

**Catching Up With The Radical Rabbi Sermon Series**  
**"The Radical Rabbi Who Thought He Was God"**  
*by Rev. John C. Tittle*

**Gospel Reading:** John 8:48-59 NRSV

<sup>48</sup> The Jews answered Jesus, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" <sup>49</sup> He answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. <sup>50</sup> Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and he is the judge. <sup>51</sup> Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death." <sup>52</sup> The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, 'Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.'" <sup>53</sup> Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?" <sup>54</sup> Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, 'He is our God,' <sup>55</sup> though you do not know him. But I know him; if I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word. <sup>56</sup> Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad." <sup>57</sup> Then the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" <sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am." <sup>59</sup> So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What jumps out at you about this passage?
2. What do you think of this statement: *Jesus gave us only three options to decide who he is, either a Mad Man, a Con Man, or the God Man.* Who do you say Jesus is? What evidence do you have to back up your belief?
3. Many people view Jesus as a great moral teacher who lived a long time ago. Why is this view of Jesus so natural and easy to accept?
4. The Judaeans called Jesus a Samaritan and said that he had a demon. Why is it so easy for us to demonize and resort to name-calling toward those different from us, or those who we disagree with, or those we don't understand?
5. What do you think of Jesus' response to their strong words and violent actions? Do you think he was guilty of name-calling too?
6. If someone today claimed that they were God, how would you test their claims? What would it take to believe in them?
7. What would it take for you to want to cast stones at someone?
8. How does it free us to live for God's glory and not worry about our own?
9. Jesus said, "before Abraham was, I am." How would you describe what he was saying in your own words?
10. Our Christian faith teaches that Jesus is both human and God. How does both the humanity and divinity of Christ help us?
11. How do you think Jesus escaped in this scene from the religious leaders who wanted to stone him?