

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #34

John 7:10-24

Years ago when I worked at Kregel Publications, there was an older man who worked in the editorial department who was a retired pastor. He told me a story of a time when he first went to a church and preached a message on the blood of Jesus Christ. He said that afternoon, there was a knock at the door of his house and he went to the door and one of his board members was there, livid mad. He said the man started shaking his fist in his face and warned him, don't you ever speak on the blood of Jesus Christ again. Well this man looked him straight in the eye and told him, you will probably hear something about the blood of Christ almost every Sunday because I intend to keep preaching it - so get your fist out of my face. He said the man left and he couldn't believe it. He was in a church preaching truth and a key member of his board hated him and hated the truth.

That is the way it has always been and it certainly is the way it was for Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ went to the religious center of the world - the temple of Jerusalem, and taught the truth of God, very few accepted His teaching, in fact, most wanted to kill Him. Christ was preaching pure truth and the self-righteous religious crowd of Pharisees, hated it and hated Him. The lesson to be seen in this section is this:

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD AND WHEN HE WENT TO THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM AND TAUGHT THE TRUTH OF GOD MOST HATED IT AND HATED HIM.

The truth of God is explosive. If the Word of God is properly handled, it will quickly rip into the souls of phony religious people and cause major explosions. They not only hate hearing the truth, they actually hate the one presenting the truth and in the case of Jesus Christ, they wanted Him dead. That did not in any way prevent Christ from presenting truth. He kept firing the truth regardless of how people responded. That is clearly the lesson we see here.

Now there are three key observations we want to make:

OBSERVATION #1 – Jesus Christ goes to the feast in Jerusalem privately, not publicly. 7:10

Without any fanfare or public notoriety, Jesus Christ went to Jerusalem. Make no mistake about this - no one told Jesus Christ what to do or when to do it. He was God in the flesh and He did whatever He wanted to do and what He did do was always right. We may recall that His brothers, who were not believers, wanted Christ to go to the feast and do something spectacular and public to prove He was who He claimed to be. However, Christ refused because it was not time yet for Him to display Himself in all of His glory (7:8). The timing of God is not the timing of most people. God does things His way, not our way.

When the text says Christ went “in secret,” it does not mean He hid Himself, because He went to the temple to teach. What it means is He arrived without any fanfare or publicity. He went privately. He did not go for the purpose of showing Himself as the Messiah, which is what His brothers had wanted Him to do (7:3-4).

God's timing of things is something the majority cannot see. When it comes time for you to do something for God, it may be that very few will be able to see it or sense it.

OBSERVATION #2 – The religious Jews were looking for Jesus at the feast. 7:11-13

The religious Jews knew that Christ would be at this feast, because they knew He kept the Law perfectly. Now verse 12 informs us that Jesus Christ was the talk of the town. The crowd was buzzing with their various opinions about Jesus Christ. There was real tension about Him. But notice they were not talking about Christ in any way that was ultimately true. As near as I can determine from chapter 7, there were five views of Jesus floating around the Jewish world:

- 1) Some said He was a good man - 7:12a;
- 2) Some said He was seductively leading people astray - 7:12b;
- 3) Some said He was demonic - 7:20;
- 4) Some said He was a prophet - 7:40;
- 5) Some said He was the most powerful speaker they had ever heard - 7:46.

This becomes the question for every individual to this very day - “What do you say about Jesus Christ?” “What do you think about Him?” “Who was He, who is He?” “Have you really come to terms with the fact that He is God and your only Savior?”

The thing I want you to see is that Jesus Christ divided the nation. He did not unite it. They were divided about Him because He was God and they were not right with God. Jesus Christ is still in the business of dividing people. He can divide a family. His name does not cause unity. God’s truth does not please the majority.

What we must realize is that opponents of Jesus Christ do not accept who He is and what He says. Obviously someone is right and someone is wrong. Both can’t be right. So a person must make a choice. You either accept Him or you accept various public views about Him.

Practically speaking if you stand up for Jesus Christ on your job, in your school, in your neighborhood, or at family gatherings and you present the real truth of God, just watch what you’ll see happen. You will probably not be very popular. In fact, you will be hated by some and questioned by others. People will sense there is a real power about you, but they will not admit to nor submit to the truth.

Now notice verse 13, no one was speaking out in the open positively about Jesus Christ, because they feared what the religious Jews might do. The religious Jews threatened any person who supported Jesus Christ. Fear is still a motivator. Fear often keeps people from speaking up for Jesus Christ. Fear is often the reason people don’t witness or testify for Him.

Do you see how Satan works? He works against you by creating a negative perspective behind your back. Satan always does his greatest work behind your back, not out in the open.

OBSERVATION #3 – Jesus Christ teaches in the temple publicly. 7:14-24 (14-15)

More than one commentator has observed that very often you find Jesus Christ teaching, which shows every one of us how important it is to teach the Word of God. That is what Jesus always did.

Jesus Christ was a remarkable teacher. Imagine having God teaching you things pertaining to God. When the Jews heard Him (v. 15), they knew they were listening to a powerful teacher, but they couldn't figure out how He knew so much. He had a unique ability and power to unravel Scripture in a way that came to life. He could interpret passages with pinpoint accuracy and the Scriptures had a practical life force when He taught them.

They couldn't figure out where He was getting His power. He had never gone to college. He had no rabbinical training. He never sat under their teaching. But never had a man spoke with the power and authority of Jesus Christ (v. 46). The Sanhedrin made the same charge against Peter and John (Acts 4:13). How can these men be such powerful teachers, when they didn't go through our formal system of training?

We do not know specifically what He was teaching, but it obviously was powerful teaching. The fact is, **God's truth may not always be accepted, but it will always be powerful.** When you saturate yourself with the Scriptures, the more powerful you do become. When you present God's truth, you may not be accepted, but power will be sensed.

Now there are seven teachings that Christ gives to this crowd that we need to see:

(Teaching #1) - Behind the teaching of Jesus Christ was a Divine Source. 7:16

This is very important. Jesus Christ did not come to this earth to teach whatever He wanted to teach - although He certainly was in position to do that. He came to teach what God the Father wanted taught. Jesus Christ got His teaching curriculum from God the Father, directly. The Apostle Paul would say that He got His Gospel from God the Son, directly. **Make no mistake about this - if you reject the Grace message of Jesus Christ, you are rejecting God.**

It is a shame that many Bible teachers today don't think in these terms about their teaching. Many think they are supposed to teach what they want to teach. So they pick a few verses or a subject and off they go. Their call is to teach what God wants them to teach. They are called to "study to rightly divide or accurately handle the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

(Teaching #2) - To really know God's truth, one must first be willing to do the will of God. 7:17

This is a key litmus test - you must be "willing" to do God's will in order to grasp God's truth. This simple formula has never been superceded. This is a very important verse to grasp. When it comes to human knowledge you first must know something before you can understand something. When it comes to God's knowledge, you first must live something before you can understand something. You must be willing to obey God's Word before you can know and understand God's Word. When one desires to do God's will, one begins to grasp God's Word. A critical key to you being able to grasp the truth of God is being willing to do the will of God. As you focus on doing God's will with your life, God's truth will become clearer and clearer to you. Don't miss what Jesus says about this - if you are willing to do God's will, you "shall" know, not "might" know God's truth. You "shall" know true teaching. Any person who really desires to do God's will, will be given a great level of understanding by God and a great level of sensitivity to God's Word.

How can you determine if teaching is true? You purpose to do God's will and you'll grow. You will hear truth and the truth will ring true within your soul. Doctrine will come to life for you. Books of the Bible will come alive for one on the path of doing God's will. Dr. H. A. Ironside said if you have difficulty believing the truth of God, or you don't see the importance of sound Biblical exposition, probably you are not really obeying God and are hiding some sin in your life. There is a good chance you are really not willing to do God's will.

(Teaching #3) - Some who teach are motivated by a desire to glorify themselves. 7:18a

You will get a bigger and better following if you seek to glorify yourself. When you watch or listen to many ministers on TV, most are not interested in accurately laying open God's Word. Most aren't interested in glorifying God, but glorifying themselves.

There are people who teach strange things because it arrogantly lets them hold themselves up as some spiritual giant for all the people to see. Such a person is not driven by a passion to communicate God's truth; he is driven by his own self-glorifying agenda.

There are some telltale signs that a teacher is interested in glorifying himself with his teaching:

- 1) His teaching will typically never offend, but will make people feel good.
- 2) His teaching will not be true to the text or the context.
- 3) His teaching will be based on his experiences or credentials.
- 4) His teaching does not appear to glorify and elevate God, but himself or man.
- 5) His teaching leaves most people feeling good about him, never upset.

(Teaching #4) - One who teaches to glorify God will be righteous and true. 7:18b

Christ of course is the only One in whom there was no unrighteousness. His teaching was true, His motivation for teaching was true and His goal was to glorify God.

I wish more and more teachers would ask themselves this question - what is it that motivates me to teach? Is it completely and honestly for the purpose of communicating accurately the truth of God in order to glorify Him? Also, we need to realize that we are called to handle God's truth in a righteous and true way. God's truth is confrontational. It does reprove and rebuke.

(Teaching #5) - You are hypocrites concerning your false belief that you keep the law. 7:19

A self-glorifying person thinks he can keep the law. He never judges himself in a righteous and true way. He lives in some fantasy world with a righteousness that is not real.

These religious Jews had convinced themselves that they kept the O.T. Law of Moses which was an outright lie. None of them kept it. In fact, they were seeking to kill Jesus Christ when the law says you shall not kill (Exodus 20:13).

Religious phonies are not true and righteous in their relationship with God. They live a lie. They pretend to be pious and spiritual, but in all reality, they live with a self deception. I knew of a situation in which one Pharisee-type took a strong stand against throwing a ball on Sunday, yet he was having an affair with a woman, not his wife, on other days of the week. He was a religious fraud. Jesus Christ came to solve the law problem and He did solve it on the cross (Col. 2:14).

In **verse 20**, the multitude responded to this great teacher by saying have you lost your mind. Are you demonic or demented - who wants you dead? These people actually have the audacity to call Jesus Christ demonic. Make no mistake about this, when it comes to teaching - if it is false teaching it is demonic, if it is true teaching it is Divine.

(Teaching #6) - You hypocritically and justifiably break the law but then you hate and condemn others who have done good things. 7:21-23

Now I want us to observe that Jesus connects the matter of “circumcision” to the Law of Moses. There are no theological ramifications of circumcision for the Church Age today. Circumcision simply becomes a choice made by a parent medically concerning a child. But under the O.T. Law, circumcision was a major issue. Now the hatred for Jesus Christ began in Jerusalem when He dared to heal a man on the Sabbath Day (5:16). It was this that caused the religious Jews to want to kill Christ (5:18).

Now Christ beats them at their own game. Circumcision originally was a sign given to Abraham, but it became part of the law under Moses. A baby was to be circumcised on the eighth day. Now if that day fell on the Sabbath day, a day in which there was to be no work, the Jews would still circumcise the baby. Christ said, you do that, but you are angry with Me for healing a man on the Sabbath.

J. Vernon McGee said he knew of many people who would say you cannot do this or that on Sunday, but would sit down at Sunday dinner and murder the minister and that was okay. Religious phonies cannot get the hypocritical beam out of their own eyes.

(Teaching #7) - Judgment is never to be according to appearance but according to what is righteous. 7:24

There are many people who go to church and give the appearance that they are really right with God. In fact, this Gospel is being written by the Apostle John and he had already written Revelation. He knew full well that from an appearance perspective, Laodicea appeared to be successful and Philadelphia appeared to be nothing. But appearances aren't reality.

When it came to Jesus Christ, righteous judgment would force one to say - Jesus Christ is God, He is our only Savior. Is that what you believe?