Am. (Exodus 3:14) The people responded with something like, "That's ridiculous! You aren't 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, <sup>58</sup> *"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*

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 that 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 gathered for the final day of the feast. (Luke 4:30) He hadn't left the city yet. He'll 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's pretty hard to take, especially when we've convinced ourselves that we are pretty good. We've decided this eroding cliff of a life of sin is a nice park to play in.

Along comes Jesus with 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 didn't see it before, we now see where we were. Whew! He rescued us just in time. It wasn't just rocks at the bottom of that cliff, there was a roaring lion waiting to devour us if we fell. (1Peter 5:8) That lion was our father, but now we have a new Father. Now we have a guaranteed seat at His table.

**Commented [notes26]:** 2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.  
Gen 18:2 (NIV)

**Commented [notes27]:** 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"  
Ex 3:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes28]:** 16 anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him. Whether an alien or native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, he must be put to death.  
Lev 24:16 (NIV)

**Commented [notes29]:** 2 If a man or woman living among you in one of the towns the LORD gives you is found doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God in violation of his covenant,  
3 and contrary to my command has worshiped other gods, bowing down to them or to the sun or the moon or the stars of the sky,  
4 and this has been brought to your attention, then you must investigate it thoroughly. If it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done in Israel,  
Deut 17:2-4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes30]:** 15 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'  
Matt 13:15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes31]:** 30 But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.  
Luke 4:30 (NIV)

**Commented [notes32]:** 8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.  
1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)

(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? Has the Son set you free? If not, I dare you to look down!

**Commented [notes33]:** Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.  
Rev 19:7 (NIV)