

DATE: November 29, 2009

TEXT: John 8: 42-59

TITLE: "John XXIV: Self Examination"



We are entering Advent this week. Advent is a time of celebration. We are celebrating the fact of Christ's presence on earth. We are celebrating God coming to His creation to declare his love. The question is this.... do we recognize the Savior when he comes into our lives? As we have been going through the 8th chapter of the book of John we see this exact question being asked. Jesus was present.... but the jews refused to see who he was. Our text is the end of a long dialogue about the person of Christ. Who is Christ?

We are going down a path of self examination this morning. Jesus was challenging the jews 2000 years ago and he is challenging us today. Who is Christ? Does Christ impact our lives? I will share 4 question this morning that will help us answer these questions

Question # 1 Who is Jesus Christ? Was Jesus a great man? Was Jesus a Prophet? Was Jesus a sham? Was Jesus delusional? Who is Jesus?

The Jews were claiming special status because they were children of Abraham. This

discussion between Jesus and the Jews ends with this statement in *John 8: 56-59*

56Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."
57"You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"
58"I tell you the truth, (Amen Amen)" Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"
59At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

The Jews immediately understood what Jesus was saying.... they immediately picked up stones to stone him to death. For us to understand we have to remember the story of Moses.

Moses is living in a distant land. He goes up the mountain for a time alone... and he encounters a

burning bush that is not consumed. He is commanded by God to lead the Israelites back to the

Promised land. Moses did not jump at the opportunity. He was very, very hesitant. The text

from *Exodus 3: 13-14* ends with this statement.....

13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" **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.' "

The Hebrew translation of this name is Yahweh... or Jehovah. That is the name of our God. It is the first person "to be" phrase in Hebrew. My name is... is. My name is... being. My name is.... I am.

Do you now hear what Jesus is saying? **“Before Abraham was.... Yahweh.”** I am.

Jesus is taking on the very name of God. The Jews instantly knew this... they instantly tried to stone him to death for blasphemy. This truly is the greatest claims of Christ found in all of Scripture. He is God. He is the great I am. He is being. He is.

The first question I posed this morning is this. Who is Jesus Christ? Do you believe he is God? I mean really believe.

Question # 2 Who do you love? Jesus asks this of the Jews in *John 8: 42...*

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.

Jesus is asking do you love me? I am reminded of the resurrected Jesus encountering Peter by the shore and asking **“Do you love me more than these?** An I picture Jesus pointing to the boats.... to his friends... maybe to his house in the distance. Do you love me more than these?

Upon occasion when I am teaching youth I begin with this exercise. I say... Imagine you are going on a 5 year journey to Mars. All of the basic necessities of life will be provided.... you

are allowed to take with you 3 personal items..... Weight and size do not matter. What 3 things would you take? Some say cars... some say I pods... some say T.V. ...many say friends... the good kids say parents.... some say clothes ... some even say their house. I say “good, now put Jesus Christ on the list. I next say eliminate one item..... eliminate a second item.... eliminate a third item... I Jesus Christ still on your list? **“Do you love me more than these?”**

Again I remind you that the Biblical definition of love is commitment. Are you committed to Jesus more than these. More than money? More than comfort? More than health? More than family? **“Do you love me more that these?”**

Question # 3 Who do you belong to? Do you understand this basic truth of Scripture:

No person is truly free. Let me say that again... No person is truly free. Freedom is an illusion.

This is true on all levels. Try not paying your taxes for 5 years and see how much freedom that

buys you. Try swearing at your principal in school and see how much freedom that buys you.

Try ignoring your boss at work and see how much freedom that gets you. Freedom is an illusion.

Jesus is saying in our text we have a choice of authorities... God or the Devil.

John 8: 44-45 states....

44You 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. 45Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!

It is not politically correct to believe in a real personal Devil. But we must recognize the truth... the person who spoke the most about a personal Devil was Jesus Christ. Satan desires to entrap you and me. That is his goal... eternal entrapment.

Jesus is telling the Jews there is no middle ground... you either are a child of God and follow Him or you are and child of the Devil. One Master loves you and desires what is best for you... the other master hates you and wants to hurt you... chose you Master.

Over the years I have worked with teens who are in rebellion. They rebel against parents... they rebel against school authorities.. They rebel against the church. I am always saddened by these kids because they almost always end up unhappy and enslaved. There is nothing more enslaving than a baby when you are 17. There is nothing more entrapping than an addiction when you are 19. There is nothing more entrapping than dropping out of school when

you are 16.

But the same is true with adults. There is nothing more entrapping than the pursuit of comfort and debt levels that overwhelm us. There is nothing more miserable than entrapment in a very unhappy marriage. There is nothing more entrapping than an addiction to alcohol or pornography when you are 45.

The Devil seeks to entrap. Sin is habit forming. The question is this: Who do you belong to? You do belong to someone... is it God, who loves you, or Satan, who seeks to destroy you?

Question # 4 Who do you hear? Jesus makes this wonderful statement in *John 8: 47*

47He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

Have you ever noticed the truth of selective hearing? Have you ever had a conversation like this. Your wife asks "Did you do this task?" You respond "Why would I do that?" And she says "Because this morning I asked you to do this task." And you say "I never heard you ask me to do that." Maybe you have never had a conversation like that... but I must admit... one or twice in my life I have had that conversation with Kim. And I have noticed I especially do not

hear Kim if she is asking me to do something that I do not really want to do.

The same is true in our relationship with Christ. Do you know Christ is constantly speaking to you. I really believe this. Christ is constantly speaking to us. Notice what our text says....**47He who belongs to God hears what God says.** God is speaking.

Do you remember the story of Elijah? Elijah was a prophet of God sent to confront king Ahab. King Ahab was a evil king as was trying to kill all the followers of Yahweh. Finally there is a great confrontation between the prophets of Baal and Elijah. God ignites the fires and consumes the Prophets of Baal... but then Jezebel, the wife of Ahab threatens to kill Elijah.

Elijah is afraid and runs for his life. He hides in a cave and he has this encounter with God in *1*

Kings 19: 11-13

The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

The Lord speaks to his children. Not in the earthquakes... not in the fire... not in the strong

winds... in that still small voice.

- God speaks in that gentle whisper in our ears as we are reading scripture
- God speaks in the voice of the Christian friend as he or she gently guides us.
- God speaks in the voice of that Sunday school teacher
- God speaks in the times of quiet prayer when the Holy Spirit put a thought in our minds
- God speaks by an accumulation of guidance in our lives that allows us to have “the mind of Christ.”

Again remember the words of Jesus...**47He who belongs to God hears what God says.**

This is a promise. As a child of God we can listen and we can hear as God speaks to us.

Examine yourself. Ask yourself these questions.....

Who is Jesus Christ? Is he the Great ‘I am’ in your life?

Who do you love? Do your live me more than these? The world... relationships... ambitions

Who do you belong to? Is your Master God or Satan... they are the only choices

Who do you hear? God is speaking.... are you listening?

AMEN

