

“Spiritual Family Resemblance”

May 18, 2014

Text: John 8:41-47

Although there are complicated philosophical theories about family resemblance, this morning we’re going to deal simply w/ the obvious fact that individuals w/i families produce other individuals who resemble themselves in various ways.

Whales produce whales, not sheep, & sheep don’t produce tangerines.

Like produces like—maybe not identically, but alike.

What we are on the inside and have received from others, reproduces itself outwardly in us.

Jesus applied this principle to the moral/spiritual realm of true prophets and false prophets, saying=>

“You will know them by their [spiritual] fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? / So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. / A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit” (Mt 7:16-18).

If you are a child of God, Scripture says you’ve become a partaker of God’s nature (II Pet 1:4) & will therefore produce good fruit.

Your new nature as God’s child will impact the way you conduct your life, because Scripture also says=>

“No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed [the divine life of God] abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (I Jn 3:9).

This doesn't mean he will become sinless like God, but that there will be a shift in his life away from sinfulness towards godliness.

His life will look more/more like God's life—not less.

But as we'll see in today's text, if you have not been born again, and are therefore not a child of God, you are by default, a child of the devil.

He is the source of your spiritual identity/nature/conduct.

In today's text, X will use this principle of family resemblance to explain to His listeners, that they cannot be God's children because they don't love Him or understand His words.

If they were God's children, they would both love Jesus and understand His words.

X will divide all mankind into 2 families—the divine family of God, and the Satanic family of the devil.

A person's nature is determined by whose family he belongs-to/comes-from, and who is the source of his spiritual nature.

* Jesus will say of Himself=> *“I proceeded forth and have come from [lit. out of] God.”*

* Regarding His listeners' origins/nature, however, Jesus will say=> *“You are of [again, out of] your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.”*

Here again, like produces like—like father, like son;
like mother, like daughter.

In today's text, we will find in God's family 2 resemblances to Himself; & in Satan's family, the same 2 resemblances to himself (Divine family resemblances and Satanic family resemblances)=>

Divine Family Resemblances

[John 8:41] (Jesus)=> *“You are doing the deeds of your father.”*

Here we see the principle: A person's nature is determined & driven by his spiritual father—either God/Satan.

His nature then becomes the prime determiner of his deeds.

Choose your spiritual father carefully.

All the rest of your life will flow out of that decision.

Jesus was speaking here to the same group of Jewish people He has been teaching throughout this chapter.

He had told them they were enslaved to their sins.

Then He'd added a statement which He now repeats here in

verse 41=> *“I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore **you also do the things which you heard from your father**” (8:38).*

X hasn't explained yet who He means by *“your father,”*

but as we're about to see, He means the devil is their spiritual father.

These Jewish folks had now begun to understand what Jesus was getting at, so they protested that God was their spiritual Father.

[Verse 41b]=> *“They said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication [sexual relations outside of marriage]; we have one Father: God.’”*

These people are prob. talking about spiritual (not literal) fornication (just as Jesus was)—a concept we find in the OT book of Hosea.

God had formed a covenant relationship w/ the Jewish people, which was the spiritual equivalent of a marriage.

In Hosea 3, God told the prophet Hosea=> *“Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods”* (Hos 3:1).

Hosea was married to a woman who hadn’t been faithful to him, & who had broken his heart, because he still loved her.

God wanted the Israelites, whom He still loved, to look at that tragic situation, & see how they had treated Him.

On a spiritual level, their worshiping other gods—false gods and idols—was the equivalent of what Hosea’s wife had done.

The Jews to whom Jesus was speaking were saying, “We haven’t done that; our religion is pure/undefiled, free of idols and spiritual fornication.”

They then went on to claim that their spiritual Father was God, and God alone—that there had been no spiritual desertion or unfaithfulness to God on their part.

Jesus is now going to show them why they are wrong—the evidence that proved their were wrong.

They have claimed that God is their spiritual Father, but Jesus will make it clear there's no family resemblance between Him/them spiritually for 2 reasons=>

* God's children love, like their Heavenly Father—these Jews didn't.

* God's children think like their Father—again, they didn't.

We praise God for Jewish people who have become true children of God by recognizing and believing in Jesus as their Messiah/Savior.

Sadly, however, most Jews don't believe, and are like the folks in this text.

Resemblance #1: God's children love like their Heavenly

Father

[Verse 42]=> *“Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from [again, “come out of”] God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.’”*

If the Jewish people to whom X was speaking were truly the children of God, they'd have loved Jesus, the Son of God.

They didn't—they loathed Him, & wanted to kill Him.

That proved conclusively they were not children of God.

God, by His very nature, is supremely loving.

John himself pointed that out in I Jn 4:8=> *“The one who*

does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

Having been born of God, & become a partaker of God’s nature, a child of God becomes loving like his Heavenly Father.

Rom 5:5=> *“The love of God has been poured out w/i our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”*

There is no way a believer, into whom God’s love has been poured, could not love One as lovely/beloved as God’s Son.

So ask yourself honestly=> “Do I love Jesus?”

True spiritual sonship is attested by likeness in character/conduct.

So if Jesus’ listeners were truly of/from God, they’d have loved God—and loved God’s Son, just as God Himself does.

If they claimed to love God, but not His Son, they would be lying, because the Bible says=> *“Whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him”* (I Jn 5:1).

Jesus said=> *“I proceeded forth and have come **from** God.”*

Not only that, but=> *“I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.”*

Jesus was the loving extension of God Himself to mankind, the radiance of God the Father’s glory, come down from heaven to earth.

* He was/is what God is, but translated into a human form we can see/watch/study/identify-with & love.

* The heavenly Source of X’s sojourn on earth, was God.

* Jesus was the divine reality of God among men, dwelling with them, & making Himself available to them.

You can take Jesus' words in vs 42, & with a slight change, apply them directly to yourself=> "If God is my Father, I will love Jesus."

Or—"If God is not my Father, I will not love Jesus";

Or—"If I do not love Jesus, it's because God is not my Father."

Why must Xns love Jesus?

1st, not to love Jesus, is to have no part in His salvation.

We can still be believers, even though we lack some of the Xn graces;

But love for X is an essential mark of our being born again.

Paul minced no words about this issue, writing, "*If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed*" (I Cor 16:22).

Jesus Himself declared the foremost commandment to be=>

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mt 22:37).

*If Jesus is our Savior/Lord, we should/must/will love Him.

*If Jesus has forgiven your sin, including you in the eternal benefits/blessings of His atoning death, you will gratefully/inevitably love Him for it.

You may think you're the best Xn you know but if you don't love X, He will someday tell you "*I never [even] knew you*" (Mt 7:23).

2nd, not to love Jesus would demonstrate inhuman degradation.

It is only rational to love the nobility of Someone who set aside the glories of heaven to sacrifice Himself for people who were His enemies.

The angels in heaven must mourn over anyone who has fallen so low, he feels no gratitude for such kindness.

Rational man admires that which is beautiful/good/right/true.

There is nothing on earth more beautiful/good/right/true than Jesus, the living embodiment of humble virtue. He is the essence of goodness/truth/life, so not to know & love Him, is to live w/o real life, or real happiness.

To know the revealed truth about Jesus, then turn one's back on Him, who alone can offer salvation to the soul, is to display the irrational depths to which human depravity/degradation can plunge.

In a sense, it is even lower than the most savage animal life, such as Nebuchadnezzar lived for 7 years, when he lost his mind.

It is a strange madness that persuades people it's better to feed on the dry/bitter ashes of this world's sin than to enjoy the pure/eternal delights of heaven.

3rd, not to love Jesus is to lack the motivation to live the Xn life.

The Apostle Paul said=> "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved*" (Acts 16:31); but "saved" from what?

Saved from sin & the old selfish life—saved unto holiness
of heaven.

But the motivation w/i us by which we seek to avoid sin & to live
holy lives for X's glory, is our love for our
Shepherd/Savior/Lord—Jesus X.

As Paul wrote, "*The love of Christ controls us*" (2 C. 5:14).

Our love for Jesus motivates us to resist temptation, &
impels us forward, towards an ever-holier and more
fruitful life.

It is the love of the sheep for his beloved/trustworthy
Shepherd.

Resemblance #2: God's children think like their Heavenly

Father

This is the 2nd piece of evidence Jesus cites to show His Jewish
audience there is no resemblance between them & God,
whom they have falsely claimed to be their spiritual Father.

Their thoughts were the opposite of His, and that left them
spiritually incapacitated, incapable of spiritual
perception/understanding.

[Verse 43] (Jesus)=> "*Why do you not **understand** what I am
saying? It is because you cannot hear My word.*"

**They could not hear/understand what Jesus said because they
chose not to—in their view, it was all
meaningless/valueless.**

They prob. even begrudged Him the time He spent teaching them the Truth, because they didn't think it really was the truth. They had no desire to hear it, & it just bored/annoyed them to listen to it.

This is always man's reaction to the Truth of God, until the H.S. opens his mind, enabling him to recognize its priceless value, as God's true Word, which can save his soul.

I Cor 2=> *"A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised"* (I Cor 2:14).

If you can't understand Jesus' words, it is imperative that you ask the Lord to enable you to do so, enlightening your mind, so you can appraise His Word correctly, and come to treasure it in your heart.

Someone: Why do you say it's imperative?

Because continued indifference to God's truth ultimately leads to permanent closure of the mind against it.

People who don't think/appraise God's words as He does, can end up paying the same heavy price for it, that Israel did for their indifference.

In Isa 6, God told Isaiah=> *"Go, & tell this people [Israel]: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' / **Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed"*** (Isa 6:9-10).

God was locking them out—locking them into the ignorance/indifference they had chosen for themselves.

Israel chose ignorance, so God rendered them insensitive, condemning them to their ignorance.

Thus we see the evidence Jesus graciously brought to bear, trying to persuade a group of Jewish people that they were not the children of God=>

They didn't love like God; nor did they think like God.

That realization could have become the 1st step in their becoming the children of God if they'd believed in X.

The only way for you to love/think like God, & thus to become His child, is to cry out to Jesus, asking Him to forgive your sins, to give you new/eternal life in Him, & to come into your heart forever through the H.S.

Satanic Family Resemblances

As I said earlier, everybody is either a child of God, or a child of Satan—there is no other possibility/alternative.

The folks in our text thought they were children of God, but actually their spiritual father was the devil.

They must have been shocked when Jesus told them so, but again, He supported His words w/ 2 lines of evidence (2 lines of evidence why this must be true)=>

- 1) Non-believers lust (not love, but lust) like the devil
- 2) Non-believers think like the devil.

Resemblance #1: Non-believers lust like their father, the devil

[Verse 44]=> “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the *desires* [*epithumias*—strong/passionate desires] of your father.”

Here, “*desires*” refers to passionate/evil desires—lusts.

Identity of passions/desires proves a person’s spiritual parentage, just as DNA proves physical parentage.

If his passions are holy, his Father is God.

If they are unholy, his spiritual father is the devil.

Either way, it’s always a case of “like father, like son.”

By “passions”/“lusts” I mean more than simple feelings.

I’m talking about evil on-going passions that drive/shape your whole life.

What are the devil’s lustful desires? To murder, & to lie.

[Verse 44b]=> “He was a *murderer* from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a *lie*, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a *liar* and the father of *lies*.”

Satan was a murderer from the very beginning.

He set his mind on killing/destroying mankind from the moment he realized that man had been created in God’s own image. He simply extended his hatred of God, to man.

I Pet 5:8=> “Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

So when he set out to deceive Eve in the Garden of Eden, there was a murderous attitude (a malicious “lust”) driving him.

God had told Adam=> *“From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die”* (Gen 2:17).

Satan overheard that, so he determined to persuade Adam/Eve to disobey God, & eat from the forbidden tree, bringing death on themselves—but also on the whole human race of their descendants, as well.

Unfortunately, this Satanic scheme proved very successful.

Rom 5:12=> *“Through one man sin entered into the world, & death through sin, & so **death** spread to **all men**.”*

This was the greatest mass murder in history, bringing death to every human being who would ever live—w/o exception.

We all die, because of Adam’s disobedience to God.

But why would Jesus call the Jews to whom He was talking murderers as well?

Because they wanted to kill Him, & ultimately they would do so.

They were murderers in their hearts even before they literally killed Jesus, because (as He explained)=> *“You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘**You shall not commit murder**’ & ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ / **But I say to you that everyone who is **angry** with his brother shall be **guilty** before the court”*** (Mt 5:21).

The inclination of God, & of His children is to give/save/support life.

The inclination of Satan & his people is to kill/destroy,
from abortion to genocide to killing of other people's
reputations w/ slander.

This Jewish crowd to whom X spoke were some of
Satan's killers-children.

But anyone who nurtures anger/hatred against others is no
less a murderer, & he too is a son of Satan.

Satan is also a liar, & he is the father of both lies/liars.

He destroyed Adam/Eve by lying to them.

God had told them, "*In the day that you eat from it [tree of
the knowledge of good/evil] you will surely die,*" but
Satan said "*You surely will not die!*" (Gen 2:17; 3:4).

Satan not only lied about disobeying God, he lied about
God Himself, implying that God was a liar.

Jesus said of Satan, "*He does not stand in the truth [the righteous
holy Truth of God] because there is no truth in him....
Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature.*"

Out of the abundance of sin/evil in his heart, Satan lies.

It's as natural for Satan to lie, as it is for you to breathe.

Heb 6:18 says it's impossible for God to lie, but for
Satan, it's impossible not to lie because he's by
nature a liar.

He still constantly disguises himself as an angel of light
(2 Cor 11:14), in another manifestation of his own
deceptive nature.

**Satan, the father of lies & the spiritual father of sinners,
defiles his own children's character, making them liars
too.**

Lying becomes so much a part of their character/identity, that it marks them as people doomed to God's eternal punishment, along w/ Satan, their father.

In Rev 21, "*all liars*" top the list of sinners, about whom God says=> "*Their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death*" (21:8).

The Jewish leaders to whom Jesus was speaking constantly displayed their lying nature w/ their hypocrisy and self-righteousness.

Resemblance #2: non-believers think like their father, the devil

Their lying nature is so attuned to Satan's lies/deception, that whenever they hear God's truth, they automatically react against it.

[Verse 45] (Jesus)=> "*But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.*"

"*The Truth*" is a whole universe of ideas/values/principles whose Source is the mind of God, & which was revealed by X.

These ideas include God's holiness, man's depravity, God's plan for redeeming fallen man from his sin through the atoning death of His Son, & His purpose to consummate all creation, for His own glory.

Man's proud heart rejects such notions because they offend his pride, leaving him at the mercy of a God he hates.

Therefore, he joins his spiritual father (Satan), continually committing himself as Adam/Eve did, to Satan's lies. Sinners are, from birth, people of the lie (Satan's great lie). Because Jesus told the truth to the Jewish sinners listening to Him, & they were inherently opposed to it, their kneejerk reaction was to reject both it/Him. God's children embrace His Truth; Satan's children hate it and reject it, specifically because it is the Truth. Pastors/preachers face this same challenge of declaring truth to people who don't want it, & don't want to hear it. We wait upon the H.S. to do His powerful/miraculous work of opening up closed hearts, even as we give them the Truth. We wait upon Him to draw people to X (6:44), & to illumine their hearts to the truth (1 Cor 2:12). We wait for God to teach their hearts, knowing that Jesus has promised=> *"Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me"* (Jn 6:45). Once that happens, a person becomes a child of God & begins to think like Him, no longer like Satan. He can now understand/learn the truth, & believe in Jesus. **Those to whom X was speaking, might have said, "The reason we don't believe You, is that You are not believable, so You're not credible for us."**

To preempt that invalid accusation, Jesus said=>

[Verse 46]=> *“Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?”*

**Jesus didn't ask if any of them thought He had sinned,
because He knew that some of them did.**

In Jn 5:18, they'd accused Him of breaking the Sabbath.
But the question Jesus asked was whether/not they thought they
could prove that He had sinned, & He asked it knowing
they never could, because He had never sinned.

If they could have, they would have, out of their hatred for
Him.

Here again is further proof that these were not children of God.

Their thinking was the opposite of God's, as if actual Truth
didn't matter—that only their own opinions mattered.

Scripture says of X that He=> *“committed no sin, nor was
any deceit found in His mouth”* (I Pet 2:22).

But that made no difference to these sinful people.

X asked, *“If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?”*

The answer was, *because* He spoke truth, & they were
liars—people of the lie.

Now Jesus draws this to a conclusion=>

[Verse 47]=> *“He who is of God hears the words of God; for this
reason you do not hear them, because **you are not of God.**”*

**Because the ability to hear/receive God's words depends on
an affinity of nature w/ God, these Jews couldn't do it.**

They were *“not of God”*—they did not draw their spiritual life
from (lit. “out of”) God.

That's why they were not born again—not children of God.
**They were in denial spiritually & it's possible that you may
be too.**

If you profess to believe all the words Jesus spoke in today's text,
and yet you don't love Jesus, but keep on clinging to your
sin, you're in denial, like these people we've read about.

You may agree/believe that Jesus was nailed to a cross for sin, &
that because He loves you, He tells you to forsake your sin.

But until you actually do that, & seek from Him God's grace,
looking for your happiness in His holiness (not your sin),
you're not really a child of God, any more than the Jews in
our text.

He patiently, kindly waits for you to place your faith in
Him and become a child of God.

But your just knowing these things, doesn't make you His
child.

Knowledge of the truth will make no difference to your soul until
it leads you to actively reach out to X by faith, ask for His
forgiveness/cleansing, & begin obeying Him as your Lord.
Unless that happens, X says to you what He said to the

Jews

“If I speak truth, why [don't you really] believe Me?”

I pray that the H.S. will open up your heart/mind to that Truth
today.

“Spiritual Family Resemblance”

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Text: John 8:41-47

1. If you are a child of God, Scripture says you have become a partaker of God’s nature; but if you have not been born again, and are therefore not a child of God, you are by default a child of the [12 devil].

Mt 7:16-18; II Pet 1:4; I Jn 3:9

In today’s text we will find in God’s family two resemblances to Himself; and in Satan’s family 2 resemblances to himself...

Divine Family Resemblances

[John 8:41]

2. A person’s nature is determined and driven by his spiritual father—either [8 God] or Satan.

Jn 8:38

[Verse 41b]

Hos 3:1

3. **The Jews to whom Jesus was speaking were saying that their spiritual Father was God; Jesus is now going to show them why they are [12 wrong]...**

1) God’s children love like their Heavenly Father

[Verse 42]

4. If the Jewish people to whom Christ was speaking were truly the children of God, they would have loved [12 Jesus], the Son of God.

I Jn 4:8; Rom 5:5; I Jn 5:1

Why must Xns love Jesus?

- *5. First, not to love Jesus is to have no [10 part] in His salvation.

I Cor 16:22; Mt 22:37; 7:23

- *6. Second, not to love Jesus would demonstrate inhuman [24 degradation].

- *7. Third, not to love Jesus is to lack the motivation to live the [20 Christian] life.

Acts 16:31; II Cor 5:14

2) God’s children think like their Heavenly Father

[Verse 43]

8. They could not hear and understand what Jesus said because they [12 chose] not to; in their view it was meaningless and valueless.

I Cor 2:14; Isa 6:9-10

Satanic Family Resemblances

9. The folks in our text thought they were children of God, but actually their spiritual father was the [12 devil].

1) Non-believers lust like their father, the devil

[Verse 44]

10. What are the devil's lustful desires? To murder and to [8 lie].

[Verse 44b]

Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12

11. Why would Jesus call the Jews to whom He was talking murderers? Because they wanted to [10 kill] Him.

Mt 5:21-22; Gen 2:17; 3:4; Heb 6:18; II Cor 11:14

12. Satan, the father of lies and the spiritual father of sinners, defiles his own children's character, making them [12 liars] too.

Rev 21:8

2) non-believers think like their father, the devil

[Verse 45]

13. Preachers face this same challenge of declaring truth to people who don't want to hear it; we wait upon the Holy Spirit to do His work of [16 opening] up closed hearts.

Jn 6:44; I Cor 2:12; Jn 6:45

[Verse 46]

Jn 5:18

14. These were not children of God; their thinking was the opposite of God's, as if actual [12 Truth] didn't matter.

I Pet 2:22

[Verse 47]

15. Knowledge of the truth will make no difference to your soul until it leads you to actively reach out to Christ by faith, ask for His forgiveness and cleansing, and begin [16 obeying] Him as your Lord.