

Holy Father, You who were pictured in Abraham of old who upon your command was willing to sacrifice his only son of promise, protect us from the father of lies who seeks to murder not to save, so that we hear Your Word of truth and believe in the merits of Your Son's spotless sacrifice alone, and that we may always possess the promise of the eternal inheritance in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

[The Jews in Jerusalem] answered Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of My own accord, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do 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 lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

In Christ Jesus, whose inheritance was not squandered on Himself, but freely shared so that we might become co-heirs with Him, dear fellow-redeemed:

Hopefully we can all look back and say that we have had wonderfully self-sacrificing earthly fathers, whose love for us was obvious no matter their many foibles and failures as sinners. Although we must confess on account of our foibles and failures as sinners, we at times provoked some of their ill behavior. But sadly we also may know of fathers who were inexcusably self-serving abusers.

All of us have two spiritual fathers: father Satan from our first birth and God the Father from our rebirth. Jesus deals with sinners in our text, who denied having the first father and subsequently did not rightly know the second either. We do well to recognize both and their relationship to us. For you see - **While the Father of Lies Murders, the Father of Truth Sacrifices.**

### I

This conversation Jesus was having with these Jerusalem Jews about fathers started when He told them: "If you abide in my Word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth

will set you free.’ They answered Him, ‘We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it you say, “You will become free?”’” The notion that they needed to be set free would mean they were subject to bondage, which they denied. Of course at the time of this incident they were subject to the Roman empire and even to the Herodians. What about the Egyptians? The Babylonians? Frankly there were even lesser powers, which over their long rebellious history had subjected them under their authority as well. Many of these enslavements as the people of God were due to their idolatrous unfaithfulness.

They lived in denial. They claimed that Abraham was their true father, but then Jesus pointed out they did not do what Abraham had done, namely believe in Him as the Christ sent by God. Then when Jesus insisted they did the works of their real father, that is the devil, they responded by saying: “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.”

But their actions proved them to be the offspring of Satan, they lied about Jesus and they sought to murder Him. So Jesus clearly accused them of being the spawn of Satan: “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do 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 lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Think of the whopper the devil told Eve – *“if you eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you will surely **not** die!”* He directly contradicted the Word of Truth spoken to Adam and Eve and death entered them immediately. While they did not fall over dead immediately, death began its process of destruction. So truly Satan was a liar and a murderer from the very beginning. And because Jesus’ hearers that day refused to hear His Word of truth and live, they perpetuated the work of the murderous father of lies.

You and I had this same father when we were born into this world. We desperately needed to be born again, replacing the father of lies with the Father of truth, whose Word gives life. We too would be in denial except God the Holy Spirit led us to confess our lost condition and believe in the One whom the Father has sent for us. Many of your neighbors live in this denial and remain victims of the murderous father of lies. You may speak with the same frustration as did Jesus who asked: “Why do you not understand what I say?” He gave this answer: “It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.”

If they had really known Abraham as they claimed, they would have seen in him as a picture of God the Father. When Abraham was told to take his son, his only son, Isaac and sacrifice him to the Lord, this foreshadowed the heavenly Father's eager willingness to sacrifice His only begotten Son for the sins of all people. Imagine how torn up inside Abraham was ascending the mountain with his son carrying the wood on his back, bringing the fire, the rope and knife as well. How could this son of the promise in his old age be put to death by the command of the very one who had promised? We are told that Abraham willingly went through with all this preparation in the sure hope of the resurrection, in that if God would require Isaac to die before he could pass on the seed of the coming Christ then He would raise him back to life to fulfill what God had promised.

Jesus said to these unbelieving Jews: "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but He sent me." Jesus, the Son of God came not to fulfill some selfish desire, but the loving will of God the Father to save all of sinful mankind. The Father of truth puts on full display His love through sacrifice, the suffering and death of His Son.

We speculate based on good tradition that the very mountain Abraham and Isaac ascended so long ago, was Mt. Calvary, the very place Jesus would bear the wooden altar of His sacrifice. There the fire of God's eternal anger for all our sins would roast His Son so that His cries of "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" and "I thirst." have been heard to our day followed by the declaration of finality "It is finished." The perfect sacrifice for us was made and by rising again it was found to be accepted by the Father for all our sins.

The father of lies stills misleads many away from their only help through the sacrifice of the Father of truth. You and I are vulnerable to the many lies that pour forth from the pit of hell. They are lies, which convince sinners to justify their sins. They are lies, which drive the self-righteous sinner also into despair.

Think of some of the ways you can get tricked. Perhaps you say you are really not gossiping because what you have said is true. Perhaps you say in order to make your adversary cease speaking mean things you must strike back with vile words. Perhaps, when you are approached by a beggar, before you hear him or her utter a word you have already judged that you will give them no money. Your attitude is shaped by stingy greed. Then, when you get enslaved by sin in these and many other ways, you lose all hope of being forgiven thinking God has cut you off from His love and fall even farther into justifying sin.

The abuse perpetrated by the father of lies is real and eternally murderous. Look what he did to Judas through the sin of greed! But the Father of truth wants you to trust His loving and sacrificial heart. Those sins, all your sins, have been paid for by the sacrifice of His perfect Son for you. This holy sacrifice means life for you, eternal life. Hear the Father of truth, trust Him and live.

Remember the prodigal son, who squandered his inheritance on riotous living? It was only when he remembered the loving sacrificial heart of his father that enabled him to return. He returned knowing that he did not deserve to be called a son but was prepared to be taken back as a servant in his father's household. The Father seeing him afar off did not wait, but ran to greet him with hugs and kisses. The father stopped his son in mid sentence and ordered that a party be arranged for this son who had been lost, but was now found.

So it is with you, my fellow redeemed. With the father of lies your sin would separate you from the rich inheritance of the heavenly kingdom to die perpetually in a distant place. But with the Father of truth His sacrificial love restores you as His beloved child with an everlasting inheritance shared with the only begotten Son. This is most certainly true!