

## John, Part 27: I Can See Clearly Now

**John 7:10 ESV** But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private. **11** The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?" **12** 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." **13** Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.

**14** About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. **15** The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" **16** So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. **17** 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. **18** 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. **19** Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?" **20** The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" **21** Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it. **22** Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. **23** If on the Sabbath a man receives 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? **24** Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

- I. In our text last week, Jesus' brothers were urging him to go to Jerusalem, to the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles (or booths) so that he could show off and do some miracles and a little crowd-pleasing teaching. They told him that this would be the best way to win new followers and garner new support.
  - A. John tells us however, that the brothers were not motivated by zeal for Christ's glory, or the advancement of his kingdom, but rather they challenged him because they doubted, and were not themselves even believers in him.
    1. But in response to their challenge, Jesus says he is not going to the feast. **John 7:8 ESV** You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." **9** After saying this, he remained in Galilee.
    2. So the brothers went up to Jerusalem, probably with a caravan of other Jews from their village, while Jesus stayed put in Nazareth.
  - B. But this could seem odd considering the way the passage began in verse 10: **John 7:10 ESV** But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, **then he also went up, not publicly but in private.** There are at least two things that seem to be problems with this that we must address.
    1. First of all, Jesus was required by Jewish law to go up to the feast. It would appear that Christ (who perfectly kept the Law) was willing to violate it when he says in verse 9 that he wasn't going and remained in Galilee. This becomes a non-issue, however, when he eventually goes to the feast.
    2. So more importantly, we must ask ourselves whether Jesus was being dishonest or deceptive with his brothers when he said he **wasn't** going to the feast. Let's let the original Greek clear this up for us.
      - a) According to the ESV Study Bible notes, "The Greek present tense (word used) in v. 8 can legitimately have the sense, 'I am **not now** going,'"

- b) Either way, it would be a huge stretch to imagine that Christ was dishonest or deceptive with his brothers. His meaning was most likely “I’m not going **now**” or “I’m not going **with you**” or even “I’m not going **with the selfish motives with you are suggesting**”.
- C. But more importantly, look at the phrase that tells us exactly how Jesus **did** go...“**not publicly but in private**”. The brothers wanted Jesus to go with flair and pizzazz, blowing the minds of everyone present. But Jesus shows up privately and unassumingly, “as if he did not wish to be observed” (AMP). Many love it when the Lord makes a big, public display (pillars of fire and parting seas). But don’t be surprised when he prefers instead to make a deeply personal impact.
1. We see this throughout the gospels. No one but his mother and the servants knew he had turned water into wine at the wedding. He met with Nicodemus alone and after dark. Often after a healing, he would tell the person not to speak a word of what happened. On the mount of Transfiguration and in Gethsemane, he limited the audience to three trusted disciples; Peter, James and John. He would even tell the demons not to reveal his true identity as he cast them from their victims.
  2. How much different is this from Jesus’ brothers! They wanted him to make a **name for Himself**. But Jesus, confident in the approval of his Father, knew this was completely unnecessary. He would soon be **given** a name that was above every other name. Why fight, strain, and compromise to be noticed and applauded by the likes of you and I?
  3. And how different is this from the approach we often take toward life and ministry? We desire BIG revelations and HUGE miracles! We want press coverage and all the attention and prestige that comes with it!
- D. **1 Kings 19:11 ESV** And (God) said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord.” And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, **but the Lord was not in the wind**. And after the wind an earthquake, **but the Lord was not in the earthquake**. **12** And after the earthquake a fire, **but the Lord was not in the fire**. And after the fire **the sound of a low whisper**. **13** And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”
1. That’s all well and good for the old, depressed prophet, but we **want** a tornado! We **want** an earthquake! We **want** a fire! What’s so exciting about a whisper?
  2. And just like that, we settle for experiences that we think seem **like** God, at the expense of having an encounter with God when he arrives in stillness.
  3. **Isaiah 30:15 ESV** For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, “In **returning** and **rest** you shall be saved; in **quietness** and **in trust** shall be your strength.” But you were unwilling...
  4. Jesus comes to us quietly, without fanfare. He does not need our insistence on an experience.
    - a) We must stop dictating to God how he should show up, and just ask him to show up! And be satisfied when he does.
    - b) The Jews of John 7 didn’t get this at all! They had no ability to perceive Jesus or understand him. Listen to the confusion they had about him...

E. **John 7:11 ESV** The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, “Where is he?” **12** 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.” **13** Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him. **14** About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. **15** The Jews therefore marveled, saying, “How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?”

1. Jesus had defied their expectations. They were disappointed in Jesus as they sized him up according to their mental image of who he should be! They weren't seeing clearly, and therefore had no idea who they were looking for!

a) Some said, “**Where is he?**”, disappointed that he hadn't come when they traditions beckoned him to do so! Are we ever guilty of thinking that if we create just the right feel with our music, or if our lighting was just right, or if we would preach with just the right inflection, that God would “show up” as if he can be summoned by some whiff of a polished atmosphere?

b) Some said, “**He is a good man!**”, thinking that they needed to defend him. Are we so afraid of what people think of Christ and his demands that we try to soften the blow for others, trying in vain to protect the reputation of the Holy and altogether lovely King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

c) Some said, “**he is leading the people astray**”, because they were offended by what following him required them to surrender (traditions). Are we unwilling to give up something you treasure more than him? Has his call to undivided allegiance caused you to be offended?

d) Are you one of the ones **fearful to even speak of Him** because of what others might think?

e) Some said, “**How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?**” Are you so preoccupied with why God wouldn't work in a certain way, say a certain thing, or do a certain thing that you dismiss what he is doing?

2. It's clear that the perception of the Jews was clouded by their own prejudices and misplaced sensitivities. They couldn't see the Messiah standing right in their midst!

F. So Jesus addresses the reason behind all of their misguided thinking in one concise statement. **John 7:16 ESV** So Jesus answered them, “**My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.**”

1. The reason they can't understand is that he is speaking a message from an unearthly realm of pure truth and wisdom, untainted by sin.

2. **John 3:12 ESV** **If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?** Essentially, Jesus was speaking a different language than the Jews (heavenly vs. earthly)!

G. But isn't this true of all of us? Isn't our “native language” fundamentally different from God's? We have all been frustrated, offended or at least left scratching our head about what truth is, or what God had ordained in our life, or what His will was. Jesus is about to tell us all why that is...

II. **John 7:17 ESV** **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.**

- A. Jesus said that the first thing necessary to understanding what is true is **desire**; specifically, **the will to do God's will!** This was the first place the Jews didn't see clearly. They didn't understand the importance of **desiring** the will of God.
    - 1. Why is this important? Because most of us have been taught that if we could just **understand** God's will, we would desire to do it. If our friends and family **understood** how rich and beautiful following Jesus was, that they would want to join us! In our mind, understanding **precedes** desire.
    - 2. But Christ is saying exactly the opposite! He is saying that if you desire to do God's will, only then will you understand it! Instead of praying only for understanding, we should mostly pray that we would desire God's will.
  - B. The Pharisees **assumed** that they were experts in God's will; especially for everyone else! But listen to what Jesus said about their spiritual condition **Matthew 13:14 ESV** Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ""You will indeed hear **but never understand**, and you will indeed see **but never perceive.**"**15** For this people's **heart** has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.""
    - 1. They would hear and not grasp, they would see and not perceive. Why? Because their **heart** had grown dull!
    - 2. The heart is the seat of their desire, their will, their emotions and passion. Though they were hearing this message, it eluded them; not because it was too high or difficult, but because the desire of their hearts had been disconnected from the Father; concerned with much lesser things!
- III. **John 7:18 ESV** 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. **19** Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?" **20** The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?"
- A. Jesus points out their blindness further by telling them that while he is motivated by nothing more or less than the glory of the Father, they are motivated by their misguided perceptions of the Messiah and their own entrenched hypocrisy.
    - 1. He points out to them that even though they all have hung all of their hopes on the Law of Moses, they are all law-breakers! They used the Law like some sort of corrective lenses to see the world, looking outward. All they saw was everyone else's sins and faults; appointing themselves to be God's referees!
    - 2. But James tells us that the Law isn't for looking outward like a pair of glasses. Rather, it is a mirror, wherein we see our **own** lack, brokenness and sin; and become aware of our desperate need for a Savior!
  - B. At this point, Jesus poses a question, "Why are you trying to kill me?" In their shame and the exposure of their sin, their knee jerk reaction is to lie and curse Jesus (not a safe thing to do)! "You have a demon! Who's trying to kill you?"
    - 1. We know that for at least two chapters they have already been trying to put him to death (see John 5:18)! They are lying. But Christ can't be fooled.

2. Their deception is so deep that they think that they can fool the one who has just uncovered the most hidden secrets of their hearts and what was discussed behind closed doors.
- C. I remember the times in my life when I struggled severely with lust and anger and all kinds of secret sins; things that a good little church boy like me wouldn't want anyone to know about! But I realized one day that though I was hiding my sin from others, I wasn't getting away with anything! There was One sitting on a throne who knew it all. This attitude represented the second place where the Jews didn't see clearly, They thought they could conceal things from Jesus.
- IV. **John 7:21 ESV** Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it. **22** Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. **23** If on the Sabbath a man receives 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? **24** Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."
- A. Jesus presses the issue. He refers to the miracle in chapter 5 where he heals the man who had been paralyzed for 38 years by the pool of Bethesda.
1. Well healings are all well and good, however, in the Jews mind Jesus made three huge mistakes, so they threw a penalty flag.
    - a) First, He healed the man on the **Sabbath** day (a day when no "work" was to be done!).
    - b) And not only did he violate the Sabbath, but he had the nerve to tell the man to carry the mat he had laid on for 38years **on the Sabbath** as he went away healed!
    - c) Lastly, in the ensuing confrontation, he said he was God's Son, making himself equal to God!
  2. It was for these reasons that they began to plot his demise according to John 5:18.
- B. Jesus uses this as the framework to further point out their spiritual blindness and the rottenness of their hypocritical spirits using the very Law they trusted.
1. According to the Law, a Jewish baby boy was to be circumcised on the 8th day of his life. Never the 7th or the 9th day. Only the 8th. So if a baby was born on Saturday, the eighth day ALWAYS fell on the Sabbath, meaning a priest must do "work" in order to circumcise the baby and keep the law! This was very important to their law and traditions.
  2. in fact, a person who was not circumcised according to this law was considered a gentile, unclean, and a castoff from the people of Israel.
- C. So if a person's spiritual purity is ensured by essentially breaking the Sabbath, how much more should an exception be made for the healing of a man's whole body? This is the third place that the Jews failed to see clearly. They thought that God cared more about the rules and traditions than he did about the person!
- V. So we have discovered three ways that the spiritual vision of the Jews was impaired.
- A. First, they thought they could understand God's will without desiring it.
1. We are also prone to this error. We get ahead of God and make assumptions about what we know, instead of stirring the passion and desire to know **him**

more deeply. The problem is that desiring God is completely foreign to our nature, so what are we to do? We are to pray for increased desire for God!

2. **Philippians 3:13 ESV** for it is God who works in you, both **to will** and **to work** for his good pleasure.

B. Second the Jews thought that they could conceal the truth from Jesus.

1. Last week, someone shared with me a story of a Christian leader who had lived a double life for 40 years. Publicly he was a model Christian, saying and doing all the right things; but privately his life was riddled by unconfessed sexual sin. If you are in a similar situation, let me warn you that you are playing a dangerous game!

2. **Galatians 6:7 ESV** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. **8** For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

C. Lastly, they thought that God cared more about rules than about people. This is an encouragement to us that instead of trying to fix ourselves and our corrupt morality, we should daily throw ourselves on the mercy and grace of God; which he delights to give!

1. We should care deeply about our sin, but we must learn that change happens as we behold God in his graciousness, looking only to him to change us.
2. **Matthew 9:13 ESV** "Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

VI. Heavenly Father, we ask that you would give us clear vision. Let us not judge by appearances like the Jews of Jesus day, but let be empowered by the Holy Spirit to make right judgements. Increase our desire to know you and to cherish your will, that we may truly understand Jesus' teaching. Help us to get over all of our religious and moral games and come to you open and naked, hiding nothing that we may be healed. Father, may we find all of our joy as Sons and Daughters who have been adopted because of grace. Thank You, Lord for opening eyes that we may see, our ears that we may hear, and for sharpening our hearts to desire you more and more. In Jesus Name, Amen.