

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 1ST-2ND, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

BROTHERS (JOHN 7:1-13)

In light of the scandal that closed chapter 6, John tells us that Jesus traveled to Galilee because of those who wanted to kill Him (vs. 1).

- Chapter 7 presumably takes place some 6 months after chapter 6 during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkoth, September/October).
- During Sukkoth, Jewish families camp out in temporary shelters to remember God's faithfulness to Israel in the wilderness.

During this holiday, Jesus' brothers (half-brothers who were all younger than and didn't yet believe in Him) started to pressure Him into making a public display on a larger platform (in Judea/Jerusalem).

- They also seemed quite cynical of Jesus' motivations for ministry: they suggested that Jesus was simply seeking public recognition (vs. 4).

Jesus responds that they can come and go as they like, but things are different for Jesus—He was submitted to a will, a timing, and a plan that was not of this world (vs. 6).

- His brothers didn't have death threats hanging over their heads, but Jesus did—and it was because He lived and preached a message of truth the world hated because it exposed sin (vs. 7).
- This is also the life of Christian discipleship!

Jesus refused to go with His brothers in one of the large processions of travelers from Galilee to Jerusalem at feast time (vs. 8–9).

- Instead, Jesus traveled alone in private to go to the festival (vs. 10).
- There was quite a bit of buzz and conversation about the topic of Jesus at this festival.
- Many were looking for Him, and everyone seemed to have a different opinion of Him (vs. 11–12).

Because of fear of the Jewish religious leaders, no one talked publicly about Jesus (vs. 13).

- Jesus is the most talked about figure in all of human history—and many seem to have their own opinions regarding Him.
- Many people debate the finer points of His identity because they don't want to submit to Jesus.
- Some downright hate Jesus because His teaching exposes our dirtiness as sinners (vs. 7).

JUDGE RIGHTLY (JOHN 7:14-24)

In verse 14, Jesus begins a public teaching appearance in the temple court.

- Jesus' teaching style is unlike the other rabbis in that He doesn't quote any other sources besides the law itself: "He spoke as one with authority" (Matt. 7:29).
- This kind of teaching style was amazingly unique and authoritative, but to the Jewish religious leaders, they saw it as an indicting statement on His lack of academic credentials (vs. 15).

To answer His skeptics, Jesus didn't point to His credentials but to His doctrine (vs. 16).

- If the leaders listened carefully to the doctrine of Jesus, they'd know that it was all rooted in the Scriptures and that it was from God.
- The reason they couldn't get past Jesus' lack of academic credentials and hear the truth Jesus proclaimed had everything to do with the posture of their hearts.

"IF ANYONE WANTS TO DO HIS WILL..." (VS. 17)

The reason these leaders didn't recognize God's truth through Jesus' teaching was because their hearts were unwilling to submit to God.

- God doesn't show us His will for our lives just to satisfy our curiosity—when we're prepared to do His will, then in God's perfect timing, we will know it. Spiritual understanding is connected to obedience!

In contrast to the religious leaders, Jesus wasn't seeking His own glory—only the glory of the Father (vs. 18).

- These leaders who wanted to kill Him were not only self-seeking, they were also hypocritical.
- They wanted to kill Jesus because they said He broke a law by healing on the sabbath—when murder was clearly against the law of Moses (vs. 19).

Painted into a corner, these religious leaders accuse Jesus of having a demon (vs. 20).

- Jesus observes that infants were sometimes circumcised on the Sabbath (if the 8th day after the birth was a Sabbath), so why was He wrong for healing on that day? (vs. 22–23).
- Religious rules create hypocrisy and judgment based on outward appearances—the ministry of Jesus was so much more than this (vs. 24).

ORIGIN STORY (JOHN 7:25-36)

Some people from Jerusalem knew the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus, yet Jesus was speaking publicly, and the authorities weren't stopping Him (vs. 25–26).

- Some thought, "maybe that's because they know He's the Messiah!"
- But others said, "We know Jesus is from Nazareth, but the Messiah is supposed to just appear from nowhere!" (vs. 27).

Many thought they knew who Jesus was and where He came from, but they didn't know that He was truly sent by God because they didn't know God (vs. 28–29).

- Many in our day think they know who Jesus is because they know some facts about Him—but they don't truly know Him, and they don't have a relationship with God through Him.
- Many have misconceptions about Him.

As Jesus is speaking, His message is polarizing this crowd—many are believing in Him (vs. 31), and yet many are trying to seize and silence Him (vs. 30).

- Yet, they can't because His hour had not yet come.
- No matter how much resistance, hatred, and attempts to silence the message of Jesus there are in any nation, culture, place, or generation—Jesus can't be stopped.

As Jesus spoke, the people were drawn to faith in Him, and their logic for believing was very clear:

"When the Messiah comes, he won't perform more than signs than this man has done, will he?" (vs. 31).

- What more could one possibly expect from another Messiah? No one can do more than Jesus did, and He deserves all of our allegiance and faith in Him as Lord.

As the religious leaders sent officers to arrest Jesus, Jesus assured them that He was only going to be there a short time and then He was going away to the one who sent Him—they'd look for Him but wouldn't be able to find Him (vs. 33–34).

- So...is Jesus going outside of Israel to the Greeks (Gentiles)? They were puzzled by His words and couldn't understand them (vs. 35–36).
- Understanding begins in the heart.

LIVING WATER (JOHN 7:37-44)

On the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the high priest would lead a procession to the pool of Siloam.

- Before the congregation, he would dip a pitcher into the pool, and the crowd would return to the temple, chanting Psalms like Psalm 118:25 "Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success!"
- When the crowd arrived at the temple, the high priest would raise the pitcher high and pour its contents on the ground.

This was all done to remember Moses striking the rock in the wilderness and the provision of water for the people of God.

- Amid the fanfare and pageantry of this last and most important day, Jesus stands up and cries out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink!" (vs. 37).
- If they'll come to Him, He'll give them the living water of the Spirit (vs. 38–39).

You can't live without water—but physical water is a symbol of the spiritual water we truly need.

- We need water for life: we must have the Spirit of God to give us eternal, spiritual life.
- We need water for satisfaction: the Spirit of God quenches the thirst and desire of every longing human heart.
- We need water for fruitfulness: the Spirit of God enables us to bear spiritual fruit.

You cannot be confronted by the truth and offer of Jesus and remain neutral: you must come to a place of decision.

- Some in the crowd said Jesus was "the Prophet," others said He was the Messiah (vs. 40–41).
- Some in the crowd begin to argue about where He was from—the Messiah can't come from Galilee, and yet Jesus was from there (vs. 42).

Apparently, some people didn't know Jesus was actually born in Bethlehem, the prophesied birthplace of the Messiah.

- The crowd was divided because of Jesus—because the presence of truth is always divisive.
- The presence of truth exposes error and falsehood.
- Some wanted to seize Jesus to shut Him up, but they didn't—it seemed as if an invisible Hand kept them from doing anything (vs. 44).

REJECTION (JOHN 7:45-52)

The temple guards who had been sent to arrest Jesus came back to the chief priests and Pharisees empty-handed (vs. 45).

- These guards were so amazed by Jesus' teaching they couldn't arrest Him (vs. 46)!
- The Pharisees are irate! Have their own guards been deceived just like the crowds?
- The Pharisees have not given an official "endorsement" of Jesus.

By their logic, because they, as Pharisees, had not officially endorsed Jesus, anyone who followed Him didn't know the law and was accursed (vs. 49).

- "None of the smart or spiritual people follow Jesus, so if you do, you're not smart and you're not spiritual!"
- Little do they know that within their own ranks, there actually are followers of Jesus.

Nicodemus (John 3) begins to try and reason with the religious leaders by warning them of judging Jesus too quickly (vs. 50–51).

- According to their own law, no one can be condemned without a hearing (Ex. 23:1; Deut. 1:16).
- The Pharisees reply that Nicodemus needs to go read His Bible—no prophet (especially not THE prophet) comes from Galilee!

ACTUALLY...

The prophet Jonah came from Gathhepher, a town in the region of Galilee.

- Some even believe that Elijah came from the region of Galilee, as did Nahum and Hosea.
- Their contempt for Jesus and all He stood for made them lose sight of all factual realities.
- They simply REFUSED to believe that Jesus could be the Messiah.

OBEDIENCE TO JESUS PRECEDES UNDERSTANDING.

- Submission to Jesus comes before understanding His perfect will for us—the gateway to a mind that knows God is a heart that's surrendered to God (vs. 17).
- Until we're willing to not be (glod), we'll never understand or admit our need for God.
- Often our intellectual debates against Jesus are excuses for our unwilling hearts.

THE OFFER OF JESUS REQUIRES DECISION.

- The promise of Jesus to quench the thirst of every human heart if we would simply come to Him in obedient, surrendered faith is divisive; even in a world that is exceptionally thirsty.
- You cannot be confronted by the truth and offer of Jesus and remain neutral: you must come to a place of decision.
- What water are you drinking?

THE IDENTITY OF JESUS REQUIRES DEVOTION.

- What messiah(s) out there perform more mighty works than Jesus?
- Which ones heal more broken hearts, atone and forgive more sin/guilt/shame, free from more addictions, restore more marriages, and satisfy more thirsty souls than Jesus?
- There is living water that can satisfy your thirst and produce fruit in your life...are you thirsty?