

## **When Jesus Shuts the Door of Heaven**

(John 7:25-36)

(preached 11/4/18; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

### **Introduction**

In 2018, there are roughly 150,000 convenience stores in America..

Of those 150,000 stores, 90% of them are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In fact, most people take it for granted that they will be able to find gas for their car no matter that time of day, but this has not always been the case..

Even in my lifetime, the idea of a store being open all day every day is a fairly new trend..

The first convenience stores were 7/11s, named after their operating hours, which were 7 am to 11 pm..

And since those stores first opened in 1927, being opened 16 hours was revolutionary..

And for 40 years, those long hours made 7/11s quite popular..

However in 1967, a strange thing happened..

The Texas Longhorns won an exciting football game late one night in Austin Texas.

Well, the fans of Texas football wouldn't stop celebrating.

In fact, when the Austin 7/11 tried to close at 11, there were still tons of people inside the store.

The manager ended up keeping the store open all night and had the best night of sales ever.

Within a year, 7/11 opened its first 24 hour location in Las Vegas Nevada and the rest is history...

In 2018, the doors of 7/11s around the world never close to the world's population..

But is that true of the doors of the doors of heaven?

Do they ever close to people?

Well, a lot of folks would tell you that heaven's gates are open wide, yet that isn't entirely true..

Heaven is shut to certain people, and John 7:25-36 is going to make that painfully clear..

So, let's continue our journey through the gospel of John by first reading this passage and then we will go back

and look at 3 people who will find the doors of heaven shut for them..

Let's now read this together..

John 7:25..

***25 So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill?***

***26 Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is [d]the Christ, do they? 27 However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.” 28 Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, “You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. 29 I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me.” 30 So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. 31 But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, “When [e]the Christ comes, He will not perform more [f]signs than those which this man has, will He?”***

***32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. 33 Therefore Jesus said, “For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. 34 You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.” 35 The***

***Jews then said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? 36 What is this statement that He said, ‘You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come’?”***

Let's begin in verses 25-27 with our first group of people shut out of heaven..

## **I. Heaven is Shut to the Misinformed (25-27)**

As we come to verse 25, we are still in the final fall of Jesus' earthly life..

He has been ministering in Israel for 3 years now..

He has healed the sick.

He has raised the dead.

He has preached the gospel.

He has declared himself to be the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world..

And the sad reality is the world is on the verge of killing him..

In fact, this is October and in April, he will be hanging on a cross at the next major Jewish festival called Passover..

His time of teaching is coming to an end.

His time of miracles is drawing to a close.

So, He is attempting to make the most of his remaining months calling people to faith and repentance in Him...

And for a few weeks now, we have been with Jesus at the Festival of Tents or Booths in Jerusalem..

Jesus attended every festival that he was required to attend by the Law.

Jesus went to every Passover in the spring, every Pentecost in May or June, and every festival of tents in October..

Even though hatred of Jesus was at an all time high among the religious leadership of Israel..

Even though these leaders were threatening to kill him...

Jesus still comes out of obedience to the law but he also comes to continue to preach the good news..

And last week in verses 14-24, we listened as Jesus stood up in the middle of the week long celebration in the middle of the temple and began to speak..

His message to the crowds was purposeful..

He told them that he spoke the words of God..

He told them that he wanted no praise..

He told them that he kept the law while the religious leaders broke the law..

And the point of the message was to convince his listeners of the truthfulness of his claims to be God...

This morning in the verses before us, we find ourselves still in the midst of Jesus' teaching in the temple during the midst of the festival of tents..

And today, the attacks on Jesus continue to build, but Jesus' judgment on unbelief continues to build as well..

Today, Jesus makes it clear that heaven is not for everyone, and that statement alone is going to anger already angry people...

And the first group unfit for heaven are the people in verses 25-27...

We can call this group the misinformed..

Let me read these verses to us again..

***25 So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill?***

***26 Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is [d]the Christ, do they? 27 However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from."***

As the anger of the religious leaders towards Jesus grows, word begins to spread among the people..

Though most of the crowd doesn't know of the murderous intentions of the Pharisees and others, some of the crowd especially those who live around Jerusalem are sensing the leaders desire to do away with Jesus.

And so as Jesus preaches, some in the crowd begin to put 2 and 2 together and wonder if Jesus is the one that some of the Jews want dead..

But the problem is that the leaders were among the crowd as well but didn't seem to be acting..

Now, some of that inaction is because the leaders feared the crowd...

They didn't want to anger the mob who had come to admire Jesus' miracles and especially his authoritative teaching...

But there was also uncertainty among the Jews and especially among the crowd that Jesus may be the long awaited Messiah...

However, no one was sure...

You even see that in how they end verse 26..

***“The rulers don’t really know if that is the Christ, do they?”***

Now, I want you to understand something very important.

The OT, which the leaders were supposed experts in, gave much information about Jesus..

The OT said he would be from the line of David..

The OT said he was be born in Bethlehem..

The OT said he would come from the tribe of Judah.

The OT said he would be born of a virgin.

The OT said he would teach in parables.

The OT said he would be from Galilee..

And on and on, the OT prophecies laid out many details about the Messiah..

But get this.

The Jewish leadership.

The rabbis, the Pharisees, the Saducees had misinterpreted the passages..

So much so, that it was common teaching among the common people that their Messiah would come from an unknown place..

You see that at the end of verse 27..

The crowds say we know that Jesus is from Nazareth in Galilee, but haven't we been taught that no one will know the hometown of Messiah?

And there was the problem..

The people were misinformed about what to look for in a coming Messiah..

Now, let me just make a few comments here...

***#1 - Anytime the word of God is taken from the people, the people are in trouble.***

This was true among the Jews in Jesus' day.

This has been true in the Roman Catholic church even until today..

This is true among the cults..

You see, anytime people become dependent upon man to know who God is, they usually find error and trouble..

Look, these Jews missed their Messiah because they were misinformed..

That leads to point #2 -

**#2 - *God does not excuse ignorance.***

On judgment day, you wont be able to tell God that you didn't know enough to be saved.

God has declared his existence in the heavens..

And God has declared salvation in His word...

Not knowing is not an excuse...

And misinformation is not an excuse either..

The Jews that overlooked Jesus and claimed that they were taught wrong go to hell as fast as those who rejected Him..

Heavens doors are shut to the misinformed..

So look, dont be led astray because you are too lazy or too dependent on man.

Open your Bible and open your heart, and God will lead you to saving truth..

A second group that will find heaven's door shut is found in verses 28-31..

I call this group, the muddled or the confused...

## **II. Heaven is Shut to the Muddled (30-31)**

As Jesus continues teaching in the temple, he raises his voice pretty loud in verse 28..

This idea of crying out is better translated, yelling or screaming...

The only time that Jesus is described speaking louder than this is when he cried out on the cross...

So Jesus is yelling in the temple in verse 28...

This is passion generated from a love of the crowds...

This is the same love and passion that will push Jesus to tears when the city of Jerusalem rejects his message..

So he is preaching at the top of his lungs here and what is he shouting?

Look, you know where I am from...

And you think it is Nazareth, but if you truly know God then you would know that I am from heaven..

But the sad truth is that the crowds in the temple of God don't know the God of the temple..

This is the sad irony of so many people..

There are people in churches today who don't know the Lord of the church..

These crowds were there to worship the faithfulness of God in preserving their nation in the wilderness many years ago, but the reality is they had long ago been unfaithful to that God..

So while they stand in a building devoted to God, they are not devoted to Him...

If they were, they would have recognized His son standing before their eyes..

Sadly, they were not only misinformed about Jesus, they were confused about Him too..

In verse 30 and verse 31, you see confusion...

In verse 30, there is a group of people seeking to seize him, and in verse 31, there is a group of people believing in Him..

Now, I want to be clear here..

This doesn't appear to be true belief...

This is the belief that the crowds had in him to meet their needs but not to believe how words...

And why would I say that?

Well, the group of believers who stuck with Jesus to the end was only around a 100 or so people...

I think what we see in verses 30 and 31 is really the same divided opinion that we have seen before...

Some believed he was a deceitful demons and some believed he was a good man..

This is the confusion that has always existed over Christ, and we talked about how He couldn't be a demon but also couldn't simply be a good man..

Look, heaven isn't open for this who think that Jesus may be the way to salvation..

You may have heard of the man who become a Jewish Christian Muslim..

In other words, he was born a Jew, went to synagogue..

He then became a Muslim while holding on to his Jewish faith and then he also claimed faith in Christ...

And his reasoning, "I want to have all my bases in case any of them are true."

Needless to say, heaven isn't open to the confused or the muddled person..

Faith is being "sure" of what we hope for and "certain" of what we do not see..

You can't come to Christ with a "just in case" attitude..

IF Jesus claimed to be the only way to heaven, you have to believe that in order to be saved..

The Jews in this day weren't fully convinced of that, and the unconvinced or confused will find no entrance into the doors of heaven..

### **III. Heaven is Shut to the Mocker (32-36)**

A final group that won't find their way through the gates to heaven is found in verses 32-36..

As Jesus continues to preach his heart out in the temple, the Pharisees have had enough...

Even though this belief in Jesus is a superficial unsaying belief, the religious leaders are getting nervous and send authorities to arrest Jesus..

Now understand this..

These officers weren't successful..

Though Jesus was publicly seen and publicly preaching, they couldn't lay a hand on Him..

And why is that...

Look back at verse 30...

“His hour had not yet come.”

In other words, God's timetable did not include Jesus being arrested and tried during the festival of booths..

In fact, his time wouldn't arrive until next spring..

Now we are going to talk more about these officers next week, but what we see here?

Why are they sent but unsuccessful in arresting Jesus?

Simply put, no one acts outside of the will of God..

God's invisible sovereign hand is fully in control in the world..

Nothing happens unless God allows it..

This is divine providence keeping the officers away from Jesus...

And so Jesus continues his message in verse 33 with a dangerous warning to the crowds around him...

***“For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. 34 You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.”***

As a kid at Carowinds, it bugged me to no end that I couldn't ride certain rides...

Now look, I was actually glad I couldn't get on Thunder Road, but I definitely wanted to ride the kiddie roller coaster called Scobby Doo..

And I was usually with my friend Chad when we went..

He was a year older than me but worse, he was a few inches taller than me..

That meant that he could ride Scoobie Doo a summer earlier than me..

I'll never forget walking up to that measuring stick hoping he was too short only to see his hair go above the yellow line and he take off up the ramp to ride..

I simply had to jump on the merry go round until he was done...

It was the worst to see my friend go and the gate shut behind him..

Well, Jesus warns the crowd here...

Look, my days are numbered here on earth..

I am only going to be preaching and tacking for a little while longer and then I am gone...

You will look for me but I will be somewhere that you can't come..

What a devastating warning that was..

Jesus is simply saying that he will be killed, resurrected, and then return to heaven..

But sadly, their unbelief will keep the leaders and the crowds from making it to heaven to be with Jesus...

Where Jesus is going, they cannot go...

Now that is a warning that should shut the mouths of all these men..

Yet, it doesn't...

Verse 35-36..

***35 The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? 36 What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"***

Though you can't see facial expressions in the Bible, I assure that these were questions of ridicule directed at Jesus...

What do you mean we can't go where you are going?

What are you going to do?

Go out and preach to the Gentile Greeks because we certainly aren't going there...

These are honest questions from a sincere crowd..

These are questions of scorn and ridicule...

They don't believe Jesus is from heaven so it doesn't even cross their mind that he is talking about his soon return back to heaven..

So instead of cowering in fear of judgment and being barred from heaven, they ridicule the One who is the only ticket to heaven...

This is the what mockers of Jesus do..

They aren't content to just let him speak and leave him alone, so they mock and tease him as well..

In John 8, Jesus is going to tell them the exact same thing, and they will joke that he must be considering suicide if he thinks he is going somewhere that they can't go...

This is tragedy of unbelief...

It not only fails to believe in Christ, it also seeks to mock Christ and those who love Him..

And no mocker of Christ will find his way through the gates of heaven..

And neither will the misinformed or the muddled...

## **Conclusion**

Let's end with a few thoughts...

### ***#1 - Be a Bible expert.***

The crowds missed out on Jesus because they took someone's else word in terms of where the Messiah would come from.

Look, I am not urging you to figure out every difficult text in the Bible, but you sure ought to know how to find your way around the Bible..

You should know some truths about Christ.

You should know some verses about how to be saved.

You should be able to locate some key passages in the Bible and be able to explain them..

Bottom line is this...

Don't be content to just have enough knowledge to get into heaven and just stop there.

It is sad to know that more Christians are experts on TV and movies than they are about their Messiah..

## ***#2 - Be confident in your trust in Christ.***

I want to be clear...

Doubt is part of what it means to be saved.

All believers are filled with doubt at times, but the pattern of the Christian life is trust in the gospel..

And the way to overcome doubt is with obedience...

Disobedient people, people who continue in unrepentant sin are plagued with doubt..

Look, obedience brings blessing to your life, but guess what it also brings?

It brings assurance...

And the goal of the Christian life is to grow in Christ and as you grow in Christ, you grow in confidence...

The world needs to see believers sure of their faith in Christ..

## ***#3 - Be longing to go where Christ is.***

In 7th grade, I tried out for JV basketball.

There were 24 of us trying to get 13 spots..

The first day of practice the coach tells me that it is probably in my best interest to play one more year of youth basketball..

Well, that only made me want to make the team and served as great motivation to fight through..

Look, I am ready to go where Jesus is...

I am ready to be with my Lord.

That doesn't mean I am ready to leave the earth.

I love my family.

I love the church.

I love ministry..

But the longing of the believer's heart is to be with Christ..

If that is not true of you today, examine your life.

What a shame it would be to find yourself in a place one day where you couldn't get to Christ..

Today is the day to come to Christ..

Today is the day to make sure the gates of heaven will be open for you..

Today is the day to make sure you aren't shut out of heaven..

Come to Christ.

Turn from your sin and trust fully in Him...

Let us pray.