

## DISCERNING LIES

Have you believed any lies lately? Someone told you something and you believed it to be true. So, you acted accordingly, only to learn that what you were told was a lie! How foolish you felt. How embarrassed you were! What anger that lie has stirred in you! Jesus said that Satan is the "father of lies."

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. Good morning and welcome to this program.

Jesus was in a heated conversation with some religious people in Jerusalem. The leaders of the Jewish high court were seeking a way to ensnare Jesus. They wanted to make Jesus look ridiculous in the eyes of the people. But beyond that, they considered Jesus such a threat to their government that they were looking for an opportunity to kill him. However, while Jesus was talking with them, many of the people began to believe in him.

"So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "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 that you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father." They 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." The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?" (John 8:31-53 ESV)

Neighbor, who is your father, Satan or God? Why would anyone desire to believe a lie? Many times the truth gets in the way of our desires! So, we believe a lie because the lie permits us to do what we want to do with a clear conscience. This is the reason Satan can so easily deceive us.

Jesus told those people that Satan was a murderer from the beginning. We cannot listen to and live by Satan's lies and expect to "never taste death." The "death" Jesus was talking about was the same death God spoke of when He warned Adam and Eve "the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:17) Of course, God was warning the first couple about the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil." Do you remember the beginning of Sin?

Adam and Eve were living in the Garden of Eden. From the trees in that garden grew every kind of fruit imaginable. Adam and Eve had God's permission to eat of any tree in the garden with the exception of one. God wished to spare them the burden of deciphering between good and evil. So He commanded the couple to NOT eat of one particular tree. There were two trees that stood in the middle of the Garden. There in the middle stood the Tree of Life; its fruit could sustain that fleshly man and woman forever in the flesh. They would never know death, that is, they would never experience the separation of body and spirit, nor would they experience the spiritual separation between them and the eternal God. However, there was also in the middle a tree that God called the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil." The fruit of that tree would not only bring disobedience but also the burden of discovery upon the man and woman. God warned Adam, and

through him Eve also, that the day they rebelled and ate of that tree they would surely die. (Genesis 2:15-17)

The first murderer we read about in the Bible was Adam's son Cain. Cain killed his brother Abel. But actually, Satan was the first murderer. Satan killed Adam and Eve by lying to Eve. He deceived her! Eve believed Satan's lie, partook of the forbidden fruit, and gave it also to her husband Adam. By their disobedience sin and its corollary death came into the world. And so humans have had to discern between good and evil ever since. And humans do a very poor job of discerning between good and evil! We can get them confused. We can easily believe lies; and the reason is because so often the lie conforms to our wishes!

The old prophet Isaiah wrote, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right!" ([Isaiah 5:20-23 ESV](#)) Have you ever acquitted the guilty for a bribe?

Lies masquerade as facts. How else can you believe something that's false? Lies masquerade as facts. Evil pretends to be goodness. Darkness pretends to be light. Something bitter pretends to be sweet. And who can believe such falseness? Why those who are wise in their own eyes and smart in their own eyes! Friends, **facts** are the truth in any circumstance. We may not like those facts, but facts are the truth! It is a fact that Jesus came from God. The Pharisees told the lie that Jesus was a Samaritan, a glutton and a drunk, a demon possessed man who associated with harlots and tax collectors. But it made no difference how many people believed the lies of the Pharisees. The truth stands forever in the facts of Jesus' teaching and the miracles that confirmed His teaching. Another Pharisee named Nicodemus did not believe the lies. He came to Jesus one night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." ([John 3:2 ESV](#)) Nicodemus saw through the lies of his comrades to the facts of Jesus' miracles.

When you have the facts then you have the truth. When you believe the facts then you believe the truth and can live your life accordingly. Jesus told those Jewish people "You are doing the works your father did." "You are of your father

the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires." "Because I tell the truth you do not believe me. If I tell the truth why do you not believe me?" "The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." (John 8:42-47) To be "of God" is simply to desire what God desires. Jesus said, "Whoever is of God hears the words of God." (John 8:47) Have you ever said something like this: "I do not want to hear it!"? You did not want to "hear it" because what someone was telling you ran counter to what you wanted to do or believe. The people listening to Jesus accused Jesus of having a demon. They did not want to hear the truth about their sins. What about you, neighbor? Have you believed any lies lately? Do you want to know the truth about your sins and about the forgiveness that Jesus brings from God? Sometimes we prefer believing a lie rather than the truth! You see, the lie is more in line with our desires. Friends, no matter how much we would desire that the lie is the truth, it will never be the truth!

Jesus taught that there is coming a day when everyone will be judged according to truth. "And Jesus cried out and said, '**Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.**'" (John 12:44-48 ESV) Friends, we need to believe and practice the truth we have heard from Jesus Christ. We will be judged by it!

The psalmist sang, "Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long." (Psalm 25:5) Another Psalm reads, "Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling!" (Psalms 43:3 ESV) When God sent Jesus He **did** send out His light and His truth. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the father except by me." (John 14:6) The reason that no one can come to the father except through Jesus is because Jesus is the only one who has purchased for us the forgiveness of our sins. To come to the Father, we must have *forgiveness*. Paul was speaking to some Christian men when he commanded, "Take heed ... to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28 KJV) Visit a church of Christ near you to learn more about the truth of Jesus Christ and His wonderful forgiveness.