



JOHN 8:31-47 (PART 2)

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. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 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. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

(verses 42-47)

This is an incredibly pointed commentary from Jesus, spoken to folk who were apparently among those *“who had believed him”* (verse 31). Basically he tells them their self-conception is all off-base. Ouch.

At root, the whole issue has to do with whose children they are and whose family likeness they bear. They prided themselves on their family-line, passionately declaring, *“We are Abraham’s descendants ... Abraham is our father”* (verses 33, 39). But they don’t stop there. Being more spiritually cocksure yet, they proclaim: *“The only Father we have is God himself”* (verse 41).

Jesus disagrees. Strongly. Just take a look at your own characteristics, Jesus says. It’s clear who your father really is.

There are families I know that have such a strong common “look”, or even a distinctive family “accent”, that there’s no doubt when you encounter one of them. The way they present themselves makes their lineage absolutely clear. There’s no question.

Jesus examines the evidence. If God were really their Father, their hearts would embrace what God himself embraces. But they don’t – they’re actually looking to kill Jesus, the one God sent (verse 37). If God were really their Father they would hear what he says, understanding his language. But they don’t – they can’t understand Jesus (verse 43), nor do they believe him (verse 46).

Instead, the evidence points to an entirely different family lineage. Jesus states it bluntly: *“You belong to your father, the devil”* (verse 44). Ouch, again. These folk want to kill Jesus, which is no surprise, since the devil *“was a murderer from the beginning.”* These folk can’t understand the truth spoken by Jesus, which is no surprise, since lying is the devil’s native language, *“for there is no truth in him.”*

Despite what they think, God isn’t their Father. Their attitudes and behaviour make it clear. They’ve been shaped by the family culture and values and perspectives of the devil himself.

It’s a cautionary tale. It causes us to sit up and take notice. Whose family likeness do our own attitudes and behaviours reflect?

Is our thinking shaped by the Truth that is in Jesus, or do we allow ourselves to be saturated in the perspectives of the world? Do our attitudes towards others

evidence Jesus' sacrificial love, or do we cling to gossip and bitterness that tends to murder reputations, even if we leave the individuals physically untouched?

If you find the Father's family likeness is not shining forth in your own life, then repent. Turn back. Strip off the old. Put on the new. Be renewed in knowledge in the image of the Creator. Clothe yourself in the Lord Jesus.

Come home to the Father. Soak up more of the family likeness.

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Father, I recommit myself into your presence. I want to be shaped by the family likeness. Conform me to the image of your Son. Fill me with your Spirit. All of it to your glory. Amen.

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Reflect:

Ask the Lord to show you any of your own attitudes or behaviours which do not show forth his family likeness. Take time to listen. Ask him to deepen his likeness in you.