

Title:            **“IF GOD WERE YOUR FATHER...”**

Text:             John 8:19-59

Subject:         *Fruits of Grace*

Date:            Sunday Morning — August 23, 2009

Tape:            John #60

Reading:        *John 8:19-59*

Introduction:

Children almost always resemble their parents; and children of the same family almost always resemble one another. With some the resemblance is stronger than it is with others; but it is a rare thing for children of the same family not to resemble one another, or not to resemble their parents.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of John's Gospel, as our Savior taught in the Temple, the Pharisees, who were certain that they were distinctly the children of God, were seeking to discredit the Lord Jesus and trying to find a way to put him to death. These Pharisees, like the Jews as a whole, thought that they alone were the objects of God's love and that they alone were the children of God.

But the Lord Jesus stripped the mask off these hypocrites, saying to them, “*If God were your Father, ye would love me*” (v. 42). I take our Lord's words in verse 42 for my subject, — **“IF GOD WERE YOUR FATHER...”**

**Proposition:** In verses 19-59 the Lord Jesus Christ shows us seven things by which the children of God in this world are always identified.

Yes, there are some things by which God's elect are specifically identified. Yes, there are some things specifically named in Holy Scripture that always follow grace. Here are seven of those things.

1. **If God were your Father, you would know the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone who is born of God knows Christ** (v. 19).

(John 8:19) “Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: — **If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.**”

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These men boasted about their spiritual perception, the depth of their learning, knowledge and understanding. They boasted about their knowledge of God. They knew just about everything there was to know; and they knew it...

- Facts of Bible History
- Tribes and Land Grants
- Creeds and Customs
- Laws and Punishments
- Rituals and Ceremonies
- Animals for Sacrifices
- The Sacrifices
- The Sabbath and Holy Days
- Feasts and Tithes
- Everything but God

They did not know God at all. Here, our Savior tells us plainly that they did not know God, because they did not know him. Can you imagine how offended they must have been? This was, to them, a public scorn. The Lord Jesus publicly denounced them, their religion and their pretence of spiritual superiority. — There is no knowledge of God apart from Christ (John 1:18; 14:6; 17:3).

(John 1:18) “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.”

(John 14:6) “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

(John 17:3) “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person. He that has seen the Son knows the Father; and indeed, no one can know the Father, but he to whom the Son reveals him.

Having said that, I hasten to add that it means nothing to say, “I believe in Jesus,” if we do not know him as he is revealed in the Scriptures (1 John 4:2-3; 5:1; 2 John 1:7).

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(1 John 4:2-3) “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: (3) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

(1 John 5:1) “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”

(2 John 1:7) “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”

Acknowledging Christ in name is meaningless, if we do not know him as the Prophets and Apostles have revealed him. If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as...

- The Incarnate God,
- The Covenant Head of His Church,
- The Surety of His Elect,
- The Law-fulfiller of His People,
- The Sin-atoner of His Chosen
- And the Savior of His People,

You do not know God and you do not know his Son. If you do not know Christ as your Savior, as your only Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption, you do not know God and you do not know his Son.

Until you trust Christ alone for the whole of your acceptance before God, you are like these Pharisees, utterly ignorant of God and all things spiritual. Your trust in yourself...

- Your Knowledge
- Your Experience
- Your Feelings
- Your Creedal Ceremonies and Religious Rituals
- Your Own Righteousness
- Your Prayers and Fastings
- Your Repentance and Faith
- Your Sorrow and Tears

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Is proof that you neither know Christ nor the Father. — **It is of no benefit to your soul, but shall be its everlasting ruin, to place your works on Christ.— You must fall on the Rock!**

**Illustration:** When the flood comes, it will be of no use to put all your clothes and all your jewelry on the rock. You must fall on the rock, or be swept away!

2. **If God were your Father, you would persevere in grace. All who are born of God persevere in grace** (v. 31).

(John 8:30-31) “As he spake these words, many believed on him. (31) Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;”

“*As he spake these words*” — As our Lord Jesus told his hearers about his crucifixion and the knowledge the Jews should have of him after his sacrifice at Calvary, as he set before them the excellency and divinity of his doctrine, of his mission from the Father, and of the Father’s presence with him “*many believed on him.*” Many who heard him preach trusted him. As the gospel was preached, it came to some in power and faith came by hearing.

As it was then, so it is today and in every day. — Some believed and some believed not (Acts 28:24). — “*as many as were ordained to eternal life believed*” (Acts 13:48).

To these new born babes in grace, the Lord Jesus declares, “*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.*” There are two kinds of disciples: professed disciples and true disciples. True disciples continue in the doctrine of Christ. False disciples go out from among us because they were not of us.

(1 John 2:19) “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

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Those who do not continue in, who do not persevere in the faith of the gospel never were born of God, never were true believers. — “*He that endureth to the end shall be saved*” (Matthew 10:22).

(1 Corinthians 15:1-3) “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; (2) By which also ye are saved, **if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you**, unless ye have believed in vain. (3) For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.”

(Hebrews 3:6) “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, **if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.**”

(Hebrews 4:14) “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold fast our profession.**”

(Hebrews 10:23) “**Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;** (for he *is* faithful that promised.)”

All who are born of God, all who truly trust the Lord Jesus Christ shall persevere unto the end.

(Job 17:9) “The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.”

(Psalms 1:3) “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

(Psalms 125:1) “A Song of degrees. They that trust in the LORD *shall be* as mount Zion, *which* cannot be removed, *but* abideth for ever.”

(Psalms 138:8) “The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.”

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(Ecclesiastes 3:14) “I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him.”

(Isaiah 46:4) “And *even* to *your* old age I *am* he; and *even* to hoar hairs will I carry *you*: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver *you*.”

(Jeremiah 32:40) “And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.”

(Philippians 1:6) “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:”

3. **If God were your Father, you would be free. All who are in Christ are the free born children of God** (v. 36).

“*He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman*” (1 Corinthians 7:22). The Master said, “*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free*” (v. 32). Then, declares in verse 36...

(John 8:36) “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

All who are born of God are free indeed. Christ sets the captive free!

- Free from Sin
- Free from Satan
- Free from Guilt
- Free from the Law
- Free from the Curse
- Free from Religion
- Free from Superstition
- Free from the Fear of Death

Free from the law’s great curse,  
In Jesus we are free:  
For Christ became a curse for us

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And died upon the tree.  
The rituals of the law  
And all the law’s commands  
Have been fulfilled in Christ the Lord,  
Established by His hands.

No cov’nant with the law  
Can now with us exist:  
Complete in Christ we stand by grace,  
Both free and ever blessed.  
No more the dread of wrath,  
No more constrained by fear,  
We worship and we serve our God  
With gratitude and cheer.

In Jesus we are free,  
In Jesus we are free-  
Free from all sin and from all guilt,  
We live in liberty!  
We’ll join the happy song,  
With all the blood-bought throng,  
And sing the praises of the Lamb,  
Whose grace makes us His own.

4. **If God were your Father, you would do the works of Abraham. All the children of Abraham do the works of Abraham** (v. 39).

(John 8:39) “They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.”

First, let me show you from the Scriptures that **all who trust Christ (Jews and Gentiles), and only those who trust Christ (whether Jew or Gentile) are the children of Abraham.** These Pharisees were, without question, Abraham’s physical seed. They were Jews. But the Lord Jesus declares plainly that they were not the children of Abraham. The children of Abraham are those who are the children of promise, his spiritual children, the Church and Israel of God (Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 3:29; Philippians 3:3).

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(Romans 2:28-29) “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: (29) But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.”

(Galatians 3:29) “And if ye *be* Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

(Philippians 3:3) “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

What does our Savior refer to when he speaks of his people doing the works of Abraham? What are the works of Abraham? What are these works that are characteristic of all who trust Christ? **The works of Abraham were works of faith and love.** Those are the things that characterize all believers. These proud Pharisees, who boasted of being Abraham’s children, were trying to murder the Lord Jesus trying to destroy life (v. 40); but Abraham was a man who hazarded his own life to save the lives of others. — Is that not what he did when he went to war to rescue Lot?

(John 8:40-41) “But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. (41) Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God.”

**What were the works of Abraham?** What are the works of Abraham which are performed by all who are born of God, the works of Abraham that characterize all the children of Abraham?

- Abraham forsook all for Christ (Genesis 12:1-4).
- Abraham cherished Christ, the Sacrifice of the Covenant (Genesis 15).
- Abraham was a magnanimous, forgiving man — (His Treatment of Lot).
- Abraham was a hospitable, generous man (Genesis 18).
- Abraham was a man who saw the Lord Jesus, and seeing him sacrificed everything to him (Genesis 22).



**“IF GOD WERE YOUR FATHER...”****5. If God were your Father, you would love the Lord Jesus. All who have God for their Father truly love the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 42).**

(John 8:42) “Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.”

(1 John 4:19) “We love him, because he first loved us.”

We may differ on many points. But in this one thing every true child of God is like every other child of God: — **“We love him”**. We do not love him as we desire. We do not love him as we know we should. We do not love him as we soon shall. But we really do love our blessed Savior.

- It is not possible for a man to experience the grace of God in salvation and not love the God of all grace.
- It is not possible for a man to know the efficacy of Christ’s blood in his own soul and not love his gracious Redeemer.
- It is not possible for a man to have his heart renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit and not love the Spirit of life.

In spite of our many weaknesses, sins and failures, we do honestly and sincerely confess, *“Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.”*

**We know also that we would never have loved him if he had not loved us first.** The love of God for us precedes our love for him. *“He first loved us.”* He loved us before we had any desire to be loved by him. He loved us before we sought his grace. He loved us before we had any repentance or faith. He loved us before we had any being. He loved us eternally. Does he not say, *“I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I called thee”*? He chose us, redeemed us and called us because he loved us.

Not only does God’s love for us precede our love for God, but **God’s love for us is the cause of our love for him.** — *“We love him, because he first loved us.”* This heart of mine was so hard, this will was so stubborn, that I would never have loved the Lord Jesus, if he had not intervened to conquer me with his love. In the midst of my sin and corruption, he passed by and, behold, it was *“the time of love!”* The Triune Jehovah, the Lord God, the God of all grace revealed his great love for me in Christ. Beholding the crucified Christ, dying in the place of sinners, the love of God conquered

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this rebel’s heart. Trusting Christ as my only Savior, I am compelled to love him, because he first loved me. And now I know that I am what am by the grace of God, because he loved me. Tell me, my brother, tell me my sister, Is it not so with you?

“Do not I love Thee, O my Lord?  
Behold my heart and see;  
And turn the dearest idol out,  
That dares to rival Thee.

Do not I love Thee, O my Lord?  
Then let me nothing love;  
Dead be my heart to every joy,  
When Jesus cannot move.

Is not Thy Name melodious still  
To mine attentive ear?  
Doth not each pulse with pleasure bound  
My Savior’s voice to hear?

Hast Thou a lamb in all Thy flock  
I would disdain to feed?  
Hast Thou a foe, before whose face  
I fear Thy cause to plead?

Would not mine ardent spirit vie  
With angels round the throne,  
To execute Thy sacred will,  
And make Thy glory known?

Would not my heart pour forth its blood  
In honor of Thy Name?  
And challenge the cold hand of death  
To damp th’ immortal flame?

Thou know’st I love Thee, dearest Lord,  
But O, I long to soar  
Far from the sphere of mortal joys,  
And learn to love Thee more!”

— Philip Doddridge

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6. **If God were your Father, you would hear his Word. All who have God for their Father, all true believers, all true Christians, hear God’s Word** (v. 47).

(John 8:47) “He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.”

They all believe the gospel. They all receive, embrace, believe and rejoice in the doctrine of God. Regenerate men and women have eyes to see the glory of God in the face of Christ. I’m talking about a believer now, not a religionist! — A Believer!

- Tell him about Divine sovereignty, and he’ll fall down and worship.
- Tell him about covenant grace, and he’ll find comfort.
- Tell him about electing love, and he’ll sing with joy.
- Tell him about total depravity, and he’ll weep as he confesses it.
- Tell him about effectual blood redemption, limited atonement, and he’ll dance like David before the Ark of God.
- Tell him about irresistible grace, and he’ll shout “Amen!”
- Tell him about the security of the saints, the final perseverance of God’s elect, and he’ll pray for grace to honor the God of all grace!

7. **If God is your Father, you shall never taste death** (v. 51).

(John 8:51) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.”

It is true, we shall drop these bodies of flesh; but that is not death. That is just laying aside a garment that is worn out and no longer needed or wanted. Like Enoch, we shall be translated, and never see death. Like Elijah, we shall be carried to heaven on a chariot of fire, and never taste death. Because the Lord Jesus tasted death for us (Hebrews 2:9), we never shall. We have everlasting life (Revelation 20:6).

(Revelation 20:6) “Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

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(2 Corinthians 5:1-9) “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: (3) If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. (4) For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (5) Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. (6) Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (7) (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) (8) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. (9) Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.”

Amen.