

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #41

John 8:48-59

How many religions would you say are in the world? When you think it through there are but two. One religious system says you can do things to be right with God - This system has lots of names. The other system says there is nothing you can do to be right with God. This system is called Biblical salvation. In all reality a person either believes he can save himself through his works or he believes only Jesus Christ can save him.

Now Jesus Christ was on earth presenting the Truth of God which is, only by faith in Him can one have everlasting life. Jesus Christ was telling people that they were all sinners and that He was the only One who could take away their sin. What a wonderful message of Grace He proclaimed that any who would believe on Him would have life. He backed up His message by doing amazing miracles which truly did display the power of God. No human can walk on water. No human could tell a person everything about him. You would have thought that people would have rallied around Him, loved Him, supported Him and believed in Him. But the majority did not do this. The majority not only rejected Jesus Christ, they branded Him as demonic and they wanted to kill Him. Why? Because He told them the Truth of God.

WHEN THE TRUTH OF GOD IS PRESENTED TO VERY RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT REALLY RIGHT WITH GOD, THEY WILL SAY TERRIBLE THINGS ABOUT THE ONE PRESENTING THE TRUTH AND WILL TRY TO DESTROY HIM.

That is precisely what happened to Jesus Christ and you can bet if you are presenting the truth to religious people not right with God, it will happen to you. Now contextually, Jesus Christ has just exposed these people. He looked them straight in the eyes, right in the temple and said “you are not of God; you are of your father the devil” (8:44). They did not like that. The truth was stinging them, it was convicting them. When one is convicted by God, you either: 1) Respond to the conviction, which is the right thing to do; 2) You get away from the one presenting the truth that is convicting you; 3) You try to discredit the one presenting truth that is convicting you; 4) You try to destroy the one presenting the truth that is convicting you. The Jews in the temple opted for the last two.

Now there are seven main sections in this text:

SECTION #1 – The religious Jews respond to Jesus’ teaching of the truth of God. 8:48

Jesus has just told these Jews they will die in their sin; He speaks the truth of God and they do not hear it because they are not of God. That preposition “of” (εκ) in **verse 47** literally means out from within. What this means is that they have never been “in” a right relationship with God. Their entire religious life is not connected to God. So in this verse, the Jews respond to Jesus.

There are three ways they respond:

(Response #1) - Our verbal assessment of you is right. 8:48a

No matter what you say to us, we believe we are right and you are wrong. Learn a very important lesson here - you may believe you are right in your theological grasp of something and you can be dead wrong. Until any person comes to terms with the fact that Jesus Christ is the only God/Savior, they are dead wrong, no matter how religious they may appear to be.

(Response #2) - You are a Samaritan. 8:48b

What is so interesting is that the Samaritans clearly identified Christ as being a pure Jew (4:9, 22, 25), and many of them believed (4:41-42). The Jews considered the Samaritans to be beneath them. This verbal charge is a contemptible expression because the Samaritans were a mixed people, not pure blood Jews and the Jews viewed them as religious heretics.

Christ actually did a couple of things that leant fuel to this charge: 1) He rejected the Jewish religious traditions invented by men, like the Samaritans; 2) He associated and even saved Samaritan people.

(Response #3) - You are demonic. 8:48c

Now these are religious people who actually say they have a good relationship with God (8:54b). These are religious people who regularly go to church. They look God in the face and call Him demonic. This is actually the unpardonable sin. When Jesus Christ was here on earth and presented Himself as God in the power of the Holy Spirit, if one were to say He was doing it by the power of Satan, that was the sin God would not forgive (Mark 3:28-30).

Keep in mind that all of these responses are due to the fact that Jesus is teaching the truth. When you present the truth about the Grace of God to a religious world proud of their works, many will oppose you and try to discredit you. John Calvin was called a “devil.” Martin Luther was called a “heretic.” You and I can expect the same kind of thing if we accurately proclaim truth. You may be called “harsh”, “dogmatic”, “power-crazed”, “dictatorial”, “egotistical”, “negative.” It all comes from the same source, the Evil One.

SECTION #2 – Jesus responds to the religious Jews assessment of Him. 8:49-51

Jesus answered in a straightforward manner and responded in the following six ways:

(Response #1) - I am not demonic. 8:49a

The truth is just the opposite of what all of these religious leaders are alleging.

(Response #2) - I do honor God My Father. 8:49b

Everything Jesus Christ did and said was that which honored God the Father. They are calling Him demonic when in fact He was honoring God. If these religious leaders would have said one positive thing about Jesus Christ, the nation of Israel could have caught fire for God. But they are too busy attacking Jesus Christ because God’s truth is convicting them.

(Response #3) - You Jews are dishonoring Me. 8:49c

When a person rejects the truth presented by and about Jesus Christ, that person dishonors Jesus Christ. If you reject the doctrine of election, or if you reject the “faith” plus no works salvation message, or if you reject the doctrine of eternal security, you dishonor Jesus Christ because He taught these things and then appeared directly to Paul to reveal His gospel and Paul taught those same things. This is more than just a difference of theological opinion; this has to do with dishonoring Jesus Christ.

(Response #4) - I do not seek My own Glory. 8:50a

If Jesus Christ would have been on this earth to seek His own glory, He sure failed. Most of the people despise Him and most what Him dead. Most hate Him because He tells the truth and they don't like it. It is quite obvious that Jesus never sought His own glory.

There are two ways presented right here that we may live our lives: 1) We may live our lives seeking our own glory; 2) We may live our lives seeking God's glory.

(Response #5) - God the Father does seek My Glory and He will judge people accordingly. 8:50b

God the Father sanctions the honoring of God the Son. If God the Father seeks to have God the Son honored, those who refuse to honor the Son will face the severe judgment of God the Father.

(Response #6) - It is true that any who believes in Me will never see eternal death. 8:51

“Truly, Truly” is another emphatic stress that Christ is telling dogmatic truth. Now when Christ says “if any one keeps My word” the noun “word” has an article “the” before it, meaning Jesus wants some word specifically identified, which He has already given, which can keep people from eternal death. The idea of “tasting death” (v. 52) is the same as “experiencing death” (Hebrews 2:9). Christ is promising that there is some type of death one will not experience if they do something that He has specifically said. The word that He specifically spoke that can keep one from eternal death is believe in Him (8:24). If they would not believe in Him, they would die in their sin. The only word God asks you to keep to be saved is believe on Jesus Christ. If you will do that you will have eternal life. This is the word He spoke and it is true.

SECTION #3 – The Jews respond to Jesus' statement that one will never taste death. 8:52-53

The Jews bring up Abraham again. Abraham was considered to be a great Jewish leader. The Jews respond to Christ's statement that one who believes does not taste death by saying, now we know you are demonic because our father Abraham who was a great man of God died and so did the prophets. You then are telling some demonic lie that any who believes in you will not taste death. Why are they calling Jesus Christ demonic? Because He is presenting the pure truth and grace of God and they do not like it and they don't understand it.

SECTION #4 – Jesus responds to the religious Jews’ allegations . 8:54-56

Christ responds brilliantly by giving seven responses:

(Response #1) - If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing . 8:54a

This is what the Jews did. There is a psychological term called “projection” which means the person making the accusation against someone else is actually the one guilty of what he is projecting. The Jews were seeking to glorify themselves, Christ never did.

Jesus says here if all one can do is glorify himself, it means nothing. If all you do is seek to live life for you, you will end up with a life that meant nothing. However, if you live it for God, it means everything forever.

(Response #2) - If God the Father glorifies Me that should mean something to you because you claim God the Father is your God. 8:54b

I Samuel 2:30 says those who honor Me, I will honor. Christ says, if God the Father honors Me and you say you really love God the Father, then you also should honor Me.

(Response #3) - You do not know God the Father. 8:55a

The word “know” (γινώσκω) means to know by experience or observation. Jesus is saying to these religious leaders you have never experienced God and you don’t know God and you don’t even know how to make proper observations about God.

(Response #4) - In contrast to you, I do know God the Father. 8:55b

The word “know” (οἶδα) means to know intuitively or inherently. Our knowledge of God is gained experientially over time as adjustments are made in regard to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Jesus knowledge is intuitive. He is God. His heart was not deceitful like ours.

(Response #5) - If I say I do not know (οἶδα) Him, I will be a liar like you are. 8:55c

They were liars because they said they knew God by experience. If Christ were to say He did not know God intuitively, He would be a liar like they were because He was God. I believe there are many religious people, religious leaders who are liars and they are living a lie. They strut around pretending that they love God and know God and yet they do not have a passion to know the truth or doctrine or books of the Bible and are more interested in appeasing people. They are liars. They do not know the God of the Bible.

(Response #6) - I do know (οἶδα) God and I do keep His word. 8:55d

The reason for Christ’s very existence on earth was because He was keeping God’s word to come here so we could be saved from our sin. The specific reason He came was to make it possible that sinners who believe on Him would be saved.

(Response #7) - Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see My day. 8:56

Jesus says, since you have named Abraham, let Me tell you something about Abraham. He rejoiced to see the day when I would come to this world to provide a sacrifice for sin. There have been many suggestions as to what this means, but the most likely is this - Abraham looked with joy at a time in the future when the Messiah would come through His lineage to be the provisional Lamb of God. Obviously Jesus knew this because He was God.

SECTION #5 – The Jews respond to Jesus’ claim about Abraham. 8:57

The Jews said, how could you possibly know what Abraham thought when you are not even 50 years old. You have not seen Abraham, so how could you know anything about Him?

SECTION #6 – Jesus responds to the Jews with a claim of Deity. 8:58

Remember, John’s gospel is written to prove Jesus Christ is God. He is the God/Savior, the God/Messiah.

Now the title “I Am” is a title of Deity, Divinity and Divine Presence. It is the most revered name for God that there is (Exodus 3:14). This is a title often used by Isaiah and certainly these religious Jews should have been searching that prophetic book (Isaiah 41:4; 43:10, 25; 45:18; 47:8, 10; 51:12; 52:6). “I Am” is not “I was.” I Am is timeless. Jesus is dogmatically stating that before Abraham came into existence, He was in existence. Preexistence is only a prerogative of Deity. He has always been in existence. **Here is one place where Jesus Christ directly claims He is God.** And the response of the Jews proves it.

SECTION #7 – The Jews pick up stones to kill Christ. 8:59

These Jews knew He was claiming to be God and they picked up stones to kill Him, but couldn’t do it. Think of this - these religious Jews hate Jesus Christ and want to kill Jesus Christ and He has loved them enough to come to this world to die for them. Why do they want to kill Him? Because He is telling these religious people the Truth of God and they do not like it.

Notice verse 59 - Jesus went out of the temple. Divine presence was no longer in the place of worship.

There are two ways to live life: 1) Live it to glorify yourself and you’ll end up with nothing; 2) Live it to glorify God and you’ll end up with everything.