



Sunday, April 12, 2026

John 7:25-53

It's been three weeks since we've walked through the first half of John 7 so I thought I would take some time this morning to give us a bit of a refresher before jumping right back in. In the first half of the chapter, John indicates that this whole chapter takes place during the Feast of Tabernacles - which was a celebration where the people would build mini tabernacle-like shelters out of palm branches and live in them for a week as a way of remembering how God provided for them way back after the exodus, and how He would continue to provide for them. And what John is showing us is that this same God is now standing among them in the flesh - that Jesus is Emmanuel - God with us.

But we also saw that even as 'God with us,' Jesus doesn't always look the way people expect. Even Jesus' own brothers struggled to believe - not because they thought He was nothing, but because they couldn't accept who He truly was. Like many of the people of that day, they wanted a visible, impressive Messiah - someone who would storm Rome, perform even more undeniable signs, and build a powerful following.

But when Jesus showed up to the feast to teach instead of perform miracles, this exposed a much deeper issue: that they were judging by outward appearance - they wanted His works, not His words. And when His works, didn't match up to their expectation, they completely disregarded His words altogether.

But the beginning of John reminds us that the works are always secondary to the Word: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' Even in the creation account in Genesis, everything begins the same way: 'Then God said.' Which means that His words give authority to His works not the other way around. And that tension - between His works and His words, between what people expect and who Jesus actually is - is what continues to unfold as we move into the rest of the chapter.

His Word is truth. His Word existed before anything else. And nothing that exists came into being apart from His Word. Which means we don't start with what He does - we start with what He says. And once we trust that His Word is true, we don't need Him to meet our expectations in order to believe.

So if you have your Bibles with you this morning, I'd like to invite you to turn with me to John 7 where we will be reading from verse 25-53. And if you're able to, please stand for the reading of the Word of the Lord:

John 7:25-53

'25 Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? 26 Yet, look, he's speaking publicly and they're saying nothing to him. Can it be true that the authorities know he is the Messiah? 27 But we know where this man is from. When the Messiah comes, nobody will know where he is from."

28 As he was teaching in the temple, Jesus cried out, "You know me and you know where I am from. Yet I have not come on my own, but the one who sent me is true. You don't know him; 29 I know him because I am from him, and he sent me."

30 Then they tried to seize him. Yet no one laid a hand on him because his hour had not yet come. 31 However, many from the crowd believed in him and said, "When the Messiah comes, he won't perform more signs than this man has done, will he?" 32 The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things about him, and so the chief priests and the Pharisees sent servants to arrest him.

33 Then Jesus said, "I am only with you for a short time. Then I'm going to the one who sent me. 34 You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come."

35 Then the Jews said to one another, "Where does he intend to go that we won't find him? He doesn't intend to go to the Jewish people dispersed among the Greeks and teach the Greeks, does he? 36 What is this remark he made: 'You will look for me, and you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"

37 On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 The one who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him." 39 He said this about the Spirit. Those who believed in Jesus were going to receive the Spirit, for the Spirit had not yet been given because

Jesus had not yet been glorified.

40 When some from the crowd heard these words, they said, “This truly is the Prophet.” 41 Others said, “This is the Messiah.” But some said, “Surely the Messiah doesn’t come from Galilee, does he? 42 Doesn’t the Scripture say that the Messiah comes from David’s offspring and from the town of Bethlehem, where David lived?” 43 So the crowd was divided because of him. 44 Some of them wanted to seize him, but no one laid hands on him.

45 Then the servants came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him?”

46 The servants answered, “No man ever spoke like this!”

47 Then the Pharisees responded to them, “Are you fooled too? 48 Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in him? 49 But this crowd, which doesn’t know the law, is accursed.”

50 Nicodemus—the one who came to him previously and who was one of them—said to them, 51 “Our law doesn’t judge a man before it hears from him and knows what he’s doing, does it?”

52 “You aren’t from Galilee too, are you?” they replied. “Investigate and you will see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”

53 Then each one went to his house.’

OK, so you’re probably familiar with my opening line to almost every message in John lately. There is a lot to unpack in these 25 or so verses and today we’re going to walk through some of the high points but as always, there will be some points that we’re not able to completely dissect over the next 30 minutes or so. This is a great opportunity for you to do some digging on your own throughout the week, especially for those of you who are connected in a life-group, see where the conversation goes. And again, just a quick plug, if you are not yet connected to a life-group, I encourage that because this is a great way to take the message from Sunday and gain deeper knowledge and application and also to surround yourself with community and grow deeper as a follower of Jesus Christ. Again, just scan the code on the seat in front of you and it’s as easy as that to sign up.

So, let’s unpack this together. Because even though this section feels very dialogue-heavy, the message is actually pretty straightforward - and it flows right in line with what John has already been

showing us in the first half of the chapter.

So, Jesus makes His way up to Jerusalem, and instead of performing signs and wonders like many would have expected, He begins to teach instead. And this is where things start to take a bit of a turn.

It seems that the people are confused. They recognize Jesus - and they know that this is the same man the authorities were trying to arrest earlier - and yet now no one is stopping Him. So they start asking, 'Wait... isn't this the man they were trying to kill? And here He is, speaking openly - and they're saying nothing. Could it be that the authorities actually think He is the Christ?'

But almost as quickly as the question comes up, they talk themselves out of it. Because - contrary to what Scripture actually teaches - they've been influenced by the idea that when the Messiah comes, His origin would be unknown.

But they think they know where Jesus is from. They know Nazareth. They know His background. And even though the Scriptures actually pointed to Bethlehem, they're not putting the pieces together.

Why?

Because many had already decided in their hearts that Jesus is not what the Messiah is supposed to look like. And anything that didn't fit that expectation... gets dismissed. Even Scripture.

So many conclude - He can't be the one.

Watch this. Even though we aren't told whether Jesus overhears their comments or supernaturally discerns what was going on, He responds by crying out so that all would hear.

And while He's responding to the crowd... what He says actually cuts straight through to the religious leaders.

Essentially now saying: '...you think you know where I'm from... but you have no idea.' Because yes, they may have known His earthly background - but they completely missed His true identity. He came from the Father. The very God they claimed to know...they didn't actually know. Because the only way to truly know the Father is through the Son - and that Son is standing right in front of

them in the flesh.

And this is what pushes them over the religious leaders over edge. Because this isn't just a misunderstanding anymore - they considered His words blasphemy. Think about it. These are men who had devoted their entire lives to God - studying the Law, obeying it, teaching it, preserving it. Their whole identity was built on knowing and honouring God. They were the ultimate authority. If anyone had questions about God, these were the men you went to. And for many of them, they prided themselves on how vast and wide their knowledge about God was.

So when Jesus cried out, He wasn't just correcting them, He was confronting them - challenging their authority by saying: 'you think you're the authority on God...but you don't even know Him. Because if you did, you would recognize His Son.'

And if you follow the trajectory here, we can see that the ordinary people in the crowd who are beginning to believe in Jesus now have a truer understanding of God than these religious leaders they've been sitting under for years.

Which means all their effort, all their knowledge, all their religious devotion - if it doesn't lead them to Jesus - it's missing the point entirely.

Because access to the Father doesn't come through heritage, status, or religious performance. It comes through Jesus and Jesus alone.

In John 14 Jesus would reiterate this to His disciple Thomas and leave no room for doubt by saying:

John 14:6

'...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will also know my Father.'

And, just as He told the woman at the well that He is the living water, Jesus uses that same imagery here in verse 37 to make the same point: that anyone who comes to Him will not thirst again, but will have streams of living water flowing from within. And those streams are referring to the presence of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus would send to dwell within us - so that true knowledge of God wouldn't come through a religious system, but through a living relationship with Him.

Which means that it doesn't matter your background, your ethnicity, your religious history, or your

status - if you want to know the Father, you must come through the Son.

So, naturally, at this point, the religious leaders are fuming. And again and again, they try to apprehend Jesus with the intent of killing Him.

But, they can't.

Again and again, they try to take Him, and again and again, they fail. Not because they lack the ability... but because they lack the authority. This is key. No man would be able to take Jesus until the appointed time - only when He allowed it - would He be handed over.

Which means that even when His disciples would later see Him betrayed by Judas, beaten and flogged by the Roman soldiers, and hanging on a criminals cross... He wasn't put there by men. He allowed it. He chose it. Nothing about it was outside of His control. And that -right there - is the ultimate display of His authority.

But the religious leaders could not submit their authority to Jesus and as a result they became entirely fed up with Him. They had no luck apprehending Him in the past, so they sent the temple guards to do it instead. And just like everyone else who had tried, they came back empty handed. The Pharisees and chief priests are angry and press them saying: 'Why didn't you bring Him in?'

But notice their response - it's not that they couldn't - like everyone else - it's that they wouldn't. Something changed. It wasn't that they were incapable, it was that His presence - through His words - transformed their hearts and minds to the point where their motives changed. Absolutely amazing!! It wasn't the miracles, not the healings, nor the signs and wonders...it wasn't the displays of power over the storms...

...it was His words. Listen to their response:

'Nobody has ever spoken like this man.'

Of course no one has ever spoken like Jesus...His words are the words of life. His words are the very words that spoke creation into existence. His words speak light to the darkness...life to death...peace to chaos...truth to lies...joy to sorrow...

And yet - the religious leaders of the day - the very ones who were supposed to lead people to God

could not see Him.

Would not see Him.

Their hearts were hard - set on their own deception.

So they turn on the temple guards and mock them - essentially saying, 'You've been deceived. You're the foolish ones - you don't even know the Law.'

Then they try to prove their point with a rhetorical question: 'Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in Him?' The implied answer? No one.

Except, maybe one. Cue Nicodemus.

Who is this man? Well if you remember all the way back to chapter 3, John tells us that:

John 3:1

'There was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.'

Which means he wasn't just a Pharisee - he was a leader among them. A man of status, influence...a man with great authority. By every worldly measure, Nicodemus was a big deal.

And in Chapter 3, he came to Jesus one night, in private, with questions. Jesus tells him that he must be born again, explaining that 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.'

And then that's it. Nicodemus leaves and that's the last we read of him...until now. And when he speaks, he challenges the other religious leaders by essentially saying - since you know the Law so well...

'Does our Law decide about a man's guilt without first listening to him and finding out what he is doing?'

Do you see what he's doing?

The very ones claiming to know the Law... aren't even following it.

In other words - you're supposed to hear Him out. Before you make up your mind... before you dig your heels in... Before you dismiss Him - listen to Him.

Nicodemus is essentially saying, 'Do what I did.' And then make your decision.

The Pharisees think none of their own have believed in Jesus, but they don't know what we know! One of their own - their best and brightest - has been listening. And now, he's inviting them to do the same.

But look at their response. Their pride has taken hold of their heart so tightly that they cannot hear the wisdom of his words, and they start mocking his place of birth, saying that nothing good comes out of Galilee. It's immature, it's foolish, it's what happens when pride grips your heart and you are so convinced that you can't be wrong that you refuse to hear the truth - even when it's right in front of you.

And so the chapter concludes - very similarly to how it opened up - with the religious leaders stuck in their way....refusing to see Jesus for who He truly is. Refusing to allow God to soften their prideful hearts and determined - more than ever - to rid the world of this Jesus character. It wasn't that they couldn't believe, it's that they wouldn't. They were so committed to their own misunderstanding that they refused to be corrected by the truth. Oh that we would be a truth-seeking people. That we would hold fast to the Words of Jesus Christ as we navigate a world and a culture that needs to hear the word of God now, more than ever before.

2 Points to consider as we close:

Faith doesn't begin with what we see... it begins with what He has said. And this whole chapter has been about the power of Jesus words. Often times like the people of Jesus' day, we want the signs and the wonders and the miracles but Jesus' reminder today is that although those are around us, there is incredible power in His words. They are truth. They are trustworthy. The Word of God is sharper than a double edged sword. It is our power as Christians. His Word is our weapon. Too many Christians rely on the words of other people to get them through difficult times. My challenge to you is start picking up the word of God first and foremost. Ask the Lord to reveal Himself to you through His Word.

On numerous occasions, Jesus refers to himself as the living water. The ultimate reality is that every single human being on earth is thirsty. And we try and quench that thirst with a multitude of things. But nothing will satisfy like Jesus Christ. So maybe the question for us today is what are you thirsty

for? The things of this world will never satisfy. So what needs to change so that your thirst can be quenched by Christ? What needs to be laid down so you can pick up Christ. You can't hold on to both the things of the world and the things of the Spirit: example Clara and the apple pit at the park.

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