

Good Evening/ morning! I am really excited to be in God's word with you today! This morning/ evening we will dive into John 7:1-52.

As we've learned in previous weeks, the theme of John's gospel is that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah and Son of God.

Jesus refers to '*his time*' many times in the book of John. This whole gospel account is a concentrated book pointing us to Christ's divine work on the cross.

This passage is broken into four key parts that we will discuss today. First, the beliefs of Jesus' Brothers; second, the Feast of Tabernacles; third, Jesus' declaration during the feast; and fourth, the division of the people. While we won't be reading all 52 verses tonight/ today; I hope you have had time to read it ahead of time, we *will* be jumping in and out of the verses in this chapter so keep your bibles or passages handy!

John 7-10 take place in the final year of Jesus' ministry and concentrate on two feasts; the Feast of Booths, also known as, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication. Today, we will be camping out in The Feast of

Tabernacles. While the events of Chapter 6 occurred during the Passover in the Spring, the events in Chapter 7 took place in the Fall, about 6 months later.

Let's begin in 7:1, <sup>1</sup>*After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because <sup>p</sup>the Jews<sup>1</sup> were seeking to kill him.*

I don't know about you all, but as I read about different ways Jesus engages with and challenges the Jewish Leaders, *I find myself feeling uncomfortable at his pushing of authority.* The people pleaser in me gets nervous, *and* I suppose I want to push against the discomfort of death that is coming. But, Theologian Stott boldly addresses this saying, 'He (Jesus) is not unprepared to face the challenge there. Indeed, he is ready to give up his life at Jerusalem, and will do so, but only at the right moment, when his 'hour' has come.'

Picking up in Verses 2-10, <sup>2</sup>*Now <sup>q</sup>the Jews' Feast of <sup>r</sup>Booths was at hand.* <sup>3</sup>*So his brothers<sup>2</sup> said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing.* <sup>4</sup>*For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, <sup>t</sup>show yourself*

to the world.”<sup>5</sup> <sup>u</sup>For not even <sup>v</sup>his brothers believed in him. <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to them, <sup>w</sup>“My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. <sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you, but <sup>x</sup>it hates me because I testify about it that <sup>y</sup>its works are evil. <sup>8</sup> You go up to the feast. I am not<sup>3</sup> going up to this feast, for <sup>z</sup>my time has not yet fully come.”<sup>9</sup> After saying this, he remained in Galilee.

<sup>10</sup> But after <sup>a</sup>his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private.

The Feast of Booths, also known as, the Feast of Tabernacles is the most popular of all the annual festivals. This celebration was celebrated in September or October and ran for 7 days. It was a time to remember God’s faithfulness to Israel during the wilderness years by living in outdoor shelters made of branches and leaves. They gave thanks for the rainfall that provided the harvest and also looked forward to that coming day when God’s spirit would be poured out at the coming of the kingdom of God; ironic seeing as how that day had come! Though the spirit had not yet been given to believers, Jesus is here! The kingdom of God has come! As we will discuss a bit more later, they are blind to it, BUT a humbling reminder for us is that we have Jesus living IN us and we are still sometimes blind to it.

We learn in this section that Jesus' brothers; *believed* to be his biological brothers, encourage Jesus to go to the Feast of booths. To which Jesus responds saying he will not, for it is not his time. Then a few verses later, he goes to the feast. When I first read this I thought, wait a second, why did Jesus say he wasn't going to go, and then did. Contrary to what you might be thinking, this is not Jesus being dishonest here. As we know, Jesus lived a perfect life, and He is always concerned about our hearts. He knows what is in us. The NIV version says verses 3 and 4 this way, **3** Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works 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."

Jesus' brothers are giving him the advice here that to be a prominent leader he must subscribe to this path- go to a bigger town and go in commanding attention with all his works and deeds. Interesting that his closest relatives, who knew him well, according to the flesh, did not even receive him as the Messiah.

Jesus knows we long for approval of others and even for a good pat on the back. This is the angle in which his brothers are encouraging him to go into Judea for the feast. With pomp and circumstance. But Jesus does not do this, instead he goes privately. Jesus is a humble leader. Bruce Milne describes it in this way, “Hunger for spectacular signs is the enemy of real faith, since it leaves the fallen, self-centered heart untouched and unrebuked. The attitude of his brothers is the attitude of the rebellious world. Hence for them *anytime* is right for doing things, whether going up to the feast , or whatever. They know nothing of the hatred of the world with which Jesus has to grapple. The world cannot hate them because they belong to it; it does not hate its own.”

The world hates Jesus because he condemns it; So if we are followers of Jesus, naturally the world will hate us too. Oi. Talk about a blow to the recovering people pleaser I am! This is an uncomfortable truth to sit in, but let's linger here for a minute.

In Matthew 5 Jesus gives his sermon on the mount and gives us the Beatitudes. Matthew 5:11- 12 says “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my

account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Two questions I have been wrestling with while studying this chapter that I encourage you to sit in and mull over as well;

→ 1) where in your life might you be desiring the glory instead of giving Jesus the ultimate glory?

→2) Is my life living in accordance to the world? Or am I reflecting Jesus and being hated by the world?

\*Repeat

Jumping back into our passage in John, verses 11- 13, we see that the Jews are looking for Jesus at the feast with a strong desire to arrest him. While some say He (Jesus) is good, others say he is leading people astray. And in Verse 13 it says, “yet for fear of the Jews, no one spoke openly of him.”

It is important to understand the tension of the times. There was much contentious talk about Jesus because of the intimidating Jewish leaders. As I've said before, I find myself nervous for Jesus as he continually challenges authorities- but His ways are not our ways as God says in Isaiah 55. Milne says it this way, "...Jesus moved steadfastly and deliberately forward in the will of the Father who directs his every movement. He is utterly secure from the machinations of the authorities until the hour appointed in eternity when he will go home to the Father's side, there to direct through his Spirit the realization of all his purposes across the ages." Wow! That is powerful! Ladies, this is such an encouragement to my heart. Nothing happens outside of the Father's will- this kept our Savior 'utterly secure' until his hour had come.

Some of you may know about my journey with fear and anxiety. Almost 7 years ago now, I was faced with fear and panic- that which I have never experienced in my life before. I felt crippled to do things that brought me so much life beforehand. I am so thankful to say, I have so much freedom from those dark days, but during that time, I was having the hardest time doing something as simple or what had before been so mindless, as driving to work. I had a good friend and counselor reminding me that we are safest

within God's will for us. I clung to this reminder often as I would ***push*** against anxieties- ***begging*** Jesus to free me. What a beautiful thing to know that our savior walked our same roads. He can sympathize with our sufferings- and yet he was ***utterly safe and secure*** within the Will of our sovereign God. We are too! And while some may wrestle with this feeling scary and out of our control- I encourage you all that this is good news! And this Gives us freedom! Jesus is KING!

Looking at Verses 14-24 we see that the people are in awe of Jesus' teaching when he had no formal rabbinic training. We see an exchange with Jesus and the people. He explains that his teaching is From God- the one who sent him. Remember, back a couple weeks, In John 5, Jesus declared that he and God are one in the same. Again, he is claiming God sent him. He also emphasizes what he emphasized to his brothers- that you will know his words are true and there is no falsehood; "for the one who speaks on his own authority, seeks his own glory (verse 18)."

God himself is truth. Because his word is alive and true, the spirit gives us wisdom through his word. This is why it is imperative for us to be in God's word consistently. When we are in God's word, it molds us. Thus, we have wisdom in what teaching is true and what is not.

We also see Jesus talking about how God brought the law through Moses.  
The Jewish leaders challenge Jesus on the law, yet they don't obey it  
themselves.

In verses 19- 24 we read, Jesus saying, <sup>19</sup>*P*Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. <sup>9</sup>*W*hy do you seek to kill me? <sup>20</sup> The crowd answered, <sup>r</sup>“You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?” <sup>21</sup> Jesus answered them, “I did <sup>s</sup>one work, and you all marvel at it. <sup>22</sup> <sup>t</sup>Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but <sup>u</sup>from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. <sup>23</sup> If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, <sup>v</sup>are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? <sup>24</sup> <sup>w</sup>Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

Here, Jesus is referring to the healing of the paralytic man in the beginning of Chapter 5. He healed this man on the sabbath which the Jewish officials condemned. In Jewish culture, they would circumcise their sons on the eighth day of life. This was to purify them and could be done even if the eighth day landed on the sabbath. Jesus' point here is that if they could heal a man through circumcision on the sabbath, why couldn't he heal a man's whole body on the sabbath. This is one of the many times Jesus challenges the law in which the

Jews live by, that God himself created for them to live and will ultimately challenge it once and for all with his work on the cross- erasing the need to atone for sin. The Jewish leaders are so focused on the rule breaking that they are missing the true messiah- the one they have been waiting for! And ironically, in condemning Jesus on breaking sabbath observance; they seek to murder him which is the breaking of the 6th commandment. Professor Tasker says, “ Jesus had in fact made it clear by healing the disabled man that He, the Christ, had come not to make *Part* of a man whole, as circumcision did, but to recreate his entire being. This was essentially divine work, the work of God Who is perpetually at work and yet keeps endless sabbath. If therefore permission was given by the law to practice on the sabbath circumcision, which only conveyed *limited* benefits, how much more fitting was it that the work of *Complete* restoration should be undertaken on that holy day!”

We see the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders throughout the other gospels as well. It angers Jesus that they are using laws that were meant for good against people. In Matthew, Jesus refers to the Pharisees as “Broods of venom.” The Pharisees,

who know and study the law, they know the facts and the doctrines yet they do not believe with their hearts. The New City Catechism, question #15 asks, “since no one can keep the law, what is its purpose? The Answer: That we may know the holy nature of God and the sinful nature of our hearts and thus our need for a savior.” We must be careful not to overvalue the law- we are called to a personal relationship with Jesus- we are in NEED of a savior! James 2:19 says, “Even the demons believe and shudder!” But they remain demons. Sisters, Jesus cares so deeply for our hearts. He wants us to come and thirst for him and him alone!

*Okay, let's look at verses 25- 36. In this next section of our passage, we see lots of muttering about Who Jesus is and if he in fact is the Messiah or even just a prophet.*

Again, Jesus tells the crowd they know where he comes from- God himself. God himself is truth. And again we see the crowd's confusion and as one theologian describes it, ‘*obstinate blindness*’ (J.C. Ryle). We see the crowds defending their denial of our Lord's Messiahship by saying, that They know where the Christ is from and also in the same breath, that they don't know

where the Christ will come from. J.C. Ryle reminds us that “Genealogies and family histories were most carefully kept by the Jewish nation. Their ignorance was without excuse.”

There are well known prophecies that tell of the Christ being of the line of David, from Bethlehem. Commentators say “They found it inconvenient to remember it on this occasion. “Men’s memories are often sadly dependent on their wills” (J.C. Ryle).

This brings caution to us the reader and believer. Are we using scripture to justify our own actions in this world? Or are we taking scripture for its full face value- despite the discomfort it may bring us as our hearts are being challenged? An example of this in my own life is when reading Ecclesiastes. It makes me uncomfortable at times that this world is not our home. When I strive to live as if here is our ultimate home, I am chasing after the wind for this world cannot satisfy my thirst! Only Jesus can satisfy us, for our citizenship is in Heaven!

Quick note, in regards to the questions of the crowd about where Jesus is going and if he is going to teach the Greeks in Verses 33-36, the people in the crowd are not wrong about this, as Jesus' ministry and his resurrection will be also for gentile.

Much like today, There is so much noise going on here. It's like the people are trying to figure out who Jesus is even though he is directly telling them! The people are affronted with who Jesus really is- It rubs them the wrong way! This isn't how the Messiah was *supposed to come* in their minds. And again we see where the authorities have no power or control over the Living God! This is a theme we are seeing in our passage- we are seeing over and over again that nothing happens outside of the will of the Father.

Finally, in verses 37- 39 we read,

<sup>37</sup>*y* On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, <sup>z</sup>*“If anyone thirsts, let him <sup>a</sup>come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, <sup>b</sup>as <sup>6</sup> the Scripture has said, <sup>c</sup>‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of <sup>d</sup>living water.’” <sup>39</sup> Now <sup>e</sup>this he said about the Spirit, <sup>f</sup>whom those who believed in him were to receive, <sup>g</sup>for as yet the Spirit had not been <sup>h</sup>given, <sup>i</sup>because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

Living water is used constantly to describe Jesus. Bruce Milne says, “This metaphor is more impressive in an arid country like Palestine, where rivers were the very source of life.” Revelation 7:17 says, “ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Blood represents death but water represents life. What a cool thing God did! This is great news! Jesus is saying that if we are thirsty, the remedy is to draw near to HIM! And out of our hearts will flow rivers of living water. Draw near to him and he will give us life! How amazing! In the Book, *Gentle and Lowly*, it says this about Jesus’ heart for us, “What elicits tenderness from Jesus is not the severity of the sin but whether the sinner comes to him. Whatever our offense, he deals gently with us. If we never come to him, we will experience a judgment so fierce it will be like a double-edge sword coming out of his mouth at us (as described in Revelation). If we do come to him, as fierce as his lion- like judgment would have been against us, so deep will **be** his lamb- like tenderness for us. We will be enveloped in one or the other. To no one will Jesus be neutral.”

In verses 40-52; We see still more talk and disbelief and division of who Jesus is. Some believe and others don't. This reminds me of the Israelites constant disbelief and forgetfulness in the wilderness. I find myself feeling frustrated with the crowd- "Come on guys, he has told us who he is!" But I do this too! I forget who Jesus is too at times. When I am living, am I living with me and Jesus or am I trying to do it on my own. Let us come to Him!

What I find so amazing and am truly in awe of, is that there will be a time when the things of this earth can no longer be neutral or divided on who Jesus is! He is God, all knowing, all powerful and he is who he says he is- Son of the father and yet there are still some who do not believe. We see this today. My prayer for all of us is that we can be bold in sharing this good news with others, unafraid of the earthly consequences of not being liked by this world. Sisters, come to him- his yoke is easy and his burden is light! He is the giver of life!

Let us finish with reading from Revelation 21: 3- 7

“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

This is the hope we have. Let’s pray.

Lord, thank you for your truth and coming down to earth to save us. Help us draw near to you in all things. May you stir up these truths in our hearts

as we meet with our groups. Would you give us boldness to share about you with others. I pray our conversations today would draw us closer to you.

In Your Name we pray, Amen.