

In the last chapter, Jesus had refused to conform to the messianic expectations of the crowds. (John 6:26) Instead, He asked them to recognize that He is the bread of life, the One that God requires us to believe. (John 6:35) He is the One who will raise us at the last day. (John 6:40) That wasn't the kind of Savior the Jews were seeking. They wanted a deliverer from Rome, a Moses that would feed them daily, not a Savior of their souls. Realizing Jesus was not what they were looking for, they turned away. (John 6:66)

Commented [notes1]: 26 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.
John 6:26 (NIV)

Commented [notes2]: 35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."
John 6:35 (NIV)

Commented [notes3]: 40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."
John 6:40 (NIV)

Commented [notes4]: 66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.
John 6:66 (NIV)

Commented [notes5]: 31 At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."
Luke 13:31 (NIV)

Our passage today jumps forward about half a year from the last chapter. During that time, Jesus spent most of His time in Gentile areas of Galilee. He went to Tyre and Sidon, to Caesarea Philippi, and fed the four thousand in the Decapolis region. In the Judean area, the Jewish leadership was seeking to take His life, and in the Galilee region, Herod was after Him. (Luke 13:31)

As we begin chapter 7, we find that even Jesus' family couldn't accept His incredible claims. His brothers seem to be taunting Him when they say, *"You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do."* ⁴ *No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world."*

Commented [notes6]: 1 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

John 2:1-2 (NIV)

Commented [notes7]: 14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.
Acts 1:14 (NIV)

Imagine having an older brother, mom's obvious favorite, who had gone to the same synagogue, slept in the same house, played the same games growing up with you, making claims like the ones we saw in John 6. The brothers had surely been at the wedding when the water was changed to wine. (John 2:1-2) Did they dismiss it? They had heard of the miracles in Capernaum, and maybe been in Jerusalem when the invalid was healed. Did they make an excuse not to believe? Were they jealous of His following? We know that after the resurrection they will believe (Acts 1:14), but at this low point, when Jesus has been rejected by his home town, and the crowds are no longer following, and the authorities are wanting to kill Him, *even his own brothers did not believe in him.*

His brothers were challenging Him to go to Jerusalem for the feast, knowing it was dangerous, perhaps even fatal. That is quite some sibling rivalry. They knew He had followers (disciples) in Jerusalem, so they taunted Him to go show them His miraculous power. If He really was all He claimed to be, then why not do some miracles to prove it in the political power center of Israel. That is just what the Jews of the last chapter were asking to see, signs, and perhaps for the same reason. If He was the Messiah they hoped for, then He should make a political move to become King. (John 2:15)

Commented [notes8]: 15 Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.
John 6:15 (NIV)

Jesus' response is somewhat enigmatic. *"The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right."* ⁷ *The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil.* ⁸ *You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, because for me the right time has not yet come."* The Jews had the belief that there is an appointed time for everyone and an appointed place for everything. (Ecclesiastes 3:1) For Jesus to tell them that anytime was right for them was not in

Commented [notes9]: 1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:
Eccl 3:1 (NIV)

line with rabbinical teaching that everyone had an appointed time. Perhaps we could read it as saying they could go anytime without concern for what would happen to them because they were one with the system that was in power.

That interpretation would seem to fit in well with what Jesus said next. The world doesn't hate them, but it hates Him because He is testifying that its actions are evil. Jesus is saying that a life that challenges people to live for the eternal instead of the temporal with words that expose a hypocritical religious show that is more about pride than a relationship with God will be under threat from this world's power brokers. If we are just going to fit in with the world, we have nothing to fear. But if we expose the lies of this world's systems, we may lose our life in the process. (John 12:25)

For Jesus, the appointed time of being God's sacrificial lamb was still six months away. If he went with the crowds it may have triggered an early triumphal entry and confrontation with the religious leaders that ended in an early crucifixion. By adding that the world hates Him, He was telling His brothers not to expect Him to be a conquering King but the suffering servant of the Isaiah prophecies. (Isaiah 53:3)

Martyrs throughout history, starting with Abel, were people whose lives exposed the pride and deception of works centered religion. This is why the Christians were such a threat to communism, Islam, Hinduism, and even secularism. (Matthew 16:18) It isn't so much that we preach against those lies, but that our very life says their promises aren't true. Our lives should be testifying that it is not about works but about faith in the One that did the works for us. That should be evident in our peace and confident trust that we are right with God. Our lives should declare that our existence is not about obtaining this world's goods and pleasures. (Colossians 3:1)

It reminds me of a true story of a golfer who played a round with Billy Graham. He told his friend that he didn't want to hear any Bible thumping and wouldn't put up with the hell and damnation stuff. After the game his friend asked him how it went. He said it was horrible, so the friend asked what Billy Graham had said. His reply, "Nothing!" You see, it was Billy Graham's life that bothered the man as much or more than Billy Graham's message. Does your joy and peace bother anyone? Is anyone mad at you just because you are who you are in Jesus?

Jesus knew that He was a wanted man and that He had to listen to the Father's direction before He went to Jerusalem. His brothers went on ahead, and, at the right time, Jesus followed secretly. Usually extended families would make the trip together. This is Jesus' last trip to Jerusalem from Galilee. He will stay in the south until the end. This is probably where Luke 9:51-56 fits in with John's story. If that is the case, Jesus took an unusual route to Jerusalem through Samaria avoiding the crowds. He sent messengers ahead to prepare them for His last visit, but they rejected Him because He was headed to Jerusalem. James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven and consume them, but Jesus rebuked them for thinking such a thing.

Commented [notes10]: 25 The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. John 12:25 (NIV)

Commented [notes11]: 3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Isaiah 53:3 (NIV)

Commented [notes12]: 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. [Matt 16:18 (NIV)

Commented [notes13]: 1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Col 3:1 (NIV)

Commented [notes14]: 51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; 53 but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. 54 When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" 55 But Jesus turned and rebuked them, 56 and they went to another village. Luke 9:51-56 (NIV)

Arriving in Jerusalem during that feast would be fascinating for us to see. The city would swell in size as Jews from all over the known world would return to remember the history of God providing for their ancestors in the wilderness. Every family would build a stick hut covered with palm fronds, a temporary shelter for the weeklong feast. Religious ceremonies took place throughout the week. We'll go into detail about one of those ceremonies next week.

¹² Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people."¹³ But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews. There was such an expectation of a coming Messiah that the people were buzzing with anticipation. Some were convinced He was the Messiah and others were sure He was a deceiver. That is a harsh charge. (Matthew 27:63) If someone was claiming to be someone they were not, leading people away from the Law, the punishment was stoning. (Deuteronomy 13:5) Jewish writings (Jerusalem Talmud) shortly after the time of Christ will refer to Jesus as "a deceiver who practiced sorcery and led the people of Israel astray." (*b. Sanh.* 43a; *cf. b. Sotah* 47a)

"Jews" in this passage refers to the Sanhedrin, the ruling counsel. The people were afraid that if they publicly acknowledge that Jesus was Messiah, the religious officials wouldn't let them into the Temple grounds. (John 9:22) That was where all the religious ritual and worship took place. It would be similar to excommunication.

Halfway through the feast, which is the fourth day, Jesus began teaching in the Temple courts. This probably refers to the Court of the Gentiles. Jesus didn't teach like the normal rabbi. (Mark 1:22) They would quote the great rabbi of old and tell of their interpretations, sometimes stringing several together to make their point about a passage. Jesus quoted Scripture alone and gave His own explanation and teaching which was always profound. They wondered why He could speak like that since He didn't train under a rabbi. He surely went to Torah school as a child, and He may have learned the oral traditions, but He did not take that final step like we would think of a college degree. That was probably because he took the role of breadwinner after His stepfather, Joseph, died. Later, the religious leaders will say the same thing about the disciples' courage and ability to speak. (Acts 4:13) The Holy Spirit is the great teacher. (John 14:26)

¹⁶ Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. In affect, Jesus was saying that He doesn't quote rabbi; He quotes God! Another bold claim! He doesn't just interpret Scripture as He would like. He listens to the explanations of God, the author. May it be so for everyone who teaches the Word! The reason we have so many strange doctrines today is that man has interpreted the Word without the teaching of the Holy Spirit. (2 Timothy 4:3)

How can we know if a teaching is of man or of God? ¹⁷ If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. When you surrender your life to God and lay down your rights and opinions to do what Jesus taught, you'll know that Jesus spoke the revelation from heaven. Jesus is saying, "If you really want to know, try it and see." Is loving God with your all and your neighbor as yourself really the great command? (Matthew

Commented [notes15]: 63 "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.'
Matt 27:63 (NIV)

Commented [notes16]: That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.
Deut 13:5 (NIV)

Commented [notes17]: 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.
John 9:22 (NIV)

Commented [notes18]: 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.
Mark 1:22 (NIV)

Commented [notes19]: 13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.
Acts 4:13 (NIV)

Commented [notes20]: 26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.
John 14:26 (NIV)

Commented [notes21]: 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.
2 Tim 4:3 (NIV)

22:37) Try it and you'll know. Is all God requires of us just to believe on the One God sent? (John 6:29) Try it and you'll know. If there is an open willingness to seek the truth and give Jesus' words a try, you'll soon know Jesus is God's message.

Commented [notes22]: 37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." Matt 22:37 (NIV)

18 He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. Everyone who teaches the word of God needs to take in this passage. You can expound on the word to show how much you know. You can teach the Bible to gain the respect of others. That is all about self-exaltation. (John 12:43) But Jesus said if you seek to honor the One that sent you, you are a person of truth and there is nothing false in you.

Commented [notes23]: 29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." John 6:29 (NIV)

Commented [notes24]: 43 for they loved praise from men more than praise from God. John 12:43 (NIV)

If you want to test a teacher or preacher to know if they are on track or not, just observe where the honor goes. If it goes to him or her, it's time to find a different teacher. Honor must always go to the One who sent us, if we are to be bearers of the truth. Are you seeking honor for yourself, or for the One that sent you in your everyday conversations and activities? (Revelation 5:13)

Commented [notes25]: 13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" Rev 5:13 (NIV)

19 Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?" The Jewish people were very proud about the fact that God chose their people to be the ones to receive God's Law. (Romans 9:4) To keep the Law means to do the actions prescribed in the Law. The Law says, "Thou shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13) Jesus asked how they could be so proud about being keepers of the Law while contemplating how they might violate the Law?

Commented [notes26]: 4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Romans 9:4 (NIV)

Commented [notes27]: 13 "You shall not murder." Ex 20:13 (NIV)

How dare He tell them they don't keep the Law! Of course none of us ever keeps the Law (Psalm 14:3), but they had deluded themselves into thinking they were keeping the Law in spite of what went on in their hearts. Their response is to tell Him He is demon possessed (crazy). They can't see anyone trying to stab Him. Jump down to verse 25 and you'll see that Jesus was absolutely correct. They admit they know a contract has been put out on Jesus. He is trying to help them see the dichotomy of their beliefs and the actions of their leadership. Their religion is ritual observance rather than letting the Words of the Law convict their hearts. We've talked about the fruits of the Spirit being the evidence of a transformed life. Ritual observance can be done by anyone. It takes a changed heart to have a changed life. You have to go beyond the ritual to the truth behind the ritual. That is what Jesus will bring them to later in the chapter.

Commented [notes28]: 3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. Psalms 14:3 (NIV)

21 Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle, and you are all astonished. Jesus is probably referring to the miracle He did on the last Passover Sabbath when the invalid at the Pool of Bethesda was healed. That was what had caused such a ruckus last time Jesus was there.

Jesus is about to make His case for healing on the Sabbath with a lesser to greater argument. It was common among rabbi to argue with this kind of logic. If a certain thing was permissible, why not something even greater? *22 Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. 23 Now if a child can be*

circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath?

If surgery could be performed on the Sabbath to keep the Law, then why could not the whole person be healed? Jesus' statement about making the complete person well may include not only the man's physical body but also His soul made right before God. (Matthew 9:2) If God allowed circumcision, an act that was to be performed eight days after birth even if it fell on the Sabbath, then why not the restoration of a man's body and the salvation of His soul?

Commented [notes29]: Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."
Matt 9:2 (NIV)

Do you see how Jesus is pleading with them to see the heart of God? Go beyond the ritual of Sabbath observance to the heart of God that wanted us to rest one day a week to be refreshed and renewed. Then you won't have any problem with someone being healed and saved on the Sabbath.

Jesus ends this part of His talk with this zinger, ²⁴ *Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.* "They looked at the healed man and saw the breaking of a rule from God. A right judgment would be that Jesus demonstrated the very spirit of the Sabbath rule by making the man whole physically and spiritually on the Sabbath six months earlier.

We are so quick to condemn politicians, spiritual leaders, and one another for not acting like we think they should. They didn't keep the rule we think is important, but have we seen the heart behind the action? If it is greed and corruption, then fine, speak out. Be sure you see the heart first though. (Isaiah 11:3) Remember, if these people could condemn the Son of God, how easy it is for us to condemn those in authority without seeing their heart. The harshness in judgment we use toward others will be applied to us. (Matthew 7:2) That puts the fear of the Lord in me and gives me pause when I open my mouth to say something critical.

Commented [notes30]: 3 and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears;
Isaiah 11:3 (NIV)

Commented [notes31]: 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
Matt 7:2 (NIV)

As I studied this passage, I could see the obvious lesson that we have gone over, looking beyond the surface to the heart. We must see if there is a contradiction between our beliefs and our actions. The lack of that personal examination is why so many turned away from following Jesus. Their expectations and God's plan did not line up. It happens to us all, because we are all human. May God help us desire what He desires and look to that which is eternal!

The other thing that I sensed John trying to convey was the loneliness of Jesus at this point, six months before the end. All but the Twelve have turned their back on Him. They love this present world with all of Satan's enticements. (1John 2:15) It almost seems as if real love will not prevail over the deceptions of Satan, like man is hopelessly lost in sin. Whether religious pride or nationalistic fervor, none but the Twelve seemed intent on following Jesus. Even they missed the message and wanted to destroy lives rather than save them. I feel the painful loneliness of Jesus. I know in some way we must share it with Him. That line of the song, "Though none go with me, still I will follow," must be true for us who follow Him. We must look forward and know God's love will prevail. (Luke 9:62) Pentecost will come. Thousands will know and follow, but until that day comes, will we choose to follow

Commented [notes32]: 15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
1 John 2:15 (NIV)

Commented [notes33]: 62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."
Luke 9:62 (NIV)

the lonely road with Him now? Whose honor do you seek? Have you decided to follow Jesus?

- 1 Why didn't Jesus' brothers believe in Him?
- 2 Why was anytime right for the brothers to go?
- 3 What might have happened if Jesus went with them?
- 4 Why does the world hate Jesus?
- 5 Why do people love to hate Christians?
- 6 Why didn't people speak up about their opinion of Jesus?
- 7 Why was Jesus' teaching unique?
- 8 How can we know if Jesus' teaching is from God?
- 9 How can we know if a speaker is a person of truth?
- 10 How did Jesus make a case for healing on the Sabbath?
- 11 What might healing the whole man refer to?
- 12 How does verse 24 apply to the passage?