

So What Do You Think About Jesus? The Model of Submission

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[0 : 00] I tell you, being an emotional person is a load to carry.

It's hard. But it's the way God wired me and so just here I am. You must be informed by the Scripture.

In fact, you can't really sing great songs apart from the Scripture. Tell your ma, tell your pa, our loves are going to grow.

Nothing, right? But when we sing such a song as we just finished singing, your love never fails. I don't know about you, but I was thinking about passages of Scripture.

And so we move from singing the Word to being instructed by the Word. And allowing the Word to be the thing that frames our life, our worship, and our ambitions for eternity.

[1 : 37] Isn't that right? Turn in your Bible to John chapter 7. And I want you to look at the clock, the watch.

We don't have a clock in the front or the back. There's a very good reason for that. All I'm saying is I do want you to know that when John finished our time of singing together, we're going to find out whether I can stomp on the throttle and get it done in fewer minutes.

And don't hold that against me and bring it up ever again. So, John 7, verse 1. After this, Jesus went in Galilee.

About in Galilee, he would not go about in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill him. Now, the feast, the Jews' feast of the booths was at hand.

So his brothers said to him, Leave here and go to Judea that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly.

[2 : 40] 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.

Let's pray. And here's what I want you to do as I am praying. I would ask that you pray as well. God, conscious, deliberate expression of your dependence upon the Spirit of God, helping me as I preach, and you as you attend to the Word of God.

Father, this morning we are gathered together because of the Lord Jesus Christ, and because you have given to us your Word, which is entirely sufficient, that we who are your children would be completely furnished for all good work.

We pray for the enabling of the Spirit of God both in my preaching that you would allow me through your enabling to be clear, to be simple in communication, to be passionate for the things that exalt the Savior and that your Spirit would take the word that you have here in the Scriptures and weave it into our heart that the thing that stands out to us would be the glory and the sufficiency and the supremacy of the Lord Jesus, that we, having not yet seen Him, would grow to care about Him more and long for the day that we will see our Savior face to face.

Let that be the ambition and affection of our life and let our time in the Word of God strengthen that desire. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

[4 : 38] Now, it is important when we take a small piece of passage to actually understand the larger context. context. And today is no exception to that rule.

So if I were to ask you, what is one verse that gives you an overview of what the book of John is about? How many of you would say, well, I'm thinking right now of John chapter 21, verse 31.

Would you say that? These things are written, what? So that you may know or that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

When we take the book of John and we are working our way through it, we understand that one of the characteristics of this book is that there's a lot of detail in Christ's life that's left out.

There are actually only seven major little pictures that are given to us. This is different than the synoptic gospels that give us lots of detail. And so when John limits his lessons to seven particular pictures, it's appropriate for us to really pay careful attention.

[5 : 53] And our text this morning stays on that theme of making it clear to us who Jesus is so that we may believe in Him as the Son of God. I do want you to understand that Jesus, at this point in John chapter 7, is still away from Jerusalem.

You'll remember what had happened as He'd started His public ministry in Jerusalem, the city of God. And how had He actually begun? How did He start? Does anybody remember? Wave at me if you remember what He did for His first public demonstration of His authority and power.

What did He do? That was actually a little more private. You're not doing bad because that's how John starts. But what was the big smackdown event in Jerusalem? Cleaning the temple, right?

I mean, here is a nobody comes bopping out of the... I am having trouble with this. Does anyone have chewing gum to stick on my ear here? Bear with me.

It's like masking tape might be good. Okay. Remember, He walks into Jerusalem and He goes into the temple and one lone guy cleans house.

[7 : 06] I mean, that's just unbelievable. And you remember, it was such an impressive act that all the scribes and Pharisees and all the leaders of Jerusalem could do as they kind of whine a little bit and say, yeah, and where do you get the right to do this?

You know, it's like, meh, meh, meh. And they're intimidated. Well, following that, Jesus ends up sensing adequate pushback from what He had done that He moved away from Jerusalem, went back towards Galilee.

And in that journey, you remember, He stopped and met the woman at the well, Samaritan woman. She came to Christ. And later, there we have John chapter 6.

And that extended passage is really an early picture of what was developing in the ministry. And we find that Christ's miracles were drawing lots of people to be interested in Him.

But Christ's teaching was leading to more and more people deciding that they didn't want what He really had to offer. And so we are now in John 7.

[8 : 13] And I might encourage you to actually pencil a note in your margin of your Bible. We are six months from the cross. I think that's important.

Six months from the cross. And what we find in John chapter 7, and we're going to look at verses 1 through 13, is really the widening gap between the people that Christ came to minister to and what His purpose and His calling really was.

So let's kind of take the passage and break it up and realize that what we find, first of all, is how most people actually saw Jesus. You look there in John chapter 7, and I want you to pick up with me there, if you will, at verse 2.

And it was the timing of the Feast of Booths. And for the nation of Israel, there were three public celebrations that all the nation of Israel was actually to be involved in.

One of them was a Passover, and we know that was a pretty big deal. But the Feast of Booths, in some ways, was the most spectacular, the most joyful. And it was one... By the way, I do want to tell you that I'm going to be on vacation starting...

[9 : 29] Actually, Pastor Saul is going to be preaching for two weeks in a row. You get to do one of my special passages. I'm like, shoot. But hey, that always happens. He is going to be preaching on John chapter 14, carrying on, and I will be back about two weeks later.

Judith and I, I have to confess this, I'm going deer hunting. I shouldn't say that publicly. But then after that, we're going down to Norris Lake, and we're going to spend a little time down there together. And we will come back and address John chapter 7, verse 37.

The Feast of Booths, a great party for a nation of Israel, was a time in which they reminded themselves of what God had done in bringing them out of the land of Egypt and slavery.

But it was also a time of great spiritual intent or import. It was where they actually, on the great day of the feast, and we're going to see this in John chapter 7, verse 37, they would actually take large pots of water and pour them down the steps of the temple.

And that was an indication of the promised coming of the Holy Spirit. It was a spectacular festival and a feast, and everybody loved coming to it.

[10:45] In that context, we find that the brothers, here in verse 4, so his brothers said to him, leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works that you're doing.

I want you to understand that the brothers were impressed by what they saw Jesus doing, and they, along with many, were actually impressed with Christ's power, but they were completely tone deaf to his truth.

They saw the miracles, they saw the evidence of his authority and power, but the truth of the matter is, is they weren't the least bit moved by the reality of what his message was all about.

I do want you to know, if you're stopping to think carefully, that what this passage tells us is that Jesus actually did have half-brothers. What does that tell you about Mary?

It tells you that she did not remain a perpetual virgin. It tells you that she had other children besides Jesus. And if you will keep your finger there in John, because of the false teaching regarding the perpetual virginity of Mary, I want you to turn in your Bible.

[12:00] At the end of the day, the question is, what does the Bible, what? What's it say? Okay. So we're thinking here, Jesus had brothers? Actually, they were half-brothers.

But turn to Matthew chapter 13. Matthew chapter 13, verse 35 and 36. Wow, I can hear all those pages rustling.

And I am discovering that I have tracked the wrong passage. That means one of you deacons is going to have to save me. 35 and 36. Where does it...

How did I do this? Okay. John... I mean, Tom, would you run the search engine that you have? And... Is it 55 and 56?

There we go. Okay. Is not... Yes. Three should be five. John 13, 55 and 56. Okay, here we go.

[13:04] Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? Are not his brothers, James, Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And are not his sisters among us.

What does this tell us? I mean, common sense, right? Mary had more children, quite a few actually, besides Jesus. And so here we find that, going back to John chapter 7, his brothers, they were impressed with the power that Jesus was displaying.

It was undeniable. They could see the things that were being done. But they didn't believe in him at all. And while they recognized that he was doing exceptional things, they really didn't see the value of those exceptional things in relationship to their own soul.

I kind of imagine what they were saying here. In the passage, he said, listen. He says, no one...verse 4... No one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, evident, obvious, show yourself to the world.

You see, in essence, what the brothers were saying is, hey, we recognize that you are displaying some exceptional power, and you might as well make something of yourself. Make a name. Let other people know what you can do.

[14:26] You've done some pretty spectacular stuff out here in the countryside, but take your game to another level. Go up to Jerusalem and let everybody see what you can do.

It's interesting that while they recognized Christ's power, they had no sensitivity to what his message really was about.

And I'm afraid that there are many, many people today that, like Christ's brothers, are all caught up in the superficial. They like good works. They like nice deeds. And they've completely missed the message of sin and repentance.

I was struck last week by listening to a short clip of President Obama kind of talking very favorably about the Pope, and he was just waxing eloquent about how the Pope was such a messenger for the disadvantaged.

And he said this, and the Pope has made it clear that the central tenet of Christianity is mercy. I thought to myself, hmm, the greatest disadvantage of the human race is not a need for mercy, but the greatest disadvantage of the human race is sin.

[15:41] And the truth of the matter is, is that God in His mercy sent Christ to be the substitution for our sin and to die in our place that we might have salvation through faith in Him.

So I recognize here at first that John is giving us a picture of, so what did people think about Jesus? Well, they kind of liked His miracles, okay. There's a second group that we find, and you'll pick up at the hostility.

First of all, in verse 1, it says, the Jews were seeking to kill Him. Again, in verse 11, it says this, the Jews were looking for Him at the feast, saying, where is He?

You know, they were interested, not because they wanted help from Him, spiritually speaking, but they were kind of put off by, is He going to show up and cause a problem for our party, you know, that kind of thing.

And you read that they had gone out of their way, actually, the Jewish leadership, to tamp down public conversations about Jesus.

[16:48] You find out that when Jesus showed up, it says here that the people, though they were muttering about Him, they were very careful that they didn't do it openly because they knew they would get kind of pushed back from the leadership.

And so you have to recognize this, that when the world goes out of its way to suppress the truth, you can be sure that what is going on is that conviction is being resisted.

I read an article, again last week, being that this is the first day of the week, I read of an esteemed doctor who was part of Harvard or was on the staff of faculty at Harvard who also had visiting privileges at a Boston hospital.

And several years ago, actually, he put together a private research paper that talked about the medical risks of sodomy. When he published this, among the other physicians in the hospital, it led to his actually being censured and eventually fired by the hospital.

Why? Because he pointed out that sin creates unintended consequences and heartache, and when in that private community, he said, listen, has anybody ever stopped to think that when we endorse all this kind of misbehavior that we actually end up creating greater public health needs?

[18:11] He was fired for that. I got to tell you that you can be sure that when the truth is spoken clearly and carefully, however kindly it is said, it ends up being offensive to those who hate the truth.

And you can be sure that Jesus here, as he spoke about the need of man's soul and the realities of sin, he ended up deeply offending the Jewish leaders who had proposed that ultimately the way to solve sin problems was just to do good works.

And you and I bump into people all the time that are of the mind that really the issue in their life can be improved by a little more effort on their part or it's just some guy taking care of some issues and it'll be okay.

So why are you going to go to heaven? Well, because I'm a pretty good person. Now, all of us have a tendency when we're smiling in public to say we're a pretty good person. Isn't that right? But the fact of the matter is that our conscience plagues us at night when we're alone.

And so I want you to recognize that the Jewish hostility over Christ's clear teaching was understandable. Now, there's a third group that I want you to recognize and you look there in verse 12 and there was much muttering about him among the people.

[19:30] They were muttering back and forth and that word muttering here is a word in the Greek that actually talks about complaining or bickering. No one in the bickering crowd really had a remedy or a conclusion.

What they were doing was just kind of going back and forth about the issues of who Jesus was. And so you look there at verse 12 and some said he's a good man. Some said, well, no, he's leading the people astray.

And back and forth they went just kind of throwing their ideas back and forth and they really weren't settled in any way with what the reality of who Jesus was and what his ministry was.

They didn't get that part at all. So instead of being humble enough to admit what their need was, the vast majority of people just chose to kind of muddle along and complain among themselves and be uncomfortable with the reality that on one hand you had the evidence of Christ doing spectacular miracles, undeniable, and on the other hand, well, he was teaching things that were really hard to swallow.

Remember what happened in John chapter 6? After he had finished his sermon and as they were playing verse 1 and only verse 1 of just as I am, what happened? All of you who need to recognize Christ as your Savior and confess your sins come towards the front.

[20:57] Nobody came. They all walked out. They didn't want to hear it. They were offended. They were offended. And so here we are, John 7, and it tells us that the people kind of just kind of muttered and grumbled and fussed a little bit but never came to a conscious and deliberate choice.

I'm reminded of actually what happened over in 1 Kings chapter 18, verse 21. Don't need to turn to it, but you'll remember there that Elijah, it had not rained for three years and so Elijah called for a

smackdown between him alone, the God of the universe, and the 450 prophets of Baal. And when they all came together on top of that little hill, he said, hey guys, what's the problem with you? Listen to what he said. Elijah came near to all the people and said, how long will you go limping between two different opinions?

I like that. How long will you go limping between two different, well, on the other hand, well, you know, he said, if the Lord is God, follow him.

But if Baal, then follow him. And here's what the people did. Does anybody know what the people did? They didn't say a word. And the truth of the matter is there are some of you here this morning in the hearing of the word of God that are going to take that passive, non-responsive role and play it out this way.

[22 : 23] You heard the word, you understand that Christ put you on the spot of saying yes or no and you're just going to kind of keep on doing your own thing. I would plead with you this morning, understand that the purpose of preaching is to put you on the spot of saying yes or no to Christ.

And understand this morning that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God and the one through whom salvation comes. And he calls you to believe in him and you who have believed in him, he calls you to live a life that is a stellar example of his power to save.

That brings us to one other thing that I want us to see this morning. What is the truth about Jesus? First of all, let's recognize that he understood his life's mission.

He understood his life's mission. His brothers wanted him to go up to Jerusalem and show his stuff, make a name for yourself, do something pretty spectacular, heal people.

Let everybody be impressed. Christ understood his life's mission was not just about taking care of the physiological needs of people. You know, I've been sobered when I stop and think about all the adulation, the praise and adoration that our culture has heaped on the Pope when I am struck by the fact that not in a single instance did he ever make the gospel clear.

[23 : 51] That's stunning. I mean, what would you think of a pastor that you listened to for longer than an hour and he never told you how to get to heaven?

John chapter 7, verse 7, just in case you wonder how Jesus handled this issue, here's what it says, the world cannot hate you but it hates me because I testify about the things, or I testify it that its works are evil.

Turn over in your Bible if you would to Luke chapter 6. Thank you, Tom, for helping me with that fall earlier. I think I've got this one right.

Luke chapter 6, verse 26. Woe to you, Tim.

Woe to you, Francis. When all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

[25 : 00] Hey, if I had one shot at Congress, does anybody want to guess what I would say? Huh? It would be this.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and the hope of eternal life rests in believing in his finished work upon the cross.

The greatest problem in mankind's existence is a sinful, wicked heart that rejects the glory and the holiness of God and there is salvation in no other person but in the work of Christ on the cross. Isn't that true? That is our one singular message that we have. And if you wonder what Jesus was all about, he understood his life's mission, it was to draw attention to the desperate need of mankind's heart and let them know they couldn't save themselves by their own efforts.

For another, as you think about it, Jesus was profoundly merciful and gentle but at the same time he was also clear that sin is man's greatest problem. Sin is man's greatest problem.

[26 : 14] I got to tell you, Jesus in many different instances could have chosen to accommodate the world that he was in and the people that for a period of time just loved his spectacular behavior.

I mean, what we know in John chapter 6, it tells us that the crowd wanted to take him and force him to be their king. He didn't do it.

And Satan comes to him and Satan earlier, if you're back in Matthew or in Mark, I believe you'll find that when Satan came to tempt Jesus, it was, hey listen, I can give you all this power, all you have to do is bow down and say that I'm, worship me.

No way. So I want you to understand that here is Jesus invited nowhere to speak in Washington or Jerusalem other than on his own initiative and the thing that he makes undeniably clear is that he came to be the Lamb of God and take away the sins of the world and I want you to understand that

Christ made that undeniably clear over and over and over again.

No one listened to him for very long and didn't understand that the issue of the heart was most important. There's a third thing that I want you to see this morning.

[27 : 36] I want you to know that Jesus knew that his call was to the cross. You look there in John chapter 7 verse 6 Jesus says my time has not yet come.

Look at verse 8 you go up to the feast for I am not going up to this feast for my time has not yet fully come.

You know what? Jesus knew exactly what the plan was. He knew what his mission was and his life was framed by that singular understanding of what he was there to do and that it was in the control and direction of his father and he completely got it.

He was focused on his mission. So let me ask you a question this morning as you think about the issue. What are you going to do with Jesus? The obvious question that we find playing out in John chapter 7 in these 13 verses that we kind of look at in an overview is that we've given we've been able to see this picture of how most people saw Jesus.

Pretty good with miracles but I'm not interested in what he has to say about my soul. Pretty irritating in that he draws attention to the fact that self-righteousness doesn't cut it and kind of confusing because you know on the one hand I see that he's doing some pretty big things but on the other hand he's really making me uncomfortable when he's talking about my soul.

[29 : 19] No, just kind of wait. John 7 gives us a picture of how the majority of people actually looked at Jesus. On the other hand we have Jesus with a very, very clear point saying to everyone that he came in contact with the desperate need of your heart.

Sinful, justly condemned before a holy God. Hardened, resistant is that there really is no remedy for the ugly darkness of your soul apart from me.

I want you to think about that because here's the truth. There's some of you sitting here today and I think that this passage in John chapter 7 kind of, everybody look up so you know I'm talking to you, right?

Everybody look up. I'm talking to you. I really am. There's some of you sitting here today that are actually pushing off Jesus just like that crowd did.

Some of you have grown up in Christian homes. You've heard all the Bible verses and you're kind of irritated by some of the idiosyncrasies that you're having in your context, right?

[30 : 40] Your parents want this or your parents, I'm not going to do that. Really? The main issue is not what your parents want. The main issue is what about the darkness of your heart? Are you listening to me?

There is no remedy for that dark and unhappy heart apart from what Jesus did on the cross in dying for your sins. And when a person comes to genuine faith in Christ, you know what the Bible says? It says they're born again. They stop being who they used to be and they are somebody completely different. I get excited about that. I was in the car last week with an individual.

I tell you, I bump into so many people who think they're saved. I mean, you know, after all, they find out I'm a Baptist pastor and they think the safeguard is I'm saved.

And I love telling them, if you're saved, you don't have to stay the way you are. In fact, Jesus died on the cross to guarantee the absolute certainty that not only do you go to heaven, but you get different.

[31 : 54] I was reading this morning in devotions where Jesus talked about salvation and He kind of compared it to, you know, when you plant a seed, something happens, right? When you put leaven in dough, what happens?

If the leaven is there, the dough does what? I know, some of you scientists want to tell me that you have to have the right humidity and you have to have the right temperature. Stop all that.

Okay? Just dough does its thing when there's yeast in it. Listen to me. There are some of you sitting here today that really can't give me any evidence or your own conscience can't give you any evidence that your profession of faith has made any difference in your life.

So ask yourself the question, which pile am I in? If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation.

And there's some of you here today that desperately need Christ and you think your problem is other people. It's not the case. On the other hand, to you who are believers, can I tell you something?

[33 : 11] A good picture of Jesus ought to absolutely inspire you to live every moment of your life with every breath you draw to make the spectacular Lord and Savior of this world evident.

Why are you here and not up there? For one reason, that Christ might be exalted in my life until he takes me home.

And anything less than that, anything less than that, dishonors the glory of the cross.

And so I would plead with you this morning, if you are a believer, glory in his name, live your life like he did with his mission clear in view and long for the day that you will see him face to face.

Let's close in prayer. Amen.