

- I. Typical human behavior.
- A. John 8:48-59 . . . The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" [49] Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. [50] But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. [51] Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death." [52] 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.' [53] Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?" [54] 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'; [55] 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. [56] Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." [57] So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" [58] Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." [59] Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.
- B. Prayer
- II. Our thoughts, desires, words, and deeds identify who we are serving or who our father is
- A. John 8:48 . . . The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"
1. These Jews were acting like teenagers and unbelievers in that they were using scorn and ridicule, along with put-downs and derogatory attacks on Jesus' character and motives – and they were doing so for three primary reasons.
 - a. First, they wanted to discredit Him in the eyes of the people.
 - b. Second, they were trying to get Him to admit he was wrong and they were right.
 - c. Third, they wanted to get Him to stop saying and doing what they didn't want Him to say and do.

2. I said they were acting like teenagers and unbelievers because the Bible teaches Christians to behave far different than that.
 - a. For example, Christ teaches us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us – not treat them with scorn and contempt.
 - b. Paul teaches us that we are to bless those who mistreat and persecute us. And he goes on to say that we are to never return any sort of evil (be it in thought, word, or deed) for evil, but instead, where possible – so far as it depends on us – we are to be at peace with everyone.
 - c. Peter, in teaching us to think and behave like Jesus says that when we are reviled or vilified or treated with disrespect and contempt, we are NOT to revile or vilify or be contemptuous or disrespectful in return – but rather we are to trust God to bring truth and justice, in His time and in His way.
 - d. Now I want to say that we shouldn't be shocked when teenagers and unbelievers act like teens and unbelievers. But we should be deeply saddened when Christians – who have the life and power of God within them – do not act like Christians.
 - e. And one of the things that saddens me is the number of church attendees who listen to popular radio and TV shows with hosts who commonly use put-downs, scorn, ridicule, and derogatory comments to attack those who hold views different from theirs.
3. Now it is true, there is a time and place to speak honestly and directly to someone or to a group about their character or motives.
 - a. But even here we Christians must shun exaggerations, sarcasm, contempt, disrespect, and derogatory comments.
 - b. Instead, we are to speak the truth in a fair, respectful, and humble manner. And whatever we say ought to be said for the good of the person to whom we are speaking and for the good of those effected by the person to whom we are speaking.
 - c. In other words, it is good and right to speak honestly to someone about the true nature of their character or motives in an effort to call them to repentance and change – and so first and foremost for their sake and for the sake of everyone they effect.
4. In concluding this part of the teaching, I want to remind you of three scripture portions that address this area of communication. The first two verses address what we say, and the third addresses our attitude and mindset in relation to what we say.
 - a. Ephesians 4:29 . . . Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification (*that is, to*

build up, especially in a moral or spiritual sense) according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace (*be of benefit*) to those who hear.

- b. Colossians 4:6 . . . Let your speech always be with grace (*kind, merciful, respectful, and with an understanding of how hard it is to change one's bad behavior*), as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.
- c. Ephesians 4:31-32 . . . Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. [32] Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

B. John 8:49-51 . . . DSB Paraphrase: Jesus answered, “You may want to see me as having a demon and as being an ungodly Jew – like the Samaritans, but the truth is, my behavior is the result of honoring my Father – who is God, yet you are dishonoring me – the One who is doing what God tells Him to do. Therefore, though you may not be willing to think this honestly and this reasonably, the reality is, by dishonoring me you are dishonoring God. Now I want to be clear – I did not point this out in order to defend my honor or to gain praise and glory from you. I pointed this out to make it clear who you really are dishonoring – for it is God that you are dishonoring. This is not wise, for it is God who seeks my glory, and it is God who will judge you for dishonoring Me. However, to prove that I am who I say I am, anyone who lives according to my example and my teaching will never see death.

- 1. I want to go back to Jesus’ words, “I do not seek My glory.” In these words, Jesus sets the example of humility for all of us. But Jesus said more about being humble and humbly seeking God’s glory than this. For example, we read in –
 - a. John 6:38, “I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”
 - b. John 7:16" “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.”
 - c. John 8:28b, “I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.”
 - d. John 8:42b, “I have not even come on My own initiative, but [God] sent Me.”
- 2. And here are two scriptures about Christ’s humility from Paul.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”

- b. Philippians 2:5-8 . . . Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- 3. Just as Jesus made it His aim to be meek and humble, and just as Jesus took whatever praise or glory that came His way and pointed it towards God, and just as Jesus spoke and lived for the glory of God, so should we.
 - a. And just as Jesus waited for God to exalt and glorify Him, so should we. For the scripture says, “Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you” (James 4:10).
 - (1) This does not mean we are to humble ourselves in order to gain the glory, praise, and fame we seek – as if we could use God for our own purposes. Nor does this mean that God must exalt us as soon as we humble ourselves.
 - (2) Do not believe the lies of the world – any pursuit of self-glory, fame, and the praises of your fellow man is a selfish act of pride – even if pursued in an outwardly humble way.
 - b. Therefore, we Christians are to take the path of humility, and we are to leave any prospect of exaltation or glory or praise or honor in God’s hands. In other words, we are to let Him decide IF we are worthy of glory or praise or honor, and WHEN we will receive them.
- 4. For me, what Jesus said to His disciples when they were arguing over which of them was the greatest, is an excellent example of the mindset, attitudes, and behavior of the one who is humble.
 - a. And here is what Jesus said, “For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I (*I who am the greatest among you and therefore should be the one being served*), I am among you as the one who serves” (Luke 22:27).
 - b. Therefore, if you want to nurture true humility, and in so doing become more Christ-like, make it your aim to have the mindset, attitude, and behavior of one who is here to serve.
- 5. The last thing I want to point out from these verses are Jesus’ words in vs 51, “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.”

- a. Is it possible Jesus is saying that whoever lives according to His teachings will be given the gift of eternal life?
 - b. I think so, and the reason I think so is because when Jesus was asked by the rich young ruler what he must do to obtain eternal life, Jesus said, "If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:16-22).
 - c. And in His parable about the sheep and the goats, Jesus said it was those who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, gave shelter to the homeless, and visited the sick and the prisoners who will inherit eternal life (Matthew 25:31-46).
 - d. This does not mean that being saved by grace through faith is not also true. But what it does mean is that saving faith is more than mental assent to a truth, it is a way of thinking and living.
- C. John 8:52-53 . . . 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.' [53] Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?"
1. Once again, the Jews are asking Jesus to exalt and glorify Himself.
 2. And it isn't that Jesus didn't deserve to be exalted and glorified, but His commitment to humility and making God the focus of exaltation and glory prevented Him from doing so.
- D. John 8:54-55 . . . 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'; [55] 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.
1. Jesus said, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing or worthless." In other words, when we lift ourselves up, when we praise ourselves, when we demand respect, when we fight for acknowledgment and recognition, we are showing ourselves to be unworthy of glory, unworthy of praise, unworthy of respect, and unworthy of being acknowledged and recognized as someone important.
 2. The important truth here is that whatever we gain from self-exaltation, self-acclaim, or self-glorifying is as worthless as counterfeit money. In fact it is not only worthless, it damages your character and hurts your relationships with others. And so God warns us against such foolish behavior. For example, we read in –

- a. Proverbs 25:27 . . . It's not good to eat too much honey, and it's not good to seek [glory] for yourself.
 - b. Proverbs 27:2 . . . Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; [let] a stranger [praise you], and not your own lips.
 - c. 2 Corinthians 10:17-18 . . . He who boasts is to boast in the Lord. [18] For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.
 - d. Luke 14:11 . . . Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.
3. The last thing I want to say about these two verses deals with Jesus' response to these Jews who were claiming that Jehovah was their God. In response to their claim Jesus said – and I paraphrase, “If I say that I do not know [God], I will be [lying like you are lying when you say you know Him], but I do know Him and I keep His word.”
- a. My purposes in pointing this out is because Jesus was NOT accusing these Jews of misunderstanding or lacking knowledge regarding their claim to know God. Jesus said they were lying. Now it is true, we can lie unknowingly or accidentally, but that is very rare. Most often we lie knowingly and deliberately, with the intent to deceive – which is what these Jews were doing.
 - b. So how does this apply to us today? Many say they know God and worship God and are living for God. But we know from Jesus' warning – near the end of the Sermon on the Mount, that some of those who claim to be born again Christians will ACT shocked on judgment day when Jesus says, “I never knew you, Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness” (Matthew 7:21-23).
 - (1) Now I say they will ACT shocked because they have lied to themselves about their relationship to God for so long that they have come to believe their own lies.
 - (2) They could have know the truth about themselves and their relationship to God, if they wanted to. They could have prayed and thought about these things, carefully and seriously, if they wanted to. They could have examined their thoughts, desires, words, and deeds in light of God's word to see if they were living according to what a Christian is, if they wanted to. And if they wanted to, they could have compared themselves to Jesus Christ instead of to sinners worse than themselves in order to discern their true spiritual condition.
 - c. But they didn't, and that is my point. We have the means to know the truth about ourselves in relation to God, if we truly want to

know the truth. Now it is true that some folks need help thinking about this, and we should give them help, but my finding is that upon asking the right questions or pointing out the discrepancy between a person's words and their behavior, they know the truth. Their problem is not a lack of truth, it is a lack of honesty.

- E. John 8:56-58 . . . Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." [57] So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" [58] Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."
 - 1. "I am" is God's memorial name – that is, it is the name that when spoken should fill our thoughts with memories of God, His goodness, His provision, His protection, His salvation, His power, His love, and His presence with us and in us.
 - 2. And so, once again, Jesus is affirming His deity, that is, that He is God in human flesh, living among us as one of us – and yet still God.

III. Conclusion

- A. John 8:59 . . . Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.
 - 1. These appear to be the same Jews who John says, back in vs 30, had come to believe in Jesus. How could they go from believing to wanting to stone Him?
 - 2. I don't really know, and they are not here to tell us. But I do know that too many Christians elevate their favored theology above God and His word.
 - 3. In other words, there are those within the church who elevate their theology so high that should something about God or something in God's word not fit their theology, they decide in favor of their theology.
- B. And I suspect this is part of what was happening with these Jews. They wanted to believe in Jesus, but His words and the implications of His words did not fit into their theology. And since only one could be right, they chose their theology over God and His word. And they verified their choice by picking up stones to throw at Jesus.