

Keeping Things in Perspective

(John 7:1-13)

(preached 10/21/18; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

Introduction

Hoping to please his father, a graduating senior applied to his father's college and was accepted.

The dad was overjoyed and gladly helped his son move in to the dorm and prepare for college life.

The first week of school, the young man noticed that the college was holding tryouts for their track team.

Though the son was not much of an athlete, he decided to try out for the team since his dad had ran track while in college as well..

He calls his dad that night to tell him of his plans, and the father is overjoyed.

The next day, the son heads out to tryouts, and the test to get on the team was simple, -

All he had to do was take part in a two man race against the best runner on the team.

Sadly, the race was a disaster.

Their best runner beat him by nearly 2 minutes.

As the son leaves the track, he knows that he must call his father...

The father grabs the phone on the first ring, eager to hear how the tryouts had gone..

“Well, Dad. The race went great. I had to run again their best runner. He finished next to last and I finished second.”

You see, life is all a matter of having the right perspective.

In Jesus' day, there were a number of perspectives on exactly who He was.

The crowds had an idea of who Jesus was.

The religious leaders had an idea of who Jesus was.

The 11 disciples had an idea who Jesus was..

Some were right views of Christ, but most were wrong..

Tragically, not much has changed today.

There are all sorts of perspectives about Christ..

Just this week, survey results were released from a poll of 3,000 Americans this year.

The survey contained 34 statements about the Christian faith...

Respondents were simply called to give their level of agreement or disagreement to each of the 3 statements..

The answers to a couple statements caught my eye..

The 1st statement was.. “Jesus Christ is the only person who never sinned.”

While that statement is completely true, 43% of the people who responded either weren’t sure or disagreed with it..

Another troubling answer was in response to this statement.. “Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God.”

Clearly, that statement is false..

Jesus wasn’t created.

He is there eternal God, yet 72% of American in 2018 either aren’t sure or agreed with that statement..

This is sad state of Christianity in this country, but worse yet, this reveals a wrong perspective on Jesus among a majority of people in our own culture..

Well, this morning we come to John 7, and what we are going to see is that wrong views of Jesus existed even during his own ministry....

Now remember, John is writing his gospel to give his readers a right perspective of Christ as the Son of God..

John is writing to convince his readers that their view of Christ is the only thing that matters in this life..

Unfortunately, many of the people that John writes about in verses 1-13 this morning have a wrong perspective on Christ...

So let's begin to look at this in verses 1-5..

We will call this..

I. The Unbelieving Brothers (1-5)

1 After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. 2 Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. 3 Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret [a]when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." 5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

As we arrive at chapter 7, some time has elapsed in the 3 1/2 year ministry of Christ..

As we began chapter 6, Jesus and the disciples were heading to the other side of the sea of Galilee to get away from the crowds in and around Capernaum..

But verse 4 of chapter 6 also let us know that the Passover was approaching as chapter 6 began..

As you know, this was one of 3 festivals that all Jewish men were required to attend each year in Jerusalem..

Passover occurred in the spring of year.

Then in early June, the Jews would gather in Jerusalem for Pentecost..

And the fall festival was the festival of booths in October

..

So between the start of chapter 6 and the start of chapter 7, six to seven months have elapsed..

It is now October and it is time for the majority of the Jewish population to make their way up to Jerusalem for the feast of booths...

And this feast was the most enjoyable one of the 3...

Passover was a solemn reminder of God's protection and provision of Israel during the plagues of Egypt..

Pentecost was a celebration of the wheat harvest..

But the feast of booths occurred right after the day of atonement where the nations sins from the past year were covered for another year..

As a result, the Jews celebrated by making their way to Jerusalem for a extended party..

Well, this is the setting for the start of verse 7, yet it is not time of celebration for Christ..

This will be his last feast of booths...

Next April will be the Passover where Jesus becomes the Passover Lamb slain on the cross...

So his ministry on earth is coming to a close...

Is his last fall of teaching and ministering to the disciples...

Winter will come and then spring will signal his betrayal and arrest in the middle of the Passover celebration..

Now verse 1 lets us know that Jesus isn't too anxious to get to Jerusalem for this feast..

And the reason is clear...

The Jewish religious leaders hatred of him was growing..

Back in John 5, Jesus was in Jerusalem for a feast when he healed a lame man by the pool of Bethesda, only to have the Jews confront him because he did it on the Sabbath..

As a result, John tells us this in John 5:18..

18 For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

Well, that hatred has only increased..

Now Jesus didn't stay in Jerusalem once the persecution of him began..

Instead, he went north to Galilee and did most of his teaching and preaching there, but word travels fast..

And the religious leaders had their spies all over Israel, so their hatred of him is only growing more and more as his popularity soars..

But Jesus stayed away from Jerusalem...

And the reason for that is clear.

His ministry wasn't done.

He wasn't going to die a second before the Father willed him to die..

And staying in Galilee allowed him the time to do more preaching before his death..

However, he couldn't disobey the law of God which required him to go to Jerusalem for each of these 3 feasts, which leads to what we see in verse 3..

So his brothers come to him in verse 3 asking Him to go to the feast of booths with them..

This would be a natural occurrence as families often traveled together up to Jerusalem..

So these brothers come to Jesus and we know all their names from the book of Matthew..

There is James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas...

And their request is that Jesus head to Jerusalem with home for the festival..

Their reason is simple..

IF you are who you say you are, it is time to go the center of the Jewish religion and declare yourself to the world..

Well, this seems like a good idea..

These are the campaign managers..

Hey, Jesus if you want to be president, it's time to have a press conference in Washington to declare your intentions to be the leader of the free world...

And though that may sound like a good idea by these brothers, it wasn't for a couple reasons..

First and foremost, Jesus did not come to be the king over Israel...

He didn't come to lead them out from under Roman rule.

He didn't come to lead a Jewish army to conquer the world.

Jesus came to die in the place of the guilt sinner..

His first coming wasn't about gaining political power.

His first coming was about overcoming the power of sin in the world...

The first coming was not getting a crown but about going to a cross...

And if he goes to Jerusalem for the feast of booths and declares his mission, they will gladly hang him on a cross because they already hate him...

And the bottom line is this...

The Father's plan is not a death at the feast of booths.

The Father's plan is a death at the Passover..

So, this isn't a good idea by the brothers of Jesus..

But beyond that, we also know from verse 5 that these brothers aren't acting in good will toward Christ..

In fact, they don't believe a word he says about himself...

Some suggest that they are trying to lure him to Jerusalem to get him arrested...

You see, Jesus had become an embarrassment to his family..

I am sure that Mary knew who her son was, but these siblings weren't convinced at all...

How you would like someone in your family going around the neighborhood claiming to be God?

On top of that, how would you like to have a brother who was always perfect in everything he did..

Talk about being annoying..

It seems that their hope is to get him to Jerusalem in hopes that the religious leaders could do something with him..

But how sad is this?

Your own flesh and blood rejecting you...

This show the depth of sin in the human heart...

You can grow up beside God, and never even know it.

We think Judas is bad for 3 years of seeing Jesus and rejecting him..

Well, these siblings had spent 10, 20, almost 30 years with Jesus and still didn't believe..

But worse yet, their unbelief had led them to try and devise a plan to get Jesus into Jerusalem to see what happens..

Obviously, Jesus knows their hearts, and we see his response in verses 6-9...

II. The Unwilling Christ(6-9)

6 So Jesus *said to them, “My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. 8 Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.” 9 Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.

In these verses, the reason for Jesus not going with his brothers is clear..

In fact, Jesus offer the reason twice in 4 verses..

“My time has not yet come.”

This is again a picture of Jesus’ unwillingness to depart the heavenly time schedule..

Jesus will go to Jerusalem..

He will declare himself as the rightful King of the Jews..

This is the picture of Palm Sunday where he rides in on a donkey and the crowds lay palm branches on the road..

Sadly, those welcoming crowds become the same crowds that call for his day a few days later...

But now in October is not the time for that triumphal entry followed by a tragic departure...

Jesus will not depart from the plans of the Father...

One of the greatest prophecies in the entire Bible is found in the book of Daniel, chapter 9..

In that incredible chapter, God laid out a prediction of when the Messiah would enter Jerusalem to very day..

And without taking you there, I will simply say this..

Jesus entered Jerusalem at the exact moment that God had predicted through the prophet Daniel..

This is why Jesus tells his brothers here that it is not his time to enter Jerusalem and declare himself the Messiah..

That day is close, but it is still months away..

You see, God's timing is always perfect.

How many times have you had thought now is the right time only to have to wait, and then you realize that the delay was perfect...

If Jesus trusts the Father's timing, how much more should we?

So Jesus turns down the request because it is the right time to do it just yet...

However at the end of verse 6, he encourages his brothers to go..

He can't go public yet, but his brothers can..

And the reason that they can go to the feast is clear..

Verse 7..

The world doesn't hate them like it hates their brother..

And why does the world hate Jesus?

His words..

You know we talked about this last week, but it wasn't the miracles or the helpings or the supernatural works that led the Jews and the crowds to hate Jesus..

In fact, the crowds loved that stuff..

They loved the free food, the free health care...

It wasn't any of that drove people to kill Jesus..

What drove them to kill Jesus was his words..

Particularly it was his words about them...

Over and over, he told the crowds and the religious leaders to repent..

He called out their sins..

He identified their wickedness..

He told them that their righteous deeds wouldn't get them into heaven..

And guess what?

The people hated Him because of what He said..

This is way of the world today..

If Pine Grove offered to provide the food for a council meeting, the local officials would gladly accept..

But if I offered to preach a sermon to them as part of the meeting, they would totally reject it..

You see, the word of God is convicting...

Everything that Jesus said rang in the depths of the soul that he spoke to...

When he made bread and fish and wine, they cheered...

When he called himself the bread of life, they booed..

This is the wickedness of man..

It loves the works of Christ, but despises his words..

And look if Jesus goes to Jerusalem and declares himself the Messiah, his words would lead them to kill him...

So he can't go with his brothers...

His time to go will come, and when he speaks on that occasion, the Jews and the crowds will be so enraged that they will convince the Romans to hang him on a cross outside of town..

So he can't go publicly..

This leads us to verses 10-13, which we will call..

III. The Unsure Crowd (10-13)

Let's read these verses...

10 But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret. 11 So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, "Where is He?" 12 There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray." 13 Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

To be clear, Jesus doesn't lie to his brother here...

He didn't go up with them.

In fact, verse 9 says that he stayed in Galilee after he talked to them..

Then, once they had gotten to Jerusalem, Jesus makes his way there but avoids the fanfare..

He comes in order to keep the law, but he doesn't draw attention to himself in the process..

In fact, we know from Luke 9 that he travelled through Samaria on his way down to this feast...

This would also allow him to come in unnoticed since most Jews never set foot in Samaria..

He was so unnoticed in his arrival that no one could even spot him...

The religious leaders even say in verse 11..

“Where is Jesus?”

This tells you of their growing desire to kill him.

They knew that he would have to come to festival in obedience to the law, but they can't find him..

And the only reason they are looking for him is to do away with Him...

The crowds even noticed the religious leaders desire for him..

Even the mention of Jesus' name sent murmurs through the crowd..

Now, the crowds aren't going to speak openly about Jesus..

They knew the power of the religious leadership..

They knew their growing desire to see Jesus dead..

So they aren't going to speak up about Jesus, but they are grumbling under their breath about Jesus...

And what are they saying about Him?

Some were saying that Jesus was a good man..

Some were saying that he was a false prophet...

Turns out they were both wrong...

Clearly, Jesus isn't a deceiver..

He has spoken truth every day of his life...

But it is also true that Jesus isn't just a good man..

In fact, that view of Jesus will send you to hell as quick as the decider view of Him...

Jesus is way more than a good man..

He is the God-man.

He is God in flesh..

And to show you how wrong it is to view Jesus as just a good man, I would remind you today that Jews and Muslims both share this view of Christ in 2018..

In fact, a Jewish rabbi and a Muslim cleric were both on Larry King Live a few years back and Larry asked them who Jesus was to them..

Both claimed that Jesus was a good teacher and a good leader, yet neither one of those men are saved..

It is not enough to see Jesus as just a good man..

Through that may seem like a good view of him in the crowds on this day, it isn't...

And this should make sense, the crowds are following Jesus for the right reasons...

The crowds are always there around Jesus for the wrong reasons, and they also have a wrong view of Him..

But this is the case in the world today..

The crowds of people in 2018 are still unsure exactly who Jesus is...

For some, he is just a way to get their political party elected.

For some, he is just a man who offered a good way to live in the world..

For some, Jesus is just what they do on Sundays.

But for those who are truly saved, Jesus is the Son of God who gave his life for the sins of those who believe in Him..

He is certainly not a liar.

He is certainly not just a good man..

He is God in the flesh who can save your soul today if you come to him in faith and repentance..

Conclusion

CS Lewis is a famous author of the early 1900s.

He is famous for some of the things he has written about the Christiana faith..

In one instance, he was asked about those people who simply see Jesus as just a good man whose example we follow..

Lewis replied...

“IF you just see Jesus as good man, you don’t understand what you are saying. A good man don’t go around calling Himself God. The only people who do that are liars and lunatics.”

“So you can’t call a liar a good man.

And you certainly can’t call a lunatic a good man..

The only option left is that Jesus is truly God.

Liar, Lunatic, or Lord.

The choice is yours..”

Let us pray.