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LESSONS IN THE FACE OF HOSTILITY (John 7:1-24)

*John 7:1-24 - After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. ² Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. ³ So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. ⁴ For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵ For not even his brothers believed in him. ⁶ Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. ⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. ⁸ 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. ¹⁰ 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."

FELLOW JEWS' ANGER.

The first verse tells us that the Jews' (specifically, the Jewish leaders) wanted to kill Jesus. This had been going on for some time. Just a couple of chapters earlier we read

*John 5:16, 18 – So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him... For this reason **the Jews tried all the harder to kill him**; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*

These were serious issues for the Pharisees. Add to that that Jesus identifies another motive in their hearts in verse seven – they hated him because he called them evil. No one wants to be told that, even today. But there may be a time when you or I have to confront sin and evil, tell someone they're wrong, and call for repentance. Many times this will result in anger. Maybe not homicidal anger like Jesus faced, but hostility nonetheless.

FAMILY'S UNBELIEF

The feast referenced here was one of the obligatory festivals in the Jewish year, in the fall. Every able-bodied male Jew within 15 miles of Jerusalem was required to come by the Mosaic law. However, devout Jews living farther away than 15 miles often went out of their way to attend, as did Jesus and his brothers.

This passage also reveals that Jesus' own earthly brothers didn't believe his message. So as they were trying to get him to go to the Feast of Booths (or Tabernacles) with them, there must have been an

uneasiness caused by his brothers' unbelief and the Pharisees' hostility.

FLUMMOXED CROWD

Once Jesus reached Jerusalem from Galilee for this eight-day celebration, he was being watched and was known. Some saw him as good, some not. The confusion was just a whisper, though, since no one wanted to face the anger of the Pharisees. Jesus still confuses many minds today, since many people will simply not accept his words that he is God, is their Creator, and they are accountable to him..

*John 14:10 – “Don’t you believe that **I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?** The words I say to you are not my own. Rather, it is the Father living in me.”*

FALSE ACCUSATIONS

The crowd's confusion led to more confusion when they heard Jesus teach in the temple. From charges of misleading people to comments about his lack of education to outright claims that he was demon-possessed and crazy, ideas about him ran the gamut. Again, each of us must decide what we will believe about Jesus and respond. Will we create our ideas of what we think he's like or will we see him in the Scriptures as he is and bow to him as Lord.

FIRM DIRECTION

In the middle of all the chaos Jesus' presence caused in the temple, his teaching cut through the confusion and showed his hearers how to avoid all the bewilderment. His words call us out of any confusion we might have today. “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 authority.” (verse 17)

THE LORD'S CHALLENGE TO THE CROWD WAS SIMPLE: IF THEY WOULD HUMBLE THEMSELVES BEFORE GOD'S WORD IN ORDER TO KNOW AND OBEY IT, THEY WOULD COME TO THE SURE REALIZATION THAT HIS TEACHING WAS TRUE.

John MacArthur, *John Commentary*

FUTILE ATTEMPTS TO KEEP THE LAW

The next part of Jesus' message focused on the law. No one has ever entered the kingdom of God by obeying the law. The Law was not given to provide for us a way to be saved, but to prove to us our sinfulness and our need for salvation. Christ Himself would be the ultimate answer for mankind's sin problem.

*James 2:10 - For whoever keeps the whole law, and yet stumbles at just one point, **is guilty of breaking all.***

FACING HYPOCRISY

The end of Jesus' argument turns the spotlight directly on the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. As Jesus points out that no one can perfectly keep the law, he uses the law to expose their illogical thinking.

By Mosaic law, only medical attention that is necessary to save a life may be performed on the Sabbath. But routinely, if a baby boy's circumcision (eight days after birth) fell on the Sabbath, it would be performed.

So Jesus' point (and the exposing of their hypocrisy) was “How can you blame me for making a man's body whole on the Sabbath when you regularly allow yourselves to mutilate it on the Sabbath?”

His last statement confronted them with a choice – judge by what you think or make a right judgement. This word “judge” (krino) means to separate, to pick out, to choose. We must do the same thing today. To choose rightly, we should allow Christ to describe himself and teach us his nature, then believe. The alternative is to depend on what we might be more comfortable with and create a savior that we can keep in a box we can control. Many take that course and it is disastrous.

BIBLE STUDY

Legislators and Staff (During Session)
Thursdays, 8:00 a.m.
(ZOOM)