

“The Way to Immortality”  
(John 8:48-59)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

Last week,

We saw Jesus defending

The two things He said to these Jews that “believed”

To warn them of the danger of their situation.

They said they were free –

No one could tell them what to do –

But they weren’t free –

They were the slaves of sin,

And as its slave, would receive its wages: death.

They said they were the children of Abraham –

They might have been his physical descendants,

But they weren’t his spiritual children –

How could they be

When they were still enslaved to sin?

They needed something more –

They needed the faith of Abraham;

To believe what Jesus told them,

To turn from their sin and trust Him.

If they did,  
Then they would be free, like Abraham.

B. Preview.

This morning,  
We see their response:  
Did they repent and believe? No.  
They did what so many do today  
When you tell them the truth:  
They verbally abused Jesus  
And wanted to kill Him.

Our passage again reminds us  
That our audience –  
The people to whom Jesus sends us  
To minister the Gospel  
Are morally depraved –  
Their hearts are bent away from the Gospel.  
They are the enemies of God.

But it also reminds us  
That this shouldn't stop us from telling them the truth:  
Jesus continued to reach out to them,  
Because this is what the Father sent Him to do –

And He loved and wanted to honor Him –  
 Because He knew this was the only way  
 They could be saved –  
 He continued because of His mercy and compassion –  
 And because He knew  
 The Spirit of God works through the Gospel  
 To save those who hate Him –  
 This is how He gathers His sheep.

## II. Sermon.

### A. We see first, how the Jews' responded to Jesus –

Regarding their being the slaves of sin,  
 Regarding their not being the true children of Abraham –  
 How they responded to *the truth*: *They attacked Jesus.*

“The Jews answered and said to Him, ‘Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?’” (v. 48).

You say we're not related to Abraham?

You more so: You half-breed Samaritan!

In the eyes of the Jews

There was almost nothing worse than a Samaritan,

Which is why the Jews often walked around Samaria,

Rather than going through it.

This, by the way, is also why

Jesus chose to make the man

Who was the good neighbor

In His parable a Samaritan –

That would certainly gain their attention.

Basically, they were calling Jesus a low-life.

Further, they said Jesus was demon-possessed.

What worse than being a Samaritan?

What's worse even than being the slave of sin?

Being the slave of Satan –

Being possessed by an unclean spirit,

Not having control of your own mind and body.

“Jesus, You're crazy!”

This is how they repaid Him for telling them the truth.

They didn't shake His hand,

Or tell Him, “Thank you.”

They attacked Him.

Why did Jesus bother with them?

Why was He willing to take this kind of abuse?

He did it for love.

This was the only way He could honor His Father,

And the only way they could be saved.

Why should you be willing

To put your emotional well-being on the line?

Why should you stick your neck out

At the risk of upsetting others

By telling them the Gospel?

Because they need to hear it,

It's the only way they can be saved

From an eternity of agony in hell.

Isn't the salvation of even one person

Worth any inconvenience or abuse

You might have to endure?

B. But notice, second, that Jesus didn't merely grin and bear it,

He continued to defend what He was saying,

And warned them of what would happen

If they didn't listen to Him.

“Jesus answered, ‘I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges’” (vv. 49-50).

Notice He passed by the first insult –

That He was a Samaritan –

And defended Himself against the second –

That He had a demon.

The consequences of a racial slur –

And their remark was nothing more than that –

Is nothing compared  
To what the consequences would be to them  
If they thought He was enslaved by Satan  
Or had lost His mind.

“I do not have a demon.  
Far from being some crazed demon-possessed man,  
I am honoring My Father –  
That’s why He sent Me out –  
To preach the truth  
So that you could be saved.”

Sin has the tendency to put the worst spin  
On the actions of others:  
Be prepared that they’ll do the same to you.  
Also, be careful not to take  
Any insults you receive personally –  
This really wasn’t your idea.  
Jesus commissioned you and sent you  
To tell others about Him –  
You represent Him.  
If they get upset about it,  
They’re going to have to answer to Him.  
That’s what Jesus points out next.

He was only seeking the honor of His Father,

Not His own.

When they dishonored Him,

They dishonored His Father,

And the Father would require it from their hands.

Jesus says, “There is One who seeks and judges” (v. 50).

Jesus didn’t have to seek for His own glory –

The Father would take care of that

As Jesus sought to honor Him.

Jesus also didn’t need to concern Himself

With judging them for their response –

The Father would also take care of that.

The same is true for you –

When you reach out, as the Lord calls you to do,

He will honor you for it –

He will richly reward you

For taking His Gospel

And sharing it with as many as you can.

But He will also call into judgment

Those who abuse and injure you

For seeking to do what is good and right and loving.

C. Notice, third, that Jesus didn't give up.

He didn't throw His hands in the air and walk away.

Just because they weren't saved now –

And remember, these Jews weren't:

They were the slaves of sin,

They weren't the true children of Abraham,

They were not of God –

Just because they weren't now saved,

And just because they continued to abuse Him,

That didn't mean they couldn't be saved.

There is a line you can cross over,

But they hadn't crossed it yet.

And so He again offers them eternal life:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death” (v. 51).

Jesus says to them,

“If you will only listen.

If you will only recognize who I am.

If you will only receive Me and follow Me,

You will never die.”

They were on their way to the grave

And to everlasting torment in hell.

But here was a way out –

The only way they could go to heaven instead –

And so He persisted; He urged them.

If you don't know Him, this morning,

If you will only listen to what He says,

If you will only do what He says,

He will forgive your sins,

He will give you eternal life,

You will be safe.

If you do know Him,

Know that this is what He authorizes you

To offer to others:

John says, “ But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name” (1:12).

If we keep His Word, we will never see death.

D. But again, the Jews scoffed at Him.

How can You, Jesus, overcome death –

Something even our greatest men have not been able to do?

“The Jews said to Him, ‘Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*; and You say, “If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.” Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out *to be*?’” (vv. 53-53).

“Now we know You're crazy.

Abraham is dead.

The prophets are dead.

And yet you say, if anyone keeps Your Word,

He will never die.

Just who do You think You are?"

Notice again how Jesus responds:

He's very careful to explain

In a way that shows

That He's not trying to promote Himself,

But to honor His Father.

At the same time,

He continues to tell them the truth

About Himself and about them,

So that they might be saved.

"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"; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word" (vv. 54-55).

When Jesus says, He knows the Father, but they don't,

He's simply pointing out the difference

Between His relationship with God and theirs:

He knows the Father

In a very intimate and loving relationship;

And He shows His love for the Father

In a way that is more than in word only –

He listens to, and obeys, Him.

These Jews only *knew of* the Father.

They were like Nicodemus –

One who professed Judaism; a church member;

But who still needed to be born again,

Who still needed a new heart:

The Spirit of God,

To enable him to know and love God,

In a real and personal relationship.

But with regard to Abraham –

And the prophets –

He is greater –

Jesus continues, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad” (v. 56).

Abraham, their father,

Looked forward to His coming, saw it and rejoiced.

How did Abraham see Jesus?

He looked forward to His day by faith –

Through the sacrifice of Isaac,

Through the substitution of the ram on Mount Moriah,

Through the promises God had made to Abraham

That through his seed all the nations would be blessed (Gen. 22),

And in many other ways –

And Abraham saw Him –

He believed God

And saw Jesus through the eyes of faith;

He trusted Him

And received His salvation.

And he rejoiced

Because now his soul was secure.

The Jews still didn't seem to understand what He was saying:

They thought He said that He had seen Abraham,

Not that Abraham saw Him –

“So the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’” (v. 57).

Again, they were trying to turn things around

So that Jesus looked smaller than He was.

How could He have seen Abraham?

Abraham lived and died over 1800 years earlier.

What Jesus now says in reply

Tells us why *He is greater than Abraham,*

And why He is able *to grant eternal life:*

It's because Jesus is God.

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, *I am*’”  
(v. 58).

Jesus is not saying that He's the Father,

But that He is eternal with the Father.

John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1:1).

Again John seems specifically

To focus on those things Jesus said

That reveals His true nature: His deity.

The reason Jesus can grant immortality,

Is because He is the eternal God.

E. Finally, we see the Jews' response to Jesus' claim.

Did Jesus mean to say merely that He existed before Abraham?

That He is God's greatest creation,

As the Jews believe?

If He was only claiming preexistence

As an angel or some other creature,

The Jews would not have responded as they did.

"Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple" (v. 59).

They wanted to kill Him because He had blasphemed –

Because in their minds,

Jesus, being a man, made Himself out to be God.

That would be blasphemous, if it wasn't true –

But it is!

He is God and man.

As a man,

He was able to do what was necessary

To reconcile you to God:

He obeyed for you,

And took your sins on Himself

And died in your place.

And as God,

He was able to grant something

Only One who is eternal can: eternal life.

Jesus is the way to immortality –

He is the only way.

Everyone's going to live forever,

Most in unimaginable torment.

But Jesus is able to give eternal life –

Something more than freedom from pain –

A personal relationship with God.

Do you want this kind of immortality?

Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death" (v. 51).

If you've already received this life through faith in Christ,

Know that He wants you to offer it to others in His name –  
To offer them real immortality,  
Not just that they'll be remembered  
For some great accomplishment in this world,  
But reconciliation with God.  
There is a fame that is greater:  
To be remembered by God in His kingdom forever.  
That is what He will give you  
For leading His Son's sheep home. Amen.

<http://www.gcmoesto.org>