

As you read...

Today we find Jesus having a very lengthy conversation with the Pharisees about His origins. They are determined to figure out where Jesus came from, so Jesus spends much time talking about His relationship with the Father.

John 1 set up for us this conversation as it laid out for us the reality that Jesus was both God and with God from the very beginning. It's a chapter that invites a discussion of the nature of God and this understanding we have of the Trinity.

Similarly, Jesus conversation here with the Pharisees leads us down similar roads. He talks about His relationship with the Father. He acknowledges that they work together and that the Father has sent Him. We hear once again about light in darkness as well as the light of life that is found in Jesus, the light of the world.

Here's the takeaway I hope you have today as you read this conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees: *Jesus is simply speaking the truth about who He is.*

He is the Son who was sent by the Father. He is God Himself. For this reason, what He says is true and powerful. Life and light are found in Him and Him alone. Darkness and death are significantly weaker in comparison and will never be victorious.

At the conclusion of the reading today the Pharisees become angry to the point of wanting to stone Jesus on the spot. Why? Because He claimed to be who He was: God Himself, the great "I Am."

Read [John 8:12-59](#)

The Light of the World

*¹² Jesus spoke to them again: “I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of **life**.”*

¹³ So the Pharisees said to him, “You are testifying about yourself. Your testimony is not valid.”

¹⁴ “Even if I testify about myself,” Jesus replied, “My testimony is true, because I know where I came from and where I’m going. But you don’t know where I come from or where I’m going. ¹⁵ You judge by human standards. I judge no one. ¹⁶ And if I do judge, my judgment is true, because it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷ Even in your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. ¹⁸ I am the one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me.”

¹⁹ Then they asked him, “Where is your Father?”

“You know neither me nor my Father,” Jesus answered. “If you knew me, you would also know my Father.” ²⁰ He spoke these words by the treasury, while teaching in the temple. But no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

Jesus Predicts His Departure

²¹ Then he said to them again, “I’m going away; you will look for me, and you will **die** in your sin. Where I’m going, you cannot come.”

²² So the Jews said again, “He won’t kill himself, will he, since he says, ‘Where I’m going, you cannot come?’”

²³ “You are from below,” he told them, “I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ Therefore I told you that you will **die** in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am he, you will **die** in your sins.”

²⁵ “Who are you?” they questioned.

“Exactly what I’ve been telling you from the very beginning,” Jesus told them. ²⁶ “I have many things to say and to judge about you, but the one who sent me is true, and what I have heard from him—these things I tell the world.”

²⁷ They did not know he was speaking to them about the Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own. But just as the Father taught me, I say these things. ²⁹ The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him.”

Truth and Freedom

³⁰ *As he was saying these things, many believed in him.*

³¹ *Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples. ³² You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

³³ *“We are descendants of Abraham,” they answered him, “and we have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, ‘You will become free?’”*

³⁴ *Jesus responded, “Truly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵ A slave does not remain in the household forever, but a son does remain forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free. ³⁷ I know you are descendants of Abraham, but you are trying to kill me because my word has no place among you. ³⁸ I speak what I have seen in the presence of the Father; so then, you do what you have heard from your father.”*

³⁹ *“Our father is Abraham,” they replied.*

“If you were Abraham’s children,” Jesus told them, “you would do what Abraham did. ⁴⁰ But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. ⁴¹ You’re doing what your father does.”

“We weren’t born of sexual immorality,” they said. “We have one Father—God.”

42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, because I came from God and I am here. For I didn’t come on my own, but he sent me. 43 Why don’t you understand what I say? Because you cannot listen to my word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. 46 Who among you can convict me of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? 47 The one who is from God listens to God’s words. This is why you don’t listen, because you are not from God.”

Jesus and Abraham

48 The Jews responded to him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you’re a Samaritan and have a demon?”

*49 “I do not have a demon,” Jesus answered. “On the contrary, I honor my Father and you dishonor me. 50 I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and judges. 51 Truly I tell you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see **death**.”*

*52 Then the Jews said, “Now we know you have a demon. Abraham **died** and so did the prophets. You say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste **death**.’ 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham who **died**? And the prophets **died**. Who do you claim to be?”*

⁵⁴ “If I glorify myself,” Jesus answered, “my glory is nothing. My Father—about whom you say, ‘He is our God’—he is the one who glorifies me. ⁵⁵ You do not know him, but I know him. If I were to say I don’t know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷ The Jews replied, “You aren’t fifty years old yet, and you’ve seen Abraham?”

⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.”

⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden and went out of the temple.

Questions

1. Jesus using the words “I am” was no accident (verse 58). He was recalling for the Pharisees Moses’ encounter with God in the burning bush (Exodus 3). Where else do you see Jesus subtly using the phrase “I am” in John’s gospel or even as our reading starts today?
2. Interestingly enough, in our reading for today Jesus speaks more about death than He does life. Why do you think that is? How can speaking about death be helpful when you want people to know about the life that is found in Jesus?

3. The Pharisees have a difficult time accepting what Jesus has to say as truth. How about you? What parts of what Jesus says are most challenging to you?

Write a list and take that to a trusted parent, mentor, pastor, adult, or friend that shares your Christian faith and have a conversation with them about the claims Jesus makes that seem challenging.

A moment to pray.

Almighty God, You are truly incredible and complex. Yet You have made me in Your image as a reflection of who You are and Your purpose in this world. Give me courage to continue to pursue You and have conversations that remind me of the meaning You bring to this world and to my life. Thank You for letting me be a part of Your much bigger work in this world. In Jesus' name. Amen.