

Children of the Devil

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 8:37-47
Preached on: Sunday, September 7, 2014

We return this morning to John's Gospel, chapter 8. We will be examining verses 37-47 and I've entitled my discourse to you this morning "Children of the Devil." Follow along as I read the text. John 8, beginning in verse 37, Jesus is speaking and says,

37 "I know that you are Abraham's offspring; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father." 39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. 40 But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. 41 You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: even God." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. 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. 45 But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not from God."

As we witness the beheadings of Americans and many others, especially Christians, including young children, we get a glimpse of something far more evil than the barbaric Islamic Jihadists who have functioned this way for millennia. We get a glimpse of the character of Satan. In Scripture, Satan is likened to a cunning serpent; a roaring lion seeking someone to devour; one with great power to perform signs and lying wonders; one who can transform himself as an angel of light; one who blinds and deceives, ensnares, afflicts and tempts. He is described as being presumptuous and proud, powerful, wicked, cynical, crafty, deceitful, fierce and cruel. His titles and names include: the accuser of the brethren; our adversary; the angel of the bottomless pit; Apollyon the destroyer; the distressing spirit. He's called a dragon; the enemy; the father of lies; a murderer; the prince of the power of the air; the ruler of the darkness of this world; ruler of the demons; ruler of this world; the serpent of old; the spirit who works in the sons of disobedience. He is called the tempter; the god of this age; the wicked one. Throughout Scripture, we find that his favorite weapon to thwart the purposes of God and destroy the

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people of God is false religion. Not only does he do this through the use of the doctrines of demons as demons influence wicked men, many times unwittingly to preach things and teach things that are lies, but he also uses these religious systems to silence, to torture, to persecute, to kill, those who belong to God.

Fox's Book of Martyrs chronicles some of his fiendish attacks on the kingdom of God and those who belong to it, people like us frankly. I think of the Emperor of Rome who put 80 Christian ministers aboard a ship and had it set on fire. We read of emperors feeding Christians to wild animals after first cutting out their tongues to silence them from singing praises to God before they died. Believers dipped in wax and used as lanterns to light Nero's gardens. Believers skinned alive and impaled. From the Catholic monarchs of the Spanish Inquisition through the period of the Reformation, true believers were bound and stung to death by wasps. We read of them being burned at the stake; beheaded; crucified; whipped to death; thrown into rivers with millstones around their neck; suspended high in chains until they died; placed in boiling water and in boiling oil; tortured on racks until their limbs were pulled apart; drowned. Hatred so intense that bones were taken out of their graves and burnt forty one years after their interment by the papists. Today there are an estimated 1,000 believers around the world every day that are martyred because of their faith in Christ.

In 1 John 5:19, John tells us that "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." No wonder we are warned in Ephesians 6 to wear the combat equipment that the Holy Spirit issues to every believer at the moment of salvation. Our two offensive weapons are: 1. the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God; 2. prayer. Jesus warned in Matthew 10, beginning in verse 16, ""Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves." He went on to say, "Beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles," and, "You will be hated by all on account of My name." Despite all of these clear warnings, there are increasing numbers of professing Christians who will go to any length to identify themselves with Satan's world system like fools of our day who believe you can negotiate with terrorists and appease the fascist ideology of Islam. They cannot see the spiritual danger. They do not understand what Paul warned in 2 Corinthians 10, beginning in verse 3, where he said, "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses." In other words, we are not bound by human limitations. "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." My friends, we cannot fight this enemy on our own. We need supernatural power.

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Now, I remind you of these things for two reasons: 1. because believers tend to either have an attitude of indifference towards this fierce battle and allow themselves to be conformed to this world system or they have an undue fascination with it, an undue fascination with demons. Both extremes are wrong and I might add, both are part of Satan's strategy to deceive us. In his great work "The Screwtape Letters," C. S. Lewis wrote, quote, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or magician with the same delight." Dear friends, as Christians we must take seriously the warning in Ephesian 6, beginning in verse 10 to "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil," while at the same time we must use our offensive weaponry: the word and prayer.

I might also remind you at the outset that Satan is ultimately a coward when confronted by the Spirit of God that dwells within us. That's why James says, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will," what? "He will flee from you." John tells us in 1 John 4:4, "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them," referring to the demonic perversions of false teachers that were deceiving the people of that day. "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." And Peter says in 1 Peter 5:9, "Resist him, firm in your faith."

The second reason I remind you of the reality of Satan and his strategies is to give you some context for what we see happening here in John 8. Behind all that we see in this historical narrative where these Jewish leaders are attacking Jesus is the unseen power of the prince of darkness, the inveterate enemy of Christ and all who belong to him. As we look at this, we see the moral likeness of his diabolical image stamped upon these adversaries of Jesus in the first century and, I might add, nothing has changed. Satan and his minions focus the majority of their energies in religious institutions including the Christian church. They are as aggressive in their activities and their attacks here at Calvary Bible Church as they are in any false religious system. This is what we see in the record of this conversation between Jesus and his pretentious, self-righteous, deceived Jewish kinsmen. Beloved, never underestimate the power of Satan to deceive and to destroy, to tempt you, to appeal to your flesh and cause you to fall prey to his influence but, likewise, never underestimate the power of the word and the power of prayer to send him running like a scalded dog.

I wish to approach this text by first focusing on two characteristics of the devil's children: 1. they are deceived by a false hope of security; 2. they bear the moral likeness of their faith, the devil. Then I wish to conclude with a strong warning or two to God's children.

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Let me remind you of the context. It is the close of a week-long celebration called the Feast of Tabernacles where Jesus has declared himself to be the light of the world. Obviously, a claim to deity; a claim that was immediately met with violent opposition. The Jewish leaders are like cornered cats and they're fighting back. The debate is fierce and Jesus continues to expose their religious pretensions, calling them slaves to sin yet promising in verse 36, "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."

Now, having based their self-professed spiritual freedom upon their status as Jews, the seed of Abraham in verse 33, Jesus now argues: 1. that they are deceived by a false hope of security. This, I might add, is the first characteristic of the devil's children. Notice verse 37, Jesus says, "I know that you are Abraham's offspring; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you." His point is: how can a person with a murderous heart claim to be a spiritual descendant of Abraham? Yes, you are physical descendants but that was never the sole criterion to be a real heir of Abraham. We see this in various passages of Scripture. For example, in Genesis 21 we have the story of Sarah. Do you remember how she demanded that Hagar and her son, Ishmael, that came from the loins of Abraham, be driven away. She said in verse 10, "for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac." Paul referred to this very thing in Romans 9, beginning in verse 6, "For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: 'Through Isaac your descendants will be named.'" Paul adds further insight to this in Romans 2, beginning in verse 28, he says, "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God." You realize that God even spoke of this through his prophet Jeremiah in chapter 9, verse 25 where he warned, "'Behold, the days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised - and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart.'"

So Jesus' point here is simply this: spiritual paternity is determined by believing the truth and living the truth. It is a matter of the heart. It's not a matter of physical lineage as the Jews thought. John tells us in 1 John 3:10, "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother." So Jesus continues to expose their false hope of security based solely upon their physical lineage. Again, it's a matter of the heart and he's saying, "You seek to kill me." Then he says something interesting, "because my word has no place in you." The concept there of "no place" has to do with no interest. There is no entrance. There is no way that progress can be made. The word cannot penetrate. It cannot go forward. It cannot advance in you. Think about it: right there before them stood the Incarnate Word, the Son of God.

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John has already dealt with this in his prologue. Remember in John 1:1, he says, "In the beginning was the Word." Late on in verse 14, he says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." "Word" is the divine Logos. It refers to a personal God with a personality. The one who is the source and revelation of truth and wisdom. Jesus was the word of God that became flesh to reveal the very mind and the heart of God. There he was standing right before them and they couldn't see it. They would not allow him entrance personally nor would they allow his word entrance into their heart. In John 1, beginning in verse 11, we read about this, "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him." But then he says this, "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." You see, these Jews were not like the Thessalonian believers of which Paul rejoiced. In 1 Thessalonians 2, beginning in verse 13, "when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe." Folks, this is always the mark of an unbeliever. You must remember this: they want nothing to do with the true word or the true Christ. They prefer their own version of both so they're suckers for satanic counterfeits, for doctrines of demons. They will make up stuff and they will conceal their ungodly lives with masks of religiosity.

I might add in all love as your pastor, this is what concerns me about some of you. I find it difficult and certainly a constant matter of prayer to see how that some of you can sit under the teaching of the word of God regularly, you can hear detailed, clear, compelling expositions of the word and yet we see no change in your life. There is something wrong. You're still living for yourself. As Jesus said, "The word has no place in you." It's like it's never entered you; it's never made progress in you. Some of you are like Teflon, nothing sticks. Or better yet, you're like titanium, nothing penetrates. Why? Is it because you're like those ancient Jews that you are spiritually dead? Jesus repeatedly warned about this. In John 12:48, he says, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him," here's what it is: "the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." My friends, what a man does with Jesus and his word determines his eternal destiny and his word is that of the Father's.

So Jesus continues this line of reasoning, exposing their granite indifference to the truth. In verse 38, he says, "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father." You see, Jesus is subtly moving them here towards their true parentage but they don't know it really as yet, I do not think. He's saying, "You falsely claim Abraham as your father but I truly claim God as my Father." We all know the analogy here; we all know that character and conduct proves one's parentage because we're all influenced by our fathers. We tend to do what we see them do and what we hear from them. Sometimes we laugh at the similarities. Other

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times, we grimace in embarrassment as we watch them do some of the things that we do that we wish we didn't do and they wouldn't do. But we can see the resemblance. We can hear the resemblance both good and bad.

That's Jesus' point here. Verse 39, "They answered and said to Him, 'Abraham is our father.'" This is typical of the self-righteous. They're saying basically, "Unlike the heathen that are morally and ethically and spiritually bankrupt, we measure up to Abraham. We are his spiritual children." But Jesus contradicts their claim. "Jesus said to them, 'If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.'" The point is: your character and your conduct is diametrically opposite of Abraham.

Verse 40, ""But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do." You see, the only crime that Jesus has committed was to tell them the truth, the truth that they did not want to hear. Unlike Jesus' enemies, you will recall that Abraham was a righteous man of extraordinary faith; a man who obeyed God; who followed God; who heard his voice; did what he said; obeyed his commands. In fact, God said of Abraham in Genesis 26:5, "Abraham obeyed me and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws." In Genesis 15:6, we read how that "Abraham believe in the Lord and he reckoned it to him as righteousness," unlike Jesus' adversaries who believed that they could earn their salvation by somehow keeping the law, doing good works and so forth. They could not grasp what Jesus has been telling them even in these preceding verses that they are slaves to their sin, that they're in bondage because of their very nature. They could not even acknowledge the sinfulness in their heart, a heart that was planning to murder Jesus. So obviously if you can't see your sin, you have no need for a Savior.

We see the same mindset in all false religious systems including, I might add, apostate Christian churches where sin is all too often dismissed or redefined. In fact, one of Satan's most effective strategies is to merge the church with the world so that genuine believers lose their distinctiveness so you really can't tell a Christian apart from a non-Christian. Satan is a genius at confusing what it means to really be a Christian. I was reading a guy who claims to be a believer, one of his blogs, and he was bragging about all of these things that he does just like the world and how he agrees with the things of the world and yet he brags about being a Christian. Instead of being a person who denies self and follows Christ as Jesus commanded, all too often we see people denying Christ and following self. Sadly folks, it's for this reason that very few churches can claim that they are a city set upon a hill because they can't be distinguished from the world.

So Satan's children are: 1. deceived by a false hope of security. 2. They bear the moral likeness of their father, the devil. We see this clearly in Jesus' adversaries. He says to them again in verse 41, "You are doing the deeds of your father." Now, what are some of

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those deeds? What has he said so far? "You seek to kill me. The word has no place in you. You do the things which you heard from your father," which cannot be Abraham or God so by process of elimination, the only other supernatural being that could be their spiritual father is Satan himself. So Jesus is saying that spiritually speaking they are illegitimate children. Having been bested in the argument, the Jews do what all defeated foes will do and that is resort to character assassination. Parents, if you look closely you will see this happening with your children in your home.

Verse 41b says this, "They said to Him, 'We were not born of fornication; we have one Father even God.'" I believe this to be a not so subtle attack on Jesus who many Jews believed was an illegitimate child but it also appears to be an act of final desperation. It's as if they're saying, "If you will not agree that Abraham was our father, then surely you will admit that God is our Father." Verse 42, "Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me.'" Jesus goes to the very heart of the issue and that is spiritual sonship is determined by a man's likeness to his father and since God the Father loves the Son, if God is truly your Father, you will love the Son as he does. A very simple argument.

Jesus goes on to say, "Jesus said to them, "for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me." You see, they not only did not love the Son, they wanted to kill him and his word had no place in them so their boast was without merit. Bottom line: God was not their spiritual Father. Jesus will later say in John 15:23, "He who hates Me hates My Father also."

Now, many people today make a similar unfounded claim regarding God as their spiritual Father. In fact, down through the centuries, it's been a part of Christian dogma in many realms of Christendom to teach the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. "We're all God's children," you hear people say. Well, physically yes but spiritually and morally, no. You see, only those who love the Son can make such a claim. Again, remember, the children of Satan are deceived by a false hope of security and this whole fatherhood of God myth offers tremendous false hope but they also bear the moral likeness of their father, the devil. Again, if you look at people who believe in this universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man, do you know what you're going to find as you talk with them, as you read what they write? As you read their doctrine, you will see that they hate Christ. His word has no place in them. They do the things which they hear from their father and they do not love the Son. Moreover, they are unable to understand, to receive, to believe, his word.

Notice what Jesus says in verse 43, "Why do you not understand what I am saying?" You know, it doesn't tell us here – by the way, John is not giving us the full discourse of everything that was said but I would imagine when Jesus said this, he just paused. Can't

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you see the penetrating eyes of the Son of God looking around at the people? "Why do you not understand what I am saying?" I'm sure there was silence as we have right now. Then Jesus answers his question, "It is because you cannot hear My word. You claim to be of the Father from whom I proceeded forth having been sent by him and my words are that of the Father, yet they are an utter mystery to you. They even offend you. Why is that?" He goes on to answer, "It is because you cannot hear My word." You see, they cannot grasp the true meaning of his word. That's the idea. They cannot comprehend the revelation of the Incarnate Word of God that stood in their midst.

Now, why can't they hear? He answers that question next in verse 44, it's because, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father." Now, what are some of those desires? Well, Jesus is going to go on to mention two that are particularly relevant to his opponents. 1. "He was a murderer from the beginning. You're like him. You've got murder in your heart. This is why you can't hear me." He was a murderer from the beginning. This is probably a reference to the successful temptation in the Garden when Satan robbed Adam of spiritual life and through him brought death to all men. Remember that great text in Romans 5:12?

But not only was he a murderer from the beginning, 2. he "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." My friends, think of this: even as Satan was successful in mass murder in the Garden, he was also successful in propagating the greatest and most universally damning lie in all of history. In the Garden, God said, "You will surely die if you disobey and eat this forbidden fruit," but Satan convinced Eve that "not only will you not die but your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil." Who wouldn't want that? My friend, if this is your father, you're going to be just like him and by your very nature you will not only have no desire to obey God, you will believe lies about Christ and lies about yourself. You will have no use for Christ; his word will have no place in you; you will do the things which you heard from your father; and you will have no love for the Son. Oh, you may believe in him. You may go to church. You may do external things. But in your heart, you do not love him.

Verse 45, Jesus says, "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me." Again, "You are murderers. You are liars like your father, the devil. You deceive others. You deceive yourself." D. A. Carson captures this perfectly when he says, quote, "The children of God will so love the truth that they will believe in Jesus. The children of the devil will be so characterized by lies that they will not be able to accept the truth precisely because it is the truth." This is so obvious. Think about it today in our culture: despite overwhelmingly compelling evidence, the natural man continues to suppress the truth in unrighteousness, the truth of Christ, the truth of the Gospel and instead he will believe the most ridiculous and evil absurdities. The Psalmist says that the natural man delights in lies. I'll give you

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just a few examples: the insanity of political correctness; the myth that somehow homosexuality is not a choice; the myth of global warming; the idea that nothing plus billions of years equals everything; that man is still evolving from apes and he is merely an animal with no purpose, no destiny, no dignity, no likeness to his Creator which has given rise to the animal rights movement that says that humans are no better than animals therefore it's okay to kill unborn and unwanted infants. "There is no such thing as God," or others will say, "Well, we're all god." Others will say, "Well, when you die, you're reincarnated so don't eat the cows." You go to places that call themselves Christian churches and you see people slain in the spirit, drunk in the spirit, laughing in the spirit, barking in the spirit. Why do people believe such insane things? Such grotesque absurdities? It's because man loves lies and they hate the truth because they are of their father, the devil, and want to do the desires of their father. Psalm 58:3, we read that, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth." This helps us understand what Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:4. No wonder they will want to "have their ears tickled so they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths." No wonder they are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," 2 Timothy 3:7.

You might say, "Alright, this helps me understand unbelief but what about belief? How can a man ever believe the truth?" Well, Jesus has already dealt with this earlier in John's Gospel and he will again later. I might add, this is not the emphasis, the thrust of this passage, but you will recall in John 3 he said that a man must be born again. God's got to do something supernaturally to him. In John 6, he speaks of the Father's wooing love. The Father must draw all that he has given to the Son in eternity past. He talks about how they must be taught by God and so forth. But here in John 8, Jesus is underscoring the need for supernatural intervention at the very nature of man in order for him to believe because he is of his father, the devil. God must change the heart. Pure water cannot flow from a poisoned well. Only God can deliver us from the domain of darkness, as Paul says in Colossians 1:13. He is the only one that can transfer us to the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Now, Jesus knew that his scathing remarks concerning their true parentage pierced their hearts. He knows their heart and he knew that this would animate them to even further violence. You see, his words stripped off their self-righteous robes and there they stood naked and angry. So in anticipation of this, he asked them two very important rhetorical questions in verse 46: first he says, "Which one of you convicts me of sin?" I would imagine there was another long pause at this point and I would also imagine there was a lot of silence. You see, he was and is the sinless Son of God. Hebrews 7:26 describes him as "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners." Then he asks them another question. He says, "If I speak truth, why do you not believe me?" And his reasoning, I

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believe, is as follows: "If I'm without sin, I obviously speak the truth so why do you not believe me? If you being the greatest theologians in Israel cannot garner sufficient and compelling evidence to convict me of sin before God's holy bar of justice, then shouldn't you question yourselves?"

Then he says in 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." You are not of God. As I meditated upon this, I was thinking there are really one of two reasons why a person is not of God. 1. You are not of God by eternal election. John 10:26 we read, "You do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." Or it may be that you are not of God because you have not been born of God. Jesus said in John 3:3, "Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jesus says in John 18:37, "Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

Once again folks, never forget this. This is such an amazing thing, such an humbling truth: apart from the regenerating and indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, none of us would ever be able to hear and receive the word of life. Peter makes this clear in 2 Peter 1:3, he says, "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness." His divine power, not man's good works, not man's free will, not man's moral and ethical behavior. It's his divine power. "Has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." Folks, this is such an incredibly somber scene as Jesus confronts this unwitting children of Satan. I want to ask you to ask yourself: do I share these same characteristics? If so, if you look close into your life, you will see that somewhere along the line, you have developed a false hope of security and secondly, you bear the moral likeness of your father, the devil, and unless you repent, unless you place your faith in Christ, you will perish in your sins and share your father's fate in an eternal hell.

I want to close this morning with just a couple brief but very strong warnings to God's children. The first one is simply this: folks, guard your love for Christ. We tend to love ourselves. We tend to love the world. Jesus has already said, "If God were your Father, you would love me." Do you love Christ? Jesus said in John 14:15, "If you love me, keep My commandments." The list is long but the supreme commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself. Are those two commands a priority in your life? You say, "Well, how can you tell if a person truly loves Christ?" Well, let me ask you this: how can you tell if a person truly loves someone else? How can you tell that? I think it's pretty obvious. They want to spend time with them. They want to serve them. My friend, do you enjoy spending time alone with

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the Lord your God? Do you have a passion to serve him? Or do you organize your life around your own pleasures and the demands of others? If I can put it real practically: if you find more joy in Facebook and tv than communing with God in private worship, there is something tragically wrong with your faith.

You know, it's so easy to leave your first love, isn't it? Like the saints at Ephesus? As we look at Scripture, we see that if you have a love for Christ, you will thirst for him, meaning you will long for intimate fellowship. You will long to commune with him through prayer and private worship in the word. You'll have a Bible that's kind of worn out. You'll have devotional books that are all dog-eared. You'll probably have a chair some place that's kind of worn out because that's where you sit and spend time with the Lord. My, it is so easy to leave your first love. You know, spiritual thirst is very much like physical thirst: you realize that physically if you stop drinking water, your natural thirst will diminish which can be very dangerous but then if you force yourself to start drinking, your thirst will increase. The same is true spiritually, folks. The more you drink of Christ, the more of him you will want. If you have no love for Christ, you won't love the things he loves and hates the things he hates. It will be just the opposite. But if you love him, you will love those things that he loves. It's interesting, since God has magnified his word above all his name, Psalm 138:2, you will love his word. You will love his church. You will love his people. You will have a love for the lost.

John tells us that if you have left your first love in Revelation 2:5, he says this, "Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first." Do you remember that season in your life when you first came to Christ and you couldn't get enough of his word? You couldn't wait to get alone with the Lord and pray, commune with him? You would never miss a service or a time of fellowship because you loved being with your church family? You couldn't wait to tell others about Christ? Then somewhere along the line, you stopped drinking and you no longer have the thirst. Oh dear Christian, guard your love for Christ.

Secondly, never underestimate the power of Satan to deceive and destroy you and your family. Let me make this real specific: if you have unsaved children in your house, I want you to understand on the basis of the word of God, right now they are presently in bondage to their sin nature, they are incarcerated in Satan's kingdom of darkness and right now, he is scheming to give them ways to offer them a false hope of security. They do not see their sin in contrast to the holiness of God and the question is: what are you doing to combat that? What are you doing that might facilitate that lie? You realize that right now you're unsaved children bear the moral likeness of their father, the devil, and given enough time, they will seek to kill Jesus, the word will have no place in them and they will just the things which they heard from their father. They won't love Jesus. They will have no ability to understand, receive and believe the word. They will want to do the

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Children of the Devil

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 8:37-47

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desires of their father who is a murderer, opposed to the truth, a liar, that resulted in hostile unbelief. And you're going to give them unsupervised access to the internet? And to television? Do you know who is in control of all of that? Have you lost your mind? Do you love your children? What kind of father lets his child play with a cobra? What mother would allow her child to go into the house of a pedophile? Satan blinds, deceives and destroys and you're not going to make it a priority to lead your family in worship? You're not going to make sure that your children are in Sunday School? In Awana? In student ministries? And everything that the church offers?

Dear Christian, wake up. ISIS is at your door. Put on the armor of God. Go to war. Take up the sword which is the word of God. Start marching into battle on your knees. Fight the good fight of faith. Get serious about knowing and teaching and living the word of God and bring up your children in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord. Never forget that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. They need to be immersed in Gospel truth constantly. Unleash the Gospel on them because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. To the Jew first and also the Greek.

Then may I close by exhorting you to take advantage, you personally, of every opportunity to learn the word of God and live the word of God that we offer here at Calvary Bible Church. You know, this is so obvious that it might be easy to disregard. As we close, I want to ask you to take seriously your responsibility to be equipped and to minister to your family through the things that we offer here.

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