

Come, Receive Jesus! Yet You Can't... And You Won't... But You Should!

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to John's Gospel.

John's Gospel, chapter 12. If you're visiting with us and need a Bible, there should be a black Bible in the chair, a pocket there underneath, a black Bible.

Go to the back because they renumber the New Testament. So find page 83. That's where you'll find John 12. John chapter 12. John 12, we're gonna start in verse 37.

37 to 50. John 12, 37 to 50. Page 83 in that chair Bible. John 12, 37 to 50.

Let's see what God has to say to us this morning from His Word. But though He had done so many signs before them, they were not believing into Him.

[1:04] In order that the word of Isaiah the prophet may be fulfilled which He spoke. Lord, who has believed our report? And the arm of the Lord, to whom has it been revealed?

For this reason. They were not able to believe. For Isaiah said again, He has blinded their eyes. And He hardened their hearts.

In order that they may not see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts, and turn, and I heal them. These things Isaiah said, because He saw His glory, and He spoke of Him.

Nevertheless, many, even of the rulers, believed into Him. But because of the Pharisees, they were not confessing. In order that they would not be put out of the synagogue.

For they loved the glory of men, rather than the glory of God. And Jesus cried out and said, The one who believes into Me does not believe into Me, but into the One who sent Me.

[2:06] And the One who sees Me, sees the One who sent Me. I, Myself, light, have come into the world. In order that all the ones who believe into Me, may not remain in darkness.

And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge them. For I do not come in order that I may judge the world, but in order that I may save the world.

The one who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has that which judges Him. The word I spoke is that, will judge Him at the last day. For I, of Myself, did not speak.

But the One who sent Me, the Father Himself, has given Me command, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that His command is eternal life.

Therefore, the things I speak, just as the Father has told Me, in this way, I speak. I love to watch NFL highlights of football games, and it's easy, because you know, you got a three hour game, versus six to eight minutes of highlights, I'd rather do six to eight minutes of highlights.

[3:23] And Facebook does that, they do like highlights. So, so I was watching a highlight from a game, I think it was last weekend, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. And somebody told me, it's a New Orleans Saint, I forgot who it was, but it was a New Orleans Saint.

And throughout the game, as you watch the highlights, New Orleans dominated Tampa Bay. They dominated the Buccaneers. And so now, the Bucs, they're down by a touchdown, plus one point.

And if they were to get a touchdown, plus one point, they'd win the game. So here's Tom Brady. I don't remember how many seconds are left in the fourth quarter, but you know, the classic line.

There's one minute left in the fourth quarter.

And they march down the field. And here's Tom Brady's last ditch effort, the last hurrah, the finality, finality. He marches down the field, and they score.

And they get the last point, three seconds left in the game. They win the game by one point. It was amazing watching this guy. That's why they, I know people love Tom Brady so much, because this guy's amazing, watching him go down the field.

[4:27] His last ditch effort to try and win this game. I bring this up because this is Jesus' final, last ditch effort.

His final appeal. His final appeal to his hearers. And then starting in John's Gospel, chapter 13, things change. His ministry now goes towards his disciples.

And then towards his mission of going to the cross. So here's his last ditch effort. Jesus' final invitation to, he says, to trust me, believe into me, or come receive me.

And that's been the title of John's Gospel throughout. Come receive Jesus. Come believe into Jesus. Come know Jesus.

And today we'll see. Come. Jesus says, come receive me. Yet you can't. And you won't.

[5:29] But you should. You can't. And you won't. But you should. Let me give it to you in a statement.

Come. Receive Jesus. Yet you can't. And you won't. But you should. All of humanity is not able to believe into Jesus. And does not want to believe into Jesus.

But we all should receive Jesus. You should. You should come. But you can't. And you won't.

But you should. Again, here is Jesus' final appeal to the crowd. Calling them to believe into him.

To receive him. And John the evangelist, he's gonna give us more information about why people were not receiving Jesus. Why did they not believe?

[6:31] Why? Well, obviously you can see there's three points in the message. People can't believe. People won't believe. People should believe.

There's your three point. Three point sermon. Makes it nice and easy for you. Three point sermon.

Here's your first point. People can't believe. Verses 37 to 41. Look at what happens.

But though he'd done so many signs before them, they were not believing into him. Jesus had done all these signs before them. Now, John gave seven specific ones.

But Jesus did many more, obviously. Yet they still did not believe into him. So, this was the public response to Jesus' ministry.

Unbelief. Unbelief. A great majority of Jews are excluded from the kingdom because of their unbelief.

[7:37] A sign, it says signs, sign was as a miraculous work that pointed like a sign, go this way, beyond itself to Jesus' true identity and his mission, which was to do God's work in the world.

So, to not believe in his signs means you don't believe in God as far as John was concerned. So, this tells us something right at the get-go that people should believe.

They're culpable. But we must also realize that no amount of speaking to them and no great sign or miracle will result in faith.

It's not up to those things. It's not up to you saying the right thing to somebody, the right words to somebody.

I mean, because if it was, why did they not believe into Jesus, the Son of God? I mean, if there's anybody who can speak the right way and say the right words, it's Jesus, right?

[8:47] Of course. No amount of speaking to people. No great sign or miracle. Or as when the rich man was there in Hades and he said to Abraham, Abraham, send someone resurrected from the dead.

Then they'll believe in him and Abraham said, no. If they will not believe the law and the prophets, they will not believe someone who's resurrected from the dead. That's very true. because people still don't believe in Jesus who rose from the dead.

Why? Verse 38. In order that, it's the purpose clause from the Greek.

In order that the word of Isaiah, the prophet, may be fulfilled which he spoke, Lord, who has believed our report, and the arm of the Lord, to whom has it been revealed? The purpose of this unbelief is in connection to Isaiah's prophecy.

In Isaiah 53 verse 1, we read 2 and 3. This is Isaiah 53 verse 1. And the Lord's arm represents Jesus' signs. And he gave Israel the message or the report, that's what the report emphasizes or denotes his message.

[10:05] But unfortunately, in Isaiah 53, they refused to believe. They rejected Isaiah's message and they rejected Jesus' message too.

It was the Lord's servant who said that God promised Israel her restoration, something she could not bring upon herself. Only he could do it. So John, the evangelist, is telling us, Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

And we're about to see why they were not able to believe Jesus because look at verse 39. For this reason, they were not able to believe.

Scripture must be fulfilled. So that's why they were not able to believe. Their unbelief is a direct fulfillment of Scripture. God will always be faithful to himself and they will always be faithful to his word.

Always. And look at what it says next. For this reason, they were not able to believe. For Isaiah said again, verse 40, he's blinded their eyes and he hardened their hearts in order that they may not see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn and I heal them.

[11:27] What John does here, he quotes from Isaiah chapter 6 and he merges Isaiah 53, actually Isaiah 53, it's later, 53 with Isaiah chapter 6.

He merges them, connects them together. In Isaiah chapter 6, you may remember, Isaiah says, I saw the Lord on his throne and the Lord commissioned Isaiah to speak his message to his people but they would ignore it, scorn it, and reject it.

But he still told Isaiah to take this message in spite of the negative results. As a matter of fact, Isaiah's preaching would evoke that negative response.

So here is the reality of unbelief, friends. God blinded their eyes. He also hardened their hearts so they would not see with their eyes, so they would not understand with their hearts and turn, in other words, repent, and God heals them.

So, here's the problem with humanity. Here's the problem with everyone in the human race. Unless God, by his spirit, does a work in people's eyes and in their hearts, they will never believe because they can't.

[13:02] They can't. They're not able to. God was the primary cause of their unbelief and he's the cause of others' unbelief.

God hardens and softens hearts. This is what John's telling us. There's no way around this. Jesus made this very clear in John chapter 6.

And now John the evangelist brings up this issue again. No one is able to come to me, Jesus said in John 6, 44, unless the Father who sent me draws him. No one.

God is sovereign in salvation. Only he can grant people the grace to be saved else it's not grace. Grace means undeserved favor or undeserved merit. If faith in Jesus is conditioned upon us, then it's not grace. So this tells us people do not believe in Jesus because they're not able to believe in Jesus.

[14:16] They can't. God sovereignly calls people to himself according to his good pleasure and for the glory of his great name all because of his grace.

That's a fact. Yet at the same time, and you'll see this very quickly if you haven't already seen it before in just a few verses up ahead, above, at the same time, people are responsible to trust Christ and believe.

His sovereignty is not pitted against human culpability. Plus, God's hardening of hearts is not arbitrary or capricious or because, you know, I'm just having a bad day.

I'm going to harden that person's heart. God's not like that. He's not like us. And by the way, there's no hardening of morally good people or morally neutral people.

There are no morally neutral people or morally good people. None is righteous, not even one, says Paul in Romans chapter 3. God's hardening of hearts is holy, just, righteous, and true.

[15:39] And He has a good purpose in everything He does for the glory of His name. And He acts towards people who are who they are because they choose it.

There's no morally good people, morally neutral people. People only seek out the glory of others, the glory of men, the glory of humanity, not the glory of God.

You'll see that in verse 43 in just a moment. But also keep this in mind. If this is true, if people can't believe, and it is true, it is a cause of great hope because only God can change hearts to trust Him as He uses us as His messengers, as His speakers.

That's why we pray. It's our dependence upon God to save sinners because it's not up to us. So we ask God to do it.

So it gives us a cause of great hope because it's like only God, you can do it. I mean, if God resurrected somebody from the dead, surely He can save this person, can't He?

[16:59] What, you don't believe that? Of course He can. I mean, if God's not sovereign in salvation, then why in the world do you even pray?

Why do you pray for people to be saved if God's not sovereign? Which is up to you? That's silly. People can't believe.

And notice what He does here, starting in verse 41, John tells us, these things, Isaiah said, because He saw His glory and He spoke of Him.

What things? What He wrote in Isaiah 6, 1 through 10. Those things. He saw His glory. Who's His glory? Jesus' glory. The closest antecedent is Jesus.

So John meant to say that Isaiah saw Jesus' glory in Isaiah 6, verse 1, and verse 3. The glory of the Lord is Christ's glory and it was Jesus' signs that manifested that glory.

[18:06] So Isaiah saw Jesus' glory and spoke of Jesus. This is why He says this here. He saw what's called, the theological term is called the pre-incarnate Christ.

That's what He saw, Isaiah. So John ties Jesus to Yahweh of the Old Testament and if that's true and it is, then that means Jesus is the one who blinds eyes and Jesus is the one who hardens hearts.

It's Him. So people can't believe. Point number two. People won't believe. Even if you take away the can't, they won't.

Look at verse 42. Nevertheless, many, even one of the rulers believed in Him. These are Jewish authorities who believed into Jesus.

Well, maybe. Remember that kind of belief in Jesus that John spoke of incessantly throughout his gospel?

[19:21] Remember that? So to speak, belief that they believed into Jesus and you're left wondering because you're like, wait a second.

As you keep reading, you're like, it doesn't really look like they really believe in Jesus. Exactly. Takes us back to John chapter two where it says, many people were believing in Jesus but He wasn't believing them because He knows what's in men's hearts.

He knows what's really going on. Well, it's that kind of belief here because notice what John says, but because of the Pharisees, they were not confessing.

They did not express their belief into Jesus out loud, publicly. They did not confess because if they did, in order that, they would not be put out of the synagogue.

They feared rejection from people, from men because notice what John tells us in verse 43. For, here's the reason, here's the reason why, for they loved the approval and the Greek word is not approval, the Greek word is doxa, which means glory.

[20:36] Oh. It's not by accident that He just talked about the glory that Isaiah saw in Isaiah chapter six, just a couple verses above. They loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God.

So, this was the real reason. The real reason they did not confess Jesus openly and publicly. They loved human glory rather than God's glory.

That's why people won't believe. I want what I want. it's about me. They preferred human approval or recognition.

So, this means that these rulers did not experience the new birth. They didn't. And it's possible that they truly believed after Jesus' resurrection, possibly, but this is a warning to us.

Anyone who is happy to believe in Jesus their own way, on their own terms, you will find out that that kind of belief is false.

[21:56] Or as D.A. Carson says, quote, secret faith will not do, end quote. End quote. And this tells us, this tells us that people do not believe in Jesus because they don't want to believe in Jesus.

They love the approval of people rather than God's approval. People don't believe because they love themselves more. You have to learn to love yourself. My friend, you already love yourself. You love yourself just fine. That's our problem. That's our problem. I'll tell you, a battle for our allegiance as Christians even rages inside us.

It's between the glory of self, humanity, and the glory of God. And even as Christians, we're tempted to fear people rather than God.

We're in this battle even as Christians, this battle that rages inside of us so this, it's a good time for us to evaluate and to ask this question and I get this from Klink.

[23:13] He says this in his commentary. Great quote. I'll give it to you. Quote, Do we love Christ in the midst of public opinion to the contrary? Are we silent before others about God?

End quote. Do I value what I want more than God's glory? Do I value and treasure Christ above anyone and everything else?

Do I want Jesus more than anyone or anything else? Friends, this is key. In so many ways, not just for us in normal Christian living, but I'll tell you, this is a key to somebody who's dealing with addictions.

This is a key to someone who's dealing with LGBTQIA+. This is a key to someone dealing with pornography, idolatry, and every other sin.

It's asking this question, who or what do I love more than Christ? Do I love this relationship, this girl with this girl more than Christ?

[24 : 22] Do I love my heroine more than Christ? Do I love my heroine more than Christ? Do I love my money more than Christ? Do I love my pleasure more than Christ? This helps us to do an evaluation of the battle that rages inside of us as Christians.

It encourages us. It warns us. It encourages us. Lord Jesus, help me to love you more beyond anyone or anything else. people can't believe.

People won't believe. But third point, people should believe. They should. They're called to.

And here's three aspects that Jesus actually reiterates. He said this in past times in the gospel. He's going to say it again. Here's the first aspect.

People should believe. To believe Jesus is to believe the Father. Look at verse 44. Jesus cried out his final appeal, his last cry to believe unto him.

[25 : 37] Not just the crowd, but even to us as readers. The one who believes into me does not believe into me, but into the one who sent me. Jesus truly called his listeners to repent.

Trust me. And if you trust me, you're going to trust the Father. People are culpable. They should believe. There's a great summary of Jesus' message throughout the entire gospel, his whole ministry.

Jesus said this constantly. The true object of our faith is actually God himself. I want him. That's why Jesus says, if one believes Jesus, that one believes God.

You believe the Father. If you believe the Father, you're going to believe Jesus. They go together.

People should believe. Believing Jesus means believing the Father.

That's the first aspect. Second aspect Jesus brings up. Seeing Jesus is seeing the Father. Verse 45. And the one who sees me sees the one who sent me.

[26 : 52] Only through Jesus do we have access to the Father. And only Jesus is the total manifestation of God and his presence is seen.

Do you want to see God? Look to Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate self-expression and self-disclosure of the Father.

This takes us back to John 1, verse 1-18. Even verse 18. No man has seen God any time. The only begotten God, the one who's in the bosom of the Father, he explains him.

You want to see God look to Jesus? He's the ultimate self-revelation of God. He's the supreme self-disclosure of God.

And notice, he as the Son is totally subordinate to the Father in all things. This is their relationship.

This is the kind of relationship that they have. Believing Jesus is believing the Father.

[28 : 02] Seeing Jesus is seeing the Father. And then there's a third aspect that Jesus brings up. Believe the light. Look at verse 46. And this is from Greek.

It's I, myself, light, have come into the world. I, myself, light. He is the light. Come to the light, Jesus says.

Come to Jesus. Repent. Don't wait. You should come today. If you don't know Christ, you should come. Repent and trust Christ. He'll save you.

He'll forgive you. He'll show you mercy and grace. Come. You should come. You should believe. He says, come to the light. Believe the light. That's I have come into the world.

That's who I am. I'm light. Because that's why he says, the next part, verse 46, in order that all the ones who believe it to me may not remain in darkness.

[29 : 03] So believing Jesus is believing the Father. Seeing Jesus is seeing the Father. And Jesus is the light. Now, what Jesus does here from then on from verse 46 to verse 50, he gives us three reasons why one should believe.

So I'll give you three reasons. Here's three reasons why you should believe in Jesus. Reason number one, potential rescue. Verse 46, I, myself, light, have come into the world.

Here it is. In order that all the ones who believe it to me may not remain in darkness. This was Jesus' mission coming into the world. Darkness conveys sin.

Darkness conveys evil. Light conveys truth. Jesus. So believe is to trust. You trust Jesus, you will not, as Jesus says in chapter 8 of John's gospel.

Die in your sins. Die in darkness. Remain in darkness. You can be rescued. So you may not remain in darkness.

[30:04] There's the potential rescue. If you trust Jesus, here's why you should believe in Jesus. Because of the potential rescue, you won't remain in darkness. Three reasons why one should believe.

One, potential rescue. So you may not remain in darkness. Here's reason number two. A painful end, else you will be judged.

Verse 47 and 48. Jesus didn't come to judge, but to transform, to save.

love. This gives us more clarification on his mission. Here's God's love for this rebellious world and sending his son so one must hear his words and keep his words.

If one only hears but does not keep, that one will eventually be judged, even though Jesus says, I came to you be saved. But notice what he says in verse 48. The one who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has that which judges him.

[31:28] The word I spoke is what will judge him not the last day. One does not merely hear Jesus' words and does whatever sheer he wants to do. One hears Jesus' words and keeps Jesus' words.

But notice he says, if you reject his words, it means you're not keeping his words and it means you're not receiving his words. And if this happens, it's these words that will judge you on the last day.

What Jesus said about himself and about his mission, that will judge you because Jesus will say, I told you to trust me. I told you why it came and you rejected, you refused.

It's why you should believe. There will be a painful end for you his words will render judgment upon you because all judgment has been given to the Son. His very words will judge you.

As Jesus said, or John, I should say, those who disobey the Son have God's wrath remaining on them. John 3.36. So Jesus makes his final appeal to come and trust him.

[32:44] I came in order that the world may be saved, not to judge, but if you do not receive my sayings and you reject them, you will be judged. He says, take this seriously.

A potential rescue, a painful end. Here's a third reason why you should believe in Jesus. Potent words. His sayings are God's sayings or the Father's sayings.

Because look at what he says in verse 49. For I of myself did not speak, but the one who sent me, the Father himself, has given me command what to say and what to speak.

Jesus didn't speak things from himself, making a bunch of stuff up. Oh, this will sound good. I'm going to give this to them. No.

That's not what he does. No, the one who sent him, the Father, has given him the command, the command of Jesus on what to say and what to speak.

[33:54] On what to say and how to say it. He speaks from the Father. Everything about Jesus and his ministry, look at what Jesus is saying here.

Everything about Jesus and his ministry was rooted totally and completely in the Father and what the Father wanted him to say. So if someone rejects these words from Jesus, you're rejecting God and these are potent words from God.

That's why it's so vital to trust him. These are the Father's words. It's significant to follow Jesus not only because one will face God's judgment but also because his words are the very words from God.

And notice what Jesus says here in verse 50. And I know, notice what Jesus says, I know, I know that his command is eternal life.

Friends, here's the Father's invitation. It's eternal life, not darkness. Not dying in your sin. Not perishing. Not eternal damnation. You should believe God offers the truth of Jesus, the gospel, to all people.

[35:14] Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Come. Therefore, Jesus says, the things I speak, just as a father's told me, in this way I speak, from Greek, in this way, in the same way I speak.

What the Father spoke to me, in this way I speak. Jesus spoke what the Father wanted him to say, and nothing else. Once again, we see this Trinitarian unity and relationship and relation that they have.

That's why it's so serious. That's why it's so significant. That's why you shouldn't take this lightly. And, by the way, it's these words that will lead to the ultimate work of Jesus from the Father. His mission. Which was his work on the cross. To sacrifice himself for his sheep. And that closes here.

Verse 50 of chapter 12. It closes Jesus' public ministry. And then we embark upon this journey from 13 to 17 where Jesus ministers specifically to his disciples.

[36 : 35] One last part. Come. Come. Receive Jesus. Jesus. That you can't. You won't. But you should.

All of humanity is not able to believe into Jesus and does not want to believe into Jesus. But we all should believe into Jesus. We all should receive Jesus.

These are potent words. A painful end. And you can be rescued. Why don't you come? Let's pray. And we do pray, Father.

Not just for those who are here that may not know you. But for us as followers of you to keep coming to you. Father, by your spirits make known to us where we are loving things or loving people more than you.

your grace has opened our eyes to your truth to see you, Jesus, for who you are.

[37 : 49] So keep making known to idols of our hearts. Increase our love for you, O Jesus, more than anyone or anything else.

I want to encourage you at this time. We do this each week after the message.

I encourage all of you to take this, this is about a minute or so. It's just between you and the Lord. Lord, just between you and the Lord Jesus to fill your mind with his truth.

Take in all that he said this morning to you. Fill your mind with gospel truth. Maybe take this time and pray, God, help me to love you more.

Maybe he's made known into ways that you're not. I don't know. But take this opportunity between you and the Lord. Again, it's like a minute.

[38 : 56] We'll sing a couple songs. We'll pray. Do this, if you would. Take this time. Do that now, please. Amen.