

John: The Word Became Flesh - John 7:1-24

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 January 2024

Preacher: Scott Liddell

[0 : 00] Today we are in John 7 and as you are turning there this week our passage is on the Feast of Booths otherwise referred to as the Feast of Tabernacles.

This Feast is one that is to remind the people of Israel of God's faithfulness in the way that He delivered them. In Deuteronomy it tells us that it is a place in which God shall choose for you to come and give Him praise. And so starting in 7 verse 1 it says, after this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. Now the Jews Feast of Booths was at hand. So as brothers said to Him, leave here and go to Judea that your disciples also may see the work you are doing for no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things show yourself to the world for not even his brothers believed in Him. Jesus said to them, my time has not yet come but your time is always here. The world cannot hate you but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.

You go up to the Feast. I am not going up to the Feast for my time has not yet fully come. After saying this he remained in Galilee but after his brothers had gone up to the Feast then he also went up not publicly but in private. The Jews were looking for him at the Feast and saying where is he? And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said he is a good man others said no he is leading the people astray yet for the fear of the Jews no one spoke openly about him. About the middle of the Feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. The Jews therefore marveled saying how is it that this man has learning when he has never studied? So Jesus answered them my teaching is not mine but him who sent me. If anyone's will is to do God's will he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true and in him there is no falsehood.

Has not Moses given you the law yet none of you keep the law why do you then seek to kill me?

The crowd answered you have a demon who is seeking to kill you?

Jesus answered them I did one work and you all marvel at it. Moses gave you circumcision not that it is from Moses but from the fathers and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If on the Sabbath a man received circumcision so that the law of Moses may not be broken are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well. Do not judge by appearances but judge with right judgment. Good morning. Good morning. We are in John's Gospel this morning. John in his Gospel has been writing for the purpose that people would believe in Jesus and we find ourselves in John chapter 7 today and John has been throughout his Gospel writing. We pick up the story a little bit I'm gonna skip ahead to John chapter 5 where Jesus heals a man. We go from that to John chapter 6 where he feeds 5,000 and then he walks on water and then testifies to being the bread of life appealing to people believe in me I am the bread of life. We come in then into chapter 7 and in this Gospel John is clarifying who Jesus is through a series of 20 questions. There's a question about more frequent than every third verse there's a question found in these in this chapter alone. Questions are frequent in this chapter and what's one of the purposes of the question one of the main purposes of why someone would ask anyone a question is to clarify I live and spoke in well what part of town do you live and spoke in what's the zip code or every question that one may ask may help clarify and bring more clarity as to exactly where in which I live. So what I'm going to do today in this message is try to distill in the passage that Cole just read three questions all of the questions found in that section

[4 : 45] I'm gonna try to distill to three questions and we're gonna ask and answer all these three questions and remember John's purpose in these questions is try to clarify who Jesus is and so we're gonna our first question that we come to is this why simply did Jesus come why did Jesus come we see in our first couple of verses after this Jesus went in verse 1 about in Galilee and he

would not go about in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill him now the Jews feast of booze was at hand and so we have some overarching context well we know that Jesus is up in the Sea of Galilee region up in Galilee and Jerusalem is down here in Judea and and Jesus is refusing to go down to Judea because people are wanting to kill him the text is reading to us so he's he's not wanting to do this but we're further informed of a something that that is occurring down in Jerusalem and that is now the feast of booze was at hand and why is that important well this is one of three pilgrimage feast that every adult male

Jewish man was to go to Jerusalem and celebrate this feast so it was incumbent upon Jesus to have to go to this thing down in Jerusalem where everybody wants to kill him and so that's the conundrum and that's the setting that is set before us that John wants us to understand and as Cole mentioned what's the feast of booze feast of booze was celebrated or commemorated to to have every if you will it's like an eight-day camping trip outside the city wall so you would just you would create a temporary shelter outside the city wall of Jerusalem where we and and you would dwell there for eight days after five days after the atonement day of atonement that that feast would begin and you build this temporary shelter and you dwell there why because it was to remind the people of Israel what it was like to live in a temporary shelter as they wandered for 40 years and how God provided for them and they would not move until the cloud moved and so the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night and if that thing stayed you stayed in your shelter if it moved you packed up your temporary shelter you moved until it stopped and you would then dwell again and so this this feast was to remember this season of scarcity and how God provided and as he led them into the promised land and it was a to as a feast each year that the Israel would commemorate to celebrate to remember how God provided for them and so this is important that Jesus go and his brothers know that and so they appealed to him in verses three through five so his brother said to him leave here and go to Judea and the disciples also may see the works that you are doing for no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly if you do these things show yourself to the world for not even his brothers believed Jesus was gaining quite a reputation up in

Galilee he as a prophet of God minimally as a prophet of God and if you will his brothers were goading him and saying hey if you're really the Messiah just go make it public go to Jerusalem make it public you're kind of a big deal up in here in Galilee but people don't readily accept you down there and if you want to make it if you're the Messiah go make it public and is this a serious appeal by his brothers or is this more of a cynical appeal verse five gives us a clue for not even his brothers believed in him and if you will they his brothers the half and these are Jesus's half brothers they they wanted Jesus to go to Jerusalem and be exposed as a fraud and we're and we're and we're asking the question why did Jesus come and one of the reasons why Jesus is delaying is he says my time has not yet come but your time has all already here in verse 6 the world cannot hate you but it hates me because I testify about it and its works are evil and you go up to the feast I am not going up to the feast for my time has not yet been fulfilled and so Jesus is responding if you will and answering this question why did Jesus come he says I'm not gonna go with you and by the way in verse 8 some manuscripts say I am not going up to this feast some manuscripts say I am not yet going up to this feast because you know we know that Jesus ultimately goes so he's not gonna go right now he's informing them and part of the reason is he keeps referring to this time my time has not yet come in verse 6 and he says it again in verse 8 my time has not yet come and it helps us know what time that is in answering the question why did

Jesus come his mission was not about gaining personal power or prestige or relegating his timetable to when he would die to his half brothers to determine that he rebuffed his half brothers pressure and tactics in verse 7 we find the reason why did Jesus come we find the answer to the question I believe in verse 7 the world cannot hate you but it hates me because I testify about it I testify about this world and its works are evil one of the purposes why did Jesus come Jesus came to expose sin and then to die for sin Jesus came why did Jesus come he came to expose sin look with me in verse 7 I testify about it the world hates me because I testify about it I expose the world's sin to itself but we also know he comes to die for sin because my time has not yet come and what time is he referring to the time when which he was glorified when he will die on the cross for to forgive sin so why did Jesus come he comes to expose sin and die for it and Jesus even does that even to this day when we read God's word we are sin is exposed and and we have one of two options we can come to Jesus when our sin is exposed for cleansing and confess our sin and accept his forgiveness or we can hate him for exposing our sin the world hated the Lord just this

week

I met a young man and we were we met for the exclusive purpose just to see how each other are doing and read scripture together and so we met and we chose a passage of scripture that just happened to be the beatitudes and so we were just reading blessed are the poor in spirit blessed are the meek blessed are those who mourn blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and this is the one that arrested me when I got to it so here I am spending time with the Lord and with a brother in Christ and we are reading scripture together and we come to this one believe it's found in verse 7 blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God and I we were talking about the application of this verse to one another and it led to confession in both of us for me I said is God the pure in heart think of someone who you could possibly think of who is the closest to being someone who is pure in heart and I was arrested I thought is God my first and every thought is God my first and every word is God my first and every action is am I pure in heart and so I confessed to this brother of all the beatitudes this is the one that most convicts me today and so then we had a time of confession we asked the Lord to forgive us and we left renewed knowing we were forgiven but it was it's good but this is what the Lord does he exposes sin and then he died for sin to forgive sin in this way Jesus is much like a doctor a good doctor will take in your symptoms and and by your symptoms he will expose exactly what may be wrong with it but they hopefully a good doctor just doesn't leave you there he will also offer you a solution if there is one and so it is what Jesus is doing and the Pharisees they don't want their sin exposed and this is how Jesus is so in contrast to the Pharisees Jesus exposed sins and then he forgives sin and the Pharisees are good at one of those two they're good at exposing sin they're good at exposing sin someone makes a mistake someone sins the Pharisees are good to point it out you can count on a Pharisee to point out someone else's sin they love to sit in the court and hand out punishment on the people in this next chapter we'll see in chapter 8 there's a woman who is caught in the very act of adultery no one could assume her innocence she was caught in the very act and and if you will they wanted Jesus to start throwing stones along with them and Jesus does not do that what does Jesus do he exposes their sin how does he do it he says if there is anyone among you who is without sin let him cast the first stone what is he doing and everyone ends up leaving he what is he doing he's exposing their sin and they hate him for it they all left and only Jesus the one who is truly without sin is the only one who is qualified to cast the first stone did not and he and he sins the woman away go and sin no more I pray in our friendships with others that we would take on this mantle this responsibility that we have this is what we do when we share the gospel we expose sin and then we point to the one who is forgiven sin and we say only

[15 : 52] Jesus can save you from your sin and and we would have that leavening influence in our friendship so why did Jesus come he came to expose sin and didn't offer forgiveness for sin for all who would believe in him second question we come to in our text would be this how does Jesus know so much look with me in verses 14 through 18 and about the middle of the feast Jesus went up to the temple and began teaching and the Jews therefore marveled saying how is it that this man is learning has learning when he is never studied so Jesus answered them my teaching is not mine but his who sent me if anyone's will is to do the God's will he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking of my own authority the one who speaks of his own authority seeks his own glory but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true and in him there is no falsehood so how did Jesus know so much this is one of the questions that they are marveling at with regard to Jesus because they in verse 15 they say how does this man have such learning when he has never studied he's not like us we we all the Pharisees and religious leaders they all went to synagogue and they all went to the they all went to they studied under somebody and that they went to this school or that school they they all had some form of education and they were thinking how does this guy know the law of God so well because he stood up in the temple and it began to teach how did he do that how did he know so much and notice what Jesus answered he did not say he did not say well I'm fully God he did not say that so how did

Jesus answer this question as they marveled at him notice with me he does say that I was sent from the father they could accept that one because they were used to God's sending prophets of God messengers of God to communicate with God's people they could accept that answer and so Jesus gives him that one but in addition though Jesus goes further in verse 17 in this verse 17 he answers the question this way if anyone's will is to do God's will he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking of my own authority so he says yep I'm someone who's sent

from God but secondly here is how I know so much and Jesus answers it this way if in essence you could take verse 17 and you could say it this way if you don't recognize the messages from God it's because your heart is unwilling to submit to God that is what he's communicating in verse 17 if you don't recognize that my message is from God then it's because your heart is unwilling to submit to God so Jesus is connecting the head with the heart and so if you will here's how you can answer this question how does Jesus know so much because he is saying he's communicating submission comes before understanding and what did Jesus personify exponentially yes he's God but one of the other things he does is he submits himself fully to the Lord which gains him understanding and he teaches so the gateway to the mind is then through the heart when we rebel against the Lord's will our ability to understand and comprehend spiritual truth is totally compromised put it simply unbelief causes misunderstanding we all know people who in a state of unbelief totally misunderstand understanding spiritual truth isn't simply about an intellectual exercise it's a spiritual exercise this is what concerns me about myself and for those who have had the privilege to study God's word formally whether a Bible college seminary or etc I I may know a little bit of Greek or a little bit of Hebrew I know nothing of Aramaic but you can memorize all the study notes in your Bible but until you submit to the will of God it makes no sense Jesus says by faith let me just communicate it this way submission comes before understanding let me illustrate it with an example if if I were to go out to a pond that is frozen it's not hard to imagine that in this season we were to go to a pond and there's something under the surface of the ice and but I cannot quite make it out I could go day after day after day it's it's disfigured I can't quite see it's fogged with the ice I can't quite see it clearly the only way to see what it is clearly that I am looking at is to break that ice and reach below the water and surface it and so if you will that ice layer is one's will that we need to break and why do I why do we need to break our will that is one of the keys to submitting to the Lord let me illustrate it with something very tangible we know that in Scripture and especially in the New Testament much of the New Testament gets at the root of greed and so the Lord talks about money a lot so I'm going to use money as an example of breaking our will and submitting ourselves to the Lord to gain understanding so you want to if you wrestle with discontentment and greed Jesus inextricably links our attitude toward money and the focus of one's heart he does it with Matthew 6 21 for where your treasure is there your heart will be so taking this concept God is after our hearts he puts something in front of us that is difficult what is the difficult thing that that is giving to give generously unto the Lord and to others so if you want to grow in contentment you want to grow in joy you want to to grow and knowing the Lord and being generous with others you want your heart orientation to be toward the Lord it's to put your treasure there and that's where your heart will be now logically thinking though that's a hard barrier to break I remember I remember being in high school just after I came to know the Lord and my parents told me that I should give to the to the Lord through the local church and I thought no no why would I do that I have college to pay for him I why why would I do this and then my my my father simply quoted 2nd Corinthians 9 6 through 7 the point is this whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully each one must give as what is decided in his heart not reluctantly not under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver and so my father just said listen Scott do you want to be pleasing to the Lord do you want to in your life reap bountifully not necessarily in monetary gain but in other areas of your relationships in other areas of your life do you want to reap bountifully well then give but do you see from where I was the thing that was in between myself and embracing this truth and submitting to the Lord is my will I needed to break through that will to submit myself to the Lord submission comes before understanding and then once you give generously and you're in that habit and you're giving sacrificially you understand a whole lot more of what this is talking about but until then it's hard to have that understanding let me use it in another area of my life I have been categorized among a group of people who have known to be as wound too tight and so being like that I I confess her about a lot of things I mean there's a million ways the cloud is gonna fall today and and it's up to me to figure out how to make sure those clouds stay aloft you know so when you're wired like that you can become anxious about a number of things and so and this is and so am I going to submit my will to the Lord with regard to everything he has said especially about anxiety so these verses things like come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest take my yoke upon me take upon pot yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble and hard and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light now I have a choice to make am I gonna cast all my cares upon the Lord and take him at his word and submit to this or am I gonna choose other routes of dealing with

ensuring the clouds stay aloft I have a choice in that moment to break my will and say Lord I'm gonna take you at your word I'm gonna submit to you and therefore by gain understanding submission comes before understanding that's the point so how is it that the Lord knew so much he says in verse 17 because I've submitted to the Lord and he's gained me understanding that's that's what he has said so I want to join the Lord in that route of submission becomes before understanding third question in this text who wants to kill Jesus who wants to kill Jesus we see in verse 1 that's one of the concerns that Jesus has is there were Jews and Judea who wanted it we're seeking to kill him and so then we find this text in verses 19 through the end of the section today we find this question prevailing has not Moses given to you the law and none of you seeks the law why do you seek to kill me Jesus is asking so then the crowd responds you have a demon who is seeking to kill you Jesus then responds to them I did one work and you all marvel at it Moses gave you circumcision not that it is from Moses but from the fathers and in you circumcise a man on the Sabbath if on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision so the law of Moses is not to be broken are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man whole body I made a man's whole body well do not judge by appearances but judge with right judgment so who wants to kill Jesus why are they bent on wanting the Lord dead and who is it they want to kill the Lord I'm gonna share why first is that Jesus is exposing their self-righteousness look with me in verses 23 and 24 what is at root of the issue we know that if you were born a Jewish boy in Israel and your parents were law abiding people keeping to the law of Moses what was their custom that on the eighth day after the child was born that child is to be circumcised so that that boy was to be circumcised on the eighth day but what happens if on the eighth day it just happens to be Sabbath what should you do are you gonna keep Sabbath or are you gonna circumcise the boy now those things are at odds and so Jesus is saying listen you circumcised the boy you did not keep

[28 : 48] Sabbath and yet you're upset with me Jesus is saying because I healed a man I made him whole and it just happened to be on the Sabbath you're just as guilty as I am and you're not judging by the right judgment and so what is their judgment what is the problem so Jesus is exposing their self-righteousness because what does self-righteousness do it says by my standard I get to determine what is right and wrong because I would never do that but I will do this and so I become the standard of right and wrong and that is at the root of self-righteousness and Jesus is exposing them you're breaking Sabbath but you're circumcising it's your standard I made a man whole but it's the Sabbath and you think this is wrong he's exposing their self-righteousness and so what is the problem in verse 24 making the right judgment is that they were judging by external categories do not judge by appearances these external categories but judge with right judgment their categories of Jesus were built on misconceptions that were leading them to erroneous conclusions as to who he was they needed a right authentic category which would lead them to conclude Jesus is the Messiah but all of their wrong categories are fueled by their self-righteousness and this motivates them infinitely so and I would say today it's true several millennia ago and it's true today that many struggle with self-righteousness including myself let me talk about the appeal why do we gravitate towards self-righteousness no one wants to think of himself as a bad person I've never had someone come to my office and say Scott I just want to confess that I'm self-righteous not one yet we generally believe that we are pretty good people and pretty righteous and this is the problem with self-righteousness is that it's so deceptive the Jewish leaders loved to compare themselves with the worst of society at least I'm not like a tax collector at least I'm not like a prostitute it self-righteousness we often compare ourselves with the worst to make ourselves feel better that's the appeal and that's also its deception in the Batman series comic book that you have a person who is called two-faced on one side of the face you have of two-face it's his name two-face you have a very handsome man strikingly handsome man and on the other side because of an accident he is badly disfigured and I think that's what it's like for us and those who are self-righteous is that we often will look at ourselves in the mirror only to see the side that looks good strikingly handsome but we fail to turn and see the ugly side of our self-righteousness and this is what Jesus is exposing Jesus is forcing themselves not to compare themselves with the worst in society but he's he's asking them to compare himself to him God in the flesh one of the other aspects of self-righteousness is is we we don't

often suspect ourselves as being self-righteous it's often we're immune to the examination when we are acting and being in a state of self-righteousness and this is why it is so dangerous so what is the danger of being self-righteous is that it squeezes out any area for grace religious leaders lacked

grace they didn't extend grace to others they didn't speak with grace why because they didn't have any need for themselves they didn't see themselves as having need for grace they saw their righteousness and they thought we are fine grace is irrelevant and unnecessary and those who see grace as unnecessary they will never show grace to others self-righteous when it is given room and before you know it it spreads to every corner of our being and grace is evicted do the nature of self-righteousness we feel good about it so if you lack grace in your tone you might just be self-deceived and self-righteous the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus because they healed the man on the Sabbath but Jesus said that healing and circumcision are no different both are ways to bless both are ways to care for below both are ways to show grace but due to their self-righteousness they could only bring themselves to see Jesus's kindness to the man as no good thing and they were anti-grace so I have three questions to conclude to give us application today to ask ourselves to diagnose whether we are self-righteous I will ask I'll ask the first one does your tone lack grace and keep in mind your actions have a tone you can remove snow with a tone you can bow the yard with a tone you can load the dishwasher with a tone that lacks grace you can you can drive your vehicle with a tone that lacks grace you can walk around the house with loud feet and with a tone that lacks grace but what do you do what do you do when you find that you are in a posture that lacks grace and your tone demonstrates it you apologize you confess that lords forgive me of my sin you apologize to the one you have the wrong tone and you seek to be reconciled and accept the Lord's forgiveness your speech also has a tone does your speech believe the best in another I would say it is a full-time job for all of us to believe the best in another it is a full-time job to continually practice the discipline of believing the best in another because oftentimes you and I may think I would never do that whatever it was I use this silly example all the time but I remember it fondly because it happened to me so someone did not reach out their hand to shake my hand and they were looking right at me but they didn't explain why they wouldn't they just didn't and I remember believing the worst about that person in that moment and then I was so convicted because I later learned that he injured his hand deeply and it hurt when people squeezed his hand and so he didn't offer it why didn't I believe the best and this is what I'm saying we're all making observations all the time every day about everything and do we believe the best and does your speech exemplify you believing the best in others all the time your speech has a tone and is it self-righteous mine was or does your speech hurt and harm accuse or does your speech ask thoughtful questions redemptedly curious questions to seek understanding does your speech defend others or does it accuse do you defend I love when I hear people say when someone comes to others and with a difficulty they have relationally with someone and they and they say you know what you are saying about this other person I don't know that person to be that way you should go to them and seek to be reconciled that is music to my ears rather than saying yeah I can totally see that person doing that one's defending one's accusing what is your speech does your tone lack grace is the first question second question how do you treat people who are different from you how do you treat people who are different from you the Jewish leaders circumcision on the Sabbath was fine but healing was not someone who is lame remember chapter 5 Jesus healing someone who had been lame for 38 years healing them on the Sabbath that's not fine but circumcising an eight-year-old baby that's a must for us the distinction may be age or forms of entertainment and use of social media and priorities and dress but self-righteousness is evident in how you handle those differences the whole point in self-righteousness is you are yourself is the standard of what is righteous that's the whole point that's the mantra thirdly do you excuse in yourself what you accuse in others do you excuse in yourself what you accuse in others the Jewish leaders could do something on the Sabbath that is circumcised that's okay but Jesus could not do something on the Sabbath that would be healing because it was clearly wrong if they did it it was wrong but if I did it it may be okay so do you excuse in yourself what you accuse others as wrongdoing and you would rationalize the behavior in yourself if you yourself did it if so you have found yourself to be self-righteous in hiding so the question is who wanted to kill Jesus and the answer is the self-righteous self-righteous kill Jesus and with that understanding I'm quite certain I would have been named among them on that day and so is there any hope for us who may be self-righteous first for those who don't know the Lord what was the point of Jesus and why did he come he came to expose sin and then to forgive it and that's what he did and so for all of us who are self-righteous we just we by faith believe in the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin and say Lord I have sinned grievously against you but

I believe in your life your sinless life your death for sin and resurrection overcoming sin and death on my behalf forgive me and for those of us who are in Christ first John 1 9 if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sin and cleanses from all and righteousness and so we do that we say Lord forgive me I have been exposed as a self-righteous person in hiding and I no longer want to hide please forgive me help me to be reconciled with you and then go to one who you have sinned against in yourself righteousness and say to that person I have sinned against you in this way would you please forgive me let us not be the standard by which we deem things right and wrong and leave that in the Lord's hand would you pray with me father I thank you for your word I thank you for how good you have been to us and you are to us thank you for your death on the cross we thank you for this story today that gave an account of how gracious and kind you are or we thank you that you are you came to expose sin but also die for sin thank you for dying for sin on our behalf Lord forgive us Lord I pray that we would have the same manner in which you knew so much that we would submit to you and we would break our will to honor you in every area of our life where we have a hard time believing you and taking you at your word may we break our will and submit to you and then gain a heart of understanding and then lastly Lord I pray that we would deny ourselves take up our cross daily and walk with you may we not be self-righteous people for that is one among many sins for which you died thank you Lord amen