

PALOMINO VALLEY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Sunday, November 10, 2024

John 7:10-13

The Debate Over Jesus; What Do You Think Of Him?

Order Of Service

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Fellowship

Today

We are continuing our study of the gospel of John, and we find ourselves in chapter 7, verses 10-13, where Jesus went secretly to the Feast of Booths after sending His brothers ahead of Him.

Last week, if you recall, Jesus' unbelieving brothers mockingly challenged Him to go to the feast and demonstrate His signs and wonders, thinking He had lost His senses.

So Jesus sent them on ahead, saying, in *John 7:8* "Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come."

So Jesus waited until about half-way through the feast, then went to Jerusalem and taught in the temple.

Let us read our text together for today--

John 7:10-14

Vs. 10 But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret.

Vs. 11 So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, "Where is He?"

Vs. 12 There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray."

Vs. 13 Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

vs. 14 But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach.

Jesus intended to obey the Law by attending the feast as He always had done, but He knew the Jews would be looking for Him because of the grumbling and disagreement about who He was.

The Feast of Booths, or Feast of Tabernacles as it is also known, has a two-fold purpose:

1. To remember Israel's time wandering in the wilderness when they lived in booths after Egypt's Pharaoh released them after the tenth plague hit Egypt.
2. To rejoice and celebrate the harvest of grapes, olives, and other fruits.

Therefore, obeying the will of His Father, He went up to the feast quietly, either alone or perhaps with a small group on their way to the feast.

We can't be sure exactly when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem. Perhaps just after the feast began, but He waited until about the middle of the feast and then went to the temple and began to teach.

Four Views Of Jesus

Jesus' half-brothers, after growing up with Him, hearing His speech and seeing His miracles, they just could not bring themselves to believe He was the long-awaited Messiah; that He was sent by God to save them from their sins.

Like all the rest of the Jews, they were expecting a political savior so they concluded He was probably insane and refused to believe Him.

The religious authorities had different views. They could not bring themselves to believe in Him since He was just an uneducated carpenter's son who grew up in Nazareth.

But they had a deeper reason. Jesus was interfering with their social status by threatening their power and traditions. They saw themselves losing control of the people through the fear they instilled in them.

Jesus confronted them with their hypocrisy and reduced their income when He drove the money changers and sellers of animals out of the temple. So they did not only dislike Him, they hated Him enough to plan to kill Him.

Then there were those who thought well of Him, saying "He is a good man." They were aware that Jesus healed some people, even drove some demons out of them, but that was as far as it went; He was just a good man, a teacher who taught some strange but interesting things.

Intellectually, they approved of Jesus, but could not come to saving faith.

The fourth group disagreed, saying He was misleading people, causing them to "go astray." So, John wrote about his observations: *"There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him."*

There was a problem with each group. Jesus confronted all who would listen with their sins. Notice **Vs. 13** *Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.*

It was fear of the Jewish religious authorities that kept so many from publicly confessing their belief in Jesus. The Pharisees had no authority and power to arrest those who professed faith in Jesus, but they could influence the authorities who had that power; both the Roman authorities and the Temple police.

That same fear of what others will think of them if they voice approval of Jesus Christ exists in the minds of people today.

The problem with so many people in this world is that they love the world and all its attractions and temptations more than they love God. It's so much easier and safer to blend in with the world and not risk ridicule, or even rejection by friends and family.

But man is a creature that desires to worship something or someone, therefore many will choose a safe but false religion; one that does not confront him about his sins; one that makes him feel good about himself.

This is a fatal position to take because it will lead to the terror of God's final judgment and condemnation. The Apostle Paul wrote about this problem in:

Romans 1:18-21

Vs. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Vs. 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

Vs. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Vs. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Vs. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools.

This fear is a strange thing, is it not? Not many people have a fear of saying what they think about athletes or entertainers. Some even worship them. And we are comfortable with stating what we believe about politicians, right?

In fact, we take strong positions either for or against what they say and stand for.

But all that does not matter because what we think, say, and believe about other people really does not change anything. But there is one man in particular of whom what you think and believe about Him matters a great deal.

In fact, your life today and your eternal future depends on what you believe about this one man; the God-man Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote about man's darkened heart in *Romans 1:21*.

All through *John 6*, we learned about how the Jews grumbled about the hard teachings of Jesus, and how they finally abandoned Him because they would not accept Him or His teachings. Their unbelief came from their hardened hearts.

A hardened heart is a terrible disease. Oh, we know about the physical diseases of the heart, such as hardening of the arteries, etc.

But the spiritual disease of a hardened heart is the worst of the diseases. It keeps the afflicted person imprisoned in a spiritual death camp because a spiritually hardened heart refuses to repent of sins and believe in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Paul again mentions this as he wrote about the Gentiles in Ephesus:

Ephesians 4:18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

When Paul arrived at Ephesus, a coastal city in ancient Greece very near to present day Turkey, the population consisted of both Jews and Gentiles. The Gentiles were pagan, worshiping the false god, Artemis; a mother goddess, and Paul's concern was that many remained in a state of darkness; a state of ignorance about the one, true, living God because of their hardened hearts.

Paul wrote about their ignorance *because of the hardness of their heart*. Many refused to believe Paul's preaching because of their pagan worship.

It's the same in our modern culture. What we think and believe about Jesus Christ is critical to the well-being of our nation. Is He both Lord and Savior, or just a teacher and a good man?

Idolatry comes in many forms, and hearts are hardened for the sake of money, social status, jobs, the love of power, and the fear of losing it. We have seen and heard the evidence of an idolatrous nature in the recent political campaigns.

God was recognized as existing, and, occasionally asked to bless our nation, but the name of the Lord Jesus Christ was never mentioned, nor were His teachings mentioned, as far as I can recall.

Instead, as the time of election grew close, name-calling in one political party took precedent over truth and solutions to our nations problems. Sadly, those of the other main political party were called Nazis, Fascists, Deplorable, and, yes, even Garbage.

It was a far cry from the faith and mentality of our Founding Fathers, of whom at least 26 were Christian seminary graduates. Why? Because so many of our citizens have developed the affliction of a hardened heart.

A new study by George Barna and the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University found this:

69% of our United States population claim to be Christian. However, just 6% of U.S. adults (which is 9% of identifying Christians) possess a biblical worldview, meaning they believe the Bible to be the accurate and inspired word of God.

Barna found that there is a large gap between those professing Christians who believe what the Bible *may teach*, and what it actually teaches!

There is a principle we need to understand because it has to do with the future well-being of our nation, and we must go back to ancient Israel to apply it.

During Israel's and Judah's history there were 43 monarchs; 42 kings and 1 queen

After Solomon, 19 kings *"did what was evil in the eyes of the LORD."*

In Judah, 8 of the 20 kings of Judah *"did what was right in the eyes of the LORD."*

There was Jehoash, Amaziah, and Uzziah among those who did right, and the nation prospered.

During the reigns of the evil kings, God sent prophets to warn them, along with all the people. And every time hardness of the heart caused God's message to be ignored, Israel and Judah suffered, even to the point of being carried away into slavery for 400 years.

We know that God never changes. He is immutable.

If you study the forming of the United States of America, beginning with the Puritans who left England to live in Holland for 12 years before sailing to our eastern shores and landing at Plymouth Rock harbor, Mass. in November 1620,

and the writing of our Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War headed by General Geo. Washington, followed by the writing of our Constitution,

you will find the providential hand of God in the forming of our nation, protecting it and prospering it.

And, since the late 1800s, and especially during the last 60-70 years, as a nation, we have steadfastly drifted away from God because of the hardness of the hearts of many of the American people.

This is evident in the policies and legislation of our recent governing administrations, which are mostly anti-God and anti-American in nature, resulting from darkened, unbelieving hearts.

Oh, some profess the Christian faith, but what is their view of God's word? Is religion their savior, or is Jesus Christ Lord and Savior? Does the Bible really mean what it says, or does it teach something that fits men's approval?

Ask yourself, Why is public prayer being banned in some places in our nation? Why are Bibles banned in some schools?

Why is our nation suffering economic problems such as unprecedented inflation? Why are we suffering unusually disastrous weather problems?

And, why are so many in our nation against Israel, God's people?

The point is that until our nation's governing people do what is right in the eyes of God, we are not going to see positive changes in our country.

And that is not likely to happen until the Christian churches in America stop compromising the preaching and teaching of the Word of God and His gospel, and return to the truth of Scripture; that Jesus Christ is God, as is the Father and the Holy Spirit,

and He requires repentance of sins and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; faith in His sacrificial atonement for our sins, in His resurrection, His gift of grace and eternal life, and in His coming again to defeat His enemies and rule this world.

You ask, "How is that going to happen? We are dealing with a nation in which half the people have hardened hearts!"

It starts with you and me. It starts with committed Christians in the churches spreading the truth about the gospel of Jesus Christ to anyone who will listen, along with the truth about themselves and their need for salvation in Christ.

This is our responsibility and command by Christ; to go and make disciples, and we need to show our gratitude for our salvation by obeying Jesus' commands.

This is where the Apostle James speaks about works, which some have misunderstood. Works does not save, yet works are necessary.

He writes in *James 2:20-23*

Vs. 20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow. That faith without works is useless?

Vs. 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

Vs. 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected,

Vs 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." and he was called the friend of God.

The rest is up to God's Holy Spirit; to awaken those whom He has chosen and drawn to Him, "to be born again."

The Apostle Peter's reply to Jesus when He questioned him:

John 6:68b "You have the words of eternal life.

Vs. 69 "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

Who do *you* say Jesus is? Is He a good man who teaches and heals people, or is He God our Lord and Savior?

I will conclude with a quote from C. S. Lewis:

"You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

Amen!

Let us pray---

Worship

Benediction: 2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Amen!

Fellowship