I. **INTRO:**

A. John Uriarte (Operation Military Assist); Frank Chaput (Mstr Gunnery Sgt USMC Retired)

B. **Memorial Day** = *a day to honor those who have fought and died for our freedom.*

C. **For many Americans**, Memorial Day means the 1st 3-day weekend of summer filled with bbq’s/picnics w/family & friends, or going to the hardware store for some project.

D. **For other Americans**, the day is Sacred. A time to pay tribute to fallen war heroes. They feel the impact of a soldier's name you might casually glance at in your local newspaper. That name is their mom or dad, aunt or uncle, brother or sister, daughter or son.

1. **No matter what your view is on war**, it is important to **honor** U.S. soldiers who have paid the ultimate price!

2. **So before we light our grills & grab our hammers, let's pause to remember those bravehearts who died to protect our freedoms** - including our freedom to worship God freely today.
   
   a) Abraham Lincoln said, Any nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure.

E. **We would like to recognize, honor, & pray for...**

1. Families who have **had a family member killed** while serving in the US armed forces...please stand & remain standing!

2. Families who **currently have a family member serving** in the US armed forces...please stand & remain standing!

3. Anyone who is **presently serving** or who **has served** in the US armed forces...please stand & remain standing! {Let’s pray}

F. We come w/hearts filled w/ gratitude & appreciation for those who have served in the past. We pray for protection and peace, courage & strength for those who serve now. We pray for military families: for the sacrifices they make in the time spent away from their soldier; for the families to have a double portion of strength, courage & blessings.

G. **Intro Story** - Did you hear last week the news headlines: “Baby Girls Switched at Birth: Truth Comes Out 56 Years Later”?

1. In 1953 2 baby girls(Kay Rene Reed Qualls & DeeAnn Angell Shafer) were born in Pioneer Hospital in eastern Oregon. They grew up happily, got married, had kids of their own & became grandparents. Then last summer their lives were turned upside down.
2. They were **mistakenly switched at birth**, when the nurses bathed the 2 bald, 6 pound babies, somehow mixing them up in the bath water and returned the babies to the wrong mothers.

3. Everything changed one day when an 86-year old woman residing in a nursing home, phoned Kay Rene’s brother, **Bobby Reed** asking to see him, because she had something to get off her chest.
   
a) Can you imagine living for 56 years only to find out you’re in the wrong family? Happens all the time spiritually! Most people think they are automatically born into God’s family, & only if they are “really bad” then they might be removed. But actually, the opposite is true. No one is born into God’s family automatically, You must be born a 2nd time. Entering His family is a choice.

II. **Paternity Test!**

   A. **My Dad Can Beat Up Your Dad!** (37-47)

   B. (37) Remember the Sunday School song, *Father Abraham had many Seeds/Sons?*
      
      1. This section is concerned with the real meaning of parentage.
      2. Jesus makes a distinction between Abraham’s fleshly seed (37) & Abraham’s spiritual children (39).

   C. My Word has no place in you - :-) (NIV) *you have no room for my word.*
      
      1. (Message Bible) *my message hasn’t yet penetrated your thick skulls.*
      2. Does His word have a place in you? Have residence in you?
      
      a) Big difference between a temp shelter & permanent residence.

   D. (44) If Satan becomes your father, **hell** will be your home.
      
      1. The Jewish officials could trace their lineage back to Abraham, but their spiritual lineage goes all the way back to the Devil himself!¹
         
         a) The serpent of old had enticed them away from the true God with the seductive apple of religiosity.
         
         b) But under the Devil’s clerical garb, he is both a murderer & a liar. And, like father, like son. They twisted the truth about Jesus & were plotting to kill Him(40).

   E. **Who Do You Make Yourself Out To Be?** (48-59)

   F. (51) Never see death - So, what did He mean? (i.e. Never know the experience of that death, which is God’s judgment on sin) - Read 5:24.

   G. (55) **Liar** - you guys are a chip off the ol’ block! (44)

¹ Chuck Swindoll; John; pg.36
H. (56) How did Abraham see Jesus’ day? - Abraham in faith saw ahead to the day of Christ’s incarnation, & anticipated His saving work.²

I. (58) Jesus gives one of the most important answers to any question posed to Him in the gospel of John. (from vs.53b Who do You make Yourself out to be?)

1. The only other time the phrase “I AM” was used to describe someone was in Ex.3:14, where God claimed that name for Himself.
   a) No identity statement could be clearer.
   b) Jesus claimed to be God Himself in human form.

J. I Am - the divine name as in Ex.3 (read vs.13-15)

1. Perhaps Moses knew of God as the distant Sovereign, but not as the immanent God who cares for & loves His chosen ones.

2. This is God’s self-identification, He names Himself! It is the announcement of a present God. [YHWH-Jehovah-Yahweh (Tetragrammaton)]
   a) It was held by the later Jews to be so sacred that it was never pronounced except by the high priest on the great Day of Atonement. Whenever this name occurred they pronounced it, as they still do, “Adonai” (i.e., Lord), thus using another word in its stead.

3. The title God gives Himself is one of wondrous significance.³

4. It is God’s personality. (ἐγώ εἰμι)
   a) Over the veiled statue of the Egyptian Isis was the famous inscription, “I am the thing that is, & was, & shall be.” But to Israel God was a living personality, distinct from all other beings & things, & transcendent above them -not it, but He!⁴
   b) When He says, I AM, it encompasses them all! He is the always-present God.
   
   (1) Jehovah in taking this title, was providing His people w/a blank check, to be filled up to any amount!

5. When you trace your finger across the pages of the OT, you'll find the names of God are intimately connected with the various needs of those whom He was in relation with.
   a) Jehovah-jireh (the Lord will Provide/given by Abr, ram caught in thicket);
      Jehovah-nissi (the Lord my banner/given by Moses, after defeat Amalekites, lifted arms);
      Jehovah-shalom (the Lord send peace/given by Gideon at altar where Angel appeared);
      Jehovah-shammah (the Lord is there/given by Ezek for Jerusalem).
      Jehovah-tsidkenu (the Lord our righteousness/given by Jeremiah name for Messiah).
   b) All of these gracious titles were unfolded to meet the needs of His people.

² Search The Scriptures; Jn.8:30-59; Bottom Notes.
³ This next section, portions are adapted from C.H. Macintosh Notes on Exodus; pg.52
⁴ F.B.Meyer; Exodus; Vol.1; pg.50
K. If we want life, Christ says, *I AM the life*; If we want righteousness, *He is, the Lord our Righteousness*; If we want peace, *He is our Peace*; if we want wisdom, sanctification, & redemption, He is made all these unto us.

1. What a profound & adorable name..I AM!

2. Every believer can rejoice in these words falling from Jesus lips...

L. I AM the **Bread of Life** (to satisfy your deep spiritual needs); I AM the **Light of the world** (so you don’t have to walk in darkness); I AM the **Door** (to those seeking entrance); I AM the **Good Shepherd** (to all sheep who have lost their way); I AM the **Res & the Life** (to those desiring true life, before & after death); I AM the **Way, Truth, Life** (to those who desire direction, wisdom, & the abundant life); I AM the **True Vine** (to those branches that will remain attached) (Then in Rev) I AM the **Alpha & Omega** (& everything in between); I AM the **Bright & Morning Star** (to those that need a beginning of a **bright new day**!)

M. Jesus made it clear: **His origin** was divine(42); **His mission** was God planned(40); **His purpose** was God willed(55). **His claim** was God Himself(58)!

N. (59) The Jews did not respond with **words** but picked up **stones** to kill Him for blasphemy. *(That’s how blasphemy was dealt with)*

1. But it was not up to the crowd to determine the timing of Jesus’ death!

O. So, Have you taken a **Paternity Test**?

P. 1 Jn.3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

1. We normally think of **devil children** as, “Rosemary’s baby, Damien in The Omen, or Linda Blair in The Exorcist”. But the bible places all unbelievers in that category.

2. **Children of the devil** don’t represent grossly immoral people; they represent **self-righteous religious people**, who are deluded into an **outward form of godliness** that lacks power of the gospel.

3. John already established we are **born into** God’s family as one of His children not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (1:13) - **not by pedigree, proximity, or credentials**.

4. So, Who’s your Father?

Q. To take a **Paternity Test** this morning. Simply submit yourself to a **DNA testing**.

1. **Die to self; Nip sin** in the bud; **Accept Christ as Lord & Savior**.

2. **Your 2 choices:** cast stones or cast yourself at the feet of Jesus!