

- I. Jesus speaks truth to the crowd about themselves and about Himself
  - A. John 7:1-9 . . . After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. [2] Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. [3] Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. [4] For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." [5] For not even His brothers were believing in Him. [6] So Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. [7] The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. [8] Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come." [9] Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.
  - B. Pray
- II. The evils of unbelief and the hatred of the world toward those who expose its evil ways.
  - A. John 7:1 . . . After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.
    - 1. We know from John 5:18, that the Jews were seeking all the more (*that is, they were increasing their current efforts*) to kill Jesus – which means they had been trying to kill Him for some time.
    - 2. Therefore, Jesus was currently staying out of harms way because, as HE says to His brothers, it was not yet God's appointed time for Him to suffer and die.
    - 3. Paul affirms that Jesus had an appointed time to die in Romans 5:6, "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."
  - B. John 7:2-5 . . .
    - 1. [2] Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near.
      - a. The Feast of Booths was celebrated after the grape harvest in September or October. Its original purpose was to be a harvest festival that would remind the Israelites of God's provision for his people during their forty years of wilderness wanderings as

encouragement to continue trusting Him to be their provider. The main festivities lasted seven days, and finished on the eighth day with a special celebration.

2. [3] Therefore [Jesus'] brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. [4] For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." [5] For not even His brothers were believing in Him.
  - a. There are several points to be made from these verses.
  - b. First, Jesus' brothers were typical brothers – they were skeptical of His claims and abilities. They assumed His intentions and motives were self-serving – that He was seeking power and fame for himself. They used sarcasm and put downs when talking to Him, and they made fun of Him. All this points to the wisdom stated in Proverbs 17:1, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Does this mean they were acting righteously? NO!
  - c. Second, according to vs 5, Jesus' brothers did not – at this time – believe in Him. But we do know that at least some, if not all of His brothers and sisters had a change of mind and heart and came to believe in Him, for we read in Acts 1:13-14, "When they had entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. [14] These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."
  - d. Third, for many years there has been some debate within the church as to whether Jesus had siblings.
    - (1) The Catholic church teaches that Mary remained a virgin all her life – which means Jesus could not have had any siblings from His mother, Mary. They base their reasoning on three conclusions drawn from the Bible and one from the early church.
      - (a) First, in the Bible, the word "brothers" is applied to siblings, extended male family members, and fellow Christians. Therefore, they conclude we cannot be certain that the references to Jesus' brothers means siblings.

- (b) Second, those the Bible seems to identify as Jesus's brothers and sisters (*siblings*) are never referred to as Mary's children, which they use to support their conclusion that Jesus had no siblings.
  - (c) Third, since there are other Mary's mentioned in the NT who had sons that were close enough to Jesus to be like brothers to Him, it can reasonably be concluded that the NT writers are referring to these men and women.
  - (d) Finally, there are writings from the early church (*150 AD and beyond*) that clearly speak of Mary as remaining a virgin all her life.
- (2) Generally, Protestants hold that Jesus had brothers and sisters, and Mary, the mother of Jesus was their mother too. This belief comes from such scriptures as:
  - (a) Matthew 12:46-47 . . . While [Jesus] was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. [47] Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.
  - (b) Matthew 13:53-56 . . . When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there. [54] He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? [55] Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? [56] And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"
- (3) My point here is that it is reasonable to conclude that Mary did not remain a virgin all her life, but that she had more children after giving birth to Jesus. However, let us not make this view of scripture a reason for religious pride, degrading Catholics and the Catholic church, or further feeding division within the body of Christ.
- e. The fourth point I want to make from these verses about Jesus' brothers urging Him to show off His powers at the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem is this: Unbelief in God and His word, which includes unbelief in Jesus and His teachings, directly affects our view of God, our response to God, and our treatment of God. And this same unbelief also directly affects our view of ourselves, our

treatment of others, and how we deal with the circumstances of life – especially the difficult or painful circumstances of life. For example –

- (1) You cannot distrust God in any way or any area without thinking more highly of yourself than you ought – and bear in mind that thinking more highly of himself than he ought was the devil's downfall.
  - (a) In whatever way or area you distrust God, you are assuming you are wiser than God, that you are better at taking care of yourself than God can or will take care of you, and that you are more knowledgeable than God about right and wrong, dependable sources of security, the correct path to happiness and inward peace, and what is best for you.
  - (b) For the Christian, such beliefs about yourself negatively affect your view of God and relationship to God. But they also negatively affect your treatment of others and the way you deal with life's circumstances.
  - (c) In other words, you will treat others in whatever way you believe necessary to promote and protect your own interests, and since you believe you know more than God about right and wrong, you will justify the use of such things as selfishness, unkindness, anger, abusive speech, getting even, and hostility to obtain the things you believe you must have to be secure and happy.
- (2) You cannot distrust God in relation to His being your provider without turning to money or job security or government agencies or family members to provide what you want and think you need. Therefore, in your dealings with others, at least in areas of finance and possessions, you will tend toward selfishness, stinginess, entitlement, and greed, while lacking in generosity yourself.
- (3) You cannot distrust God in relation to His being your protector without resorting to either trying to control people so they do what you want or appeasing people in the hope that they will treat you the way you want. And of course, in your efforts to gain or maintain control over those who do not cooperate, you will likely resort to words and behavior that threaten or force them into submission. And should your efforts at appeasement not bring the desired results, you will

likely give way to resentment, bitterness, and rare but volatile expressions of anger toward the one who is not responding the way you want. And in either case, you will, in time, distance yourself from the person who won't cooperate with your wishes so that the relationship either becomes shallow and empty or non-existent.

- f. Therefore, faith in God is essential to godly living in all our behavior and in every area of life, while unbelief is the enemy, not only of a healthy, loving relationship with God, but it is also the enemy of healthy, loving relationships with those around you.

C. John 7:6-8 . . .

- 1. [6] So Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune.
  - a. What Jesus is telling His brothers is that His time to show Himself, to perform miracles and declare His message in Jerusalem has not yet come. However, His brothers can go to Jerusalem anytime because they are no threat to the religious or political leaders in Jerusalem.
- 2. [7] The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.
  - a. The world does not hate those who are of the world, who embrace the values and beliefs of the world, and who support the ways and desires of the world.
  - b. The world hates those whose words and deeds expose the world's rebellion against God along with their hypocrisy, dishonesty, double-standards, injustice, selfishness, immorality, love of money, greed, abuse of power, abuse of women and children, prejudice, hatred, cruelty, pride, arrogance, and hidden sins – just a name a few things.
  - c. This is why they hated Jesus, and this is why they will hate any Christian or noble minded person who exposes such evils. And let me remind you that it is not just Christians who are persecuted for righteousness sake. Anyone who takes a stand against the evils of government or society will incur the wrath of those whose evil ways are exposed. However, though taking stands like this are uncommon practice among unbelievers, it ought to be common among those who belong to God through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ.

- d. So why is the world so sensitive to having their evil's exposed? Jesus answered this question when He told His disciples, and us, that the world hates righteousness and loves unrighteousness, and that if the world hates Him, they will hate those who follow Him.
  - (1) And Jesus to Nicodemus, Jesus said, "Men love the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds are evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed" (John 3:19-20).
  - (2) And on another occasion Jesus said to His disciples, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you" (John 15:18-19).
  - (3) Jesus took this one step further when He said, "He who hates Me hates My Father also" (John 15:23).
- 3. We should not desire to be hated, as if being hated is the proof of being a true Christian. But neither should we desire to be loved at the expense of the truth.
  - a. Jesus said that "We – that is those who believe in Him, we are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; [15] nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. [16] Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).
  - b. And Jesus also said, "We are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men" (Matthew 5:13).
  - c. And as I read last Sunday, "We are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; [16] to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life (2 Corinthians 2:15-16).
- 4. What I hope we can see here is that this is more than evangelism and more than debating politics or joining in with those who are complaining about the condition of our country.

- a. This is about speaking the truth – with respect, gentleness, and humility – to anyone who is openly proclaiming or quietly supporting an ungodly value, belief, activity, or way of life.
- b. We ought to speak the truth so as to expose the evils of injustice, prejudice, and hatred.
- c. We ought to speak the truth about selfish, dishonest, and unfair business practices – from the products sold to the way a business treats its employees.
- d. And we ought to speak the truth about such things as social practices, fashions, music, literature, the arts and sciences that promote ungodliness – and I could go on but I suspect you are getting the idea.
- e. Let me affirm that I am not diminishing the importance of evangelism, but I am promoting more than evangelism because it is too easy and too common to evangelize without addressing the many evils all around us as we talk with those around us.
- f. In other words, as lights in the world, as salt in the world, as the fragrance of Christ in the world, we are evangelize AND use our words and deeds to expose the evil that is openly supported or quietly tolerated in our world.

### III. Conclusion

- A. John 7:8-9 . . . Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come." [9] Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.
  - 1. In other words, Jesus is telling His brothers that if they are so intent on His doing the wise thing by making the most of the Feast for Himself, then they too should do what is wise and right according to their religious beliefs and make the most of the Feast for themselves.
  - 2. But because His time to die had not come, even though it was close, He told His brothers He would not be going to the Feast.