

New Life: John 7
Pastor Carlos Sibley
Sunday, October 7, 2018

I want to invite you to take your Bibles and open them to the Gospel of John. We're in John 7, and we're working through this book of the New Testament. We are working from this perspective of what John himself said when he wrote this book. He wanted to prove who Jesus is. He took signs and wonders and the things that Jesus taught and stacked one on the other. It all culminates in this: this is who Jesus is. This is what He said. This is what He did. If you believe that He is the Christ and that He is the Savior of the world, you will have life. You will have eternal life. You will have new life. Every week, we are hitting replay on that and seeing who Jesus is. He is building this case for who Jesus is.

We've had a crazy week in our nation. It's been a very emotional week for our nation. The last couple of weeks, publicly or privately you have probably been affronted with the confirmation of Judge Brett Kavanaugh as a Supreme Court Justice. In that setting, the conflict, the emotion, and the divide have been the lead story. Somewhere along the way, you've been asked or you have been around that conversation. I jumped in the car the other day with a neighbor. We hadn't talked in a while about personal things. He was going to give me a ride to the car shop, and we got in the car and exchanged pleasantries. He asked me how I was doing, and then his next question to me is "What do you think about this Kavanaugh thing?" It is being talked about.

I saw a kind of humorous thing, but I guess it's frustrating for the other guy. There's a young guy in Kentucky this week who is active on Twitter, and he tweeted, "It's a terrible time to be named Brett Kavanaugh." This poor guy has the same name, and he usually would get 30-40, maybe 100 likes on a post that he would put up. But I think right now he has 900,000 likes on that one single Twitter message. This is definitely something that is on people's minds.

This conflict and emotion with people divided and choosing sides - that's exactly what we find in John chapter 7. John chapter 7 has the region of Judea and Galilee and the city of Jerusalem in conflict. They are divided. People are choosing sides, and an individual has become polarizing. The things that He said, the things that He's done are causing people to marvel. They were marveling at Jesus. The Scripture says they were also muttering about Jesus. They were reacting to Jesus about who He is and what He said what He did.

John's presenting this story to us. John's saying to us in chapter 7: "See what He did, hear what He said, and decide what you believe." That's what I want to ask you today to do. I want you to see what He did. I want you to Hear what He said, and I want you to decide what you believe. The Gospel of John is both apologetic and evangelistic. The Gospel of John is apologetic in that he sets out to prove that Jesus is who He claimed to be. And it's evangelistic in that once you see who He is, he wants you to believe that He is who He says He is. By believing that incredible promise, you will have life. What you believe about Judge Brett Kavanaugh, although emotional, doesn't have much impact on your everyday life. Certainly not on eternal life. But what you believe about Jesus Christ

does have an impact on everyday life. What you believe about Jesus Christ also has an impact on every day of life after death. Jesus matters. If you're a middle schooler today, what you believe about Jesus affects the rest of your middle school days. If you're a high schooler, what you believe about Jesus affects every day of your high school days. If you're a college student, if you're married or unmarried, if you have a job or you're unemployed, if you are retired, what you believe about Jesus affects every day of life and every day after death.

In chapter 6 of John, there is one single verse I want to call your attention to. In John 6:15, it says, "Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself." In John 6:15, they want to take Him and make Him King. Look one chapter over at the very first verse of John 7. "After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him." What happened from John 6:15 to John 7:1 that had the people moving from wanting to crown Him King wanting to kill Him? Things that He had said and things that He had done were causing the crowds to divide. They were choosing sides. Some were believing, some were doubting. Some were rejecting, some were trying to arrest Him, some were trying to kill Him. What happened? Some who had been sent to arrest Jesus came back without Him. And those that have been sent to arrest Jesus came back to the Pharisees and to the leaders of the Jews and they did not have Jesus. I want you to see the reason in John 7:45: "The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, 'Why did you not bring him?' The officers answered, 'No one ever spoke like this man!'"

Think about that. Those who probably had arrested thousands that had gone and taken them captive - they had put chains on them and had taken spears or knives or weapons. They had gone in their armor and were professional arrestors, if you will. They go and they find Jesus. They know where He is and they know who He is. They can hear Him talking and they can see Him working, but they come back without Him. And they want to know why they didn't bring Him in! There is one excuse: no one ever spoke like this man. Don't you just love Jesus? You see Him in His life, where He did miracles like no one else could do and He loved like no one else could love. And here He says that he spoke like no one else had ever spoken.

I want to ask you this- what did He say? How did He speak? If the reason they did not arrest Him was due to how He spoke, how did He speak? Number one: He spoke on time. Jesus Christ was not bound by time, but for Jesus Christ, timing mattered. Jesus Christ is not bound by time. He is infinite. He created all things. All things were created by Him, through Him and for Him. He was with God in the beginning, and together they made us. They created humanity. They created everything that is here created in this world. He is the Alpha and the Omega. But Jesus Christ took time and He shows us that time mattered. He had a plan. He was working. He was carrying out these plans of God.

Look at chapter 7, verse 6: "Jesus said to them, 'My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.'" Look at verse 8: "You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." Look at verse 30: "So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come." When you read through the Gospel of John and

also look at all four Gospels and you see the story and life of Jesus, it seems that that He's moving toward His death. He is going to be arrested, crucified, and is going to die. There's a trial. There are accusations. There is denial and betrayal. There are all of these events in His life. Here is what is underlying through all of it: Jesus is in absolute control. Do you remember Pilate asking the court those questions and trying to tell Jesus what he would do to Him? Jesus said, "You could do nothing you could do nothing if the Father did not allow it."

What's happening here is that you see the sovereignty of God and you see human responsibility all intertwined. You see the divinity of Jesus and you see the humanity of Jesus all intertwined together. One of the things we see, even as Jesus is moving toward His death is that one of the ways He spoke differently than anyone else is that He always spoke on time. I want you to hear this about Jesus. Jesus can do anything at any time, so rest in knowing He will do all things on time. Some of you sit here this morning and you're thinking,

"God, what's going on here? I'm tired of waiting."

"Why is this happening so fast? God, it seems like I'm not able to control this."

"I can't manage this. I need you to come through with this."

"God I'm not getting the answers that I need to see. I'm not seeing any progress!"

"God, are you out there? Can you hear me?"

Listen to this truth from this very moment where He's moving toward death. He's announcing to them, "I'm not doing this and I'm not doing that because it's not on my schedule! Things happen according to my timetable!" They wanted to make Him King. They wanted to kill Him. They wanted Him to go to Jerusalem. He said, "Not yet." Jesus Christ can do anything at any time, so rest in knowing He will do all things on time. What an incredible thought of strength to our faith to know that when we're calling out to God, He is not asleep. He has not forgotten you. He has not abandoned you. He answers in His time because He knows the right time.

Number two, He spoke on time with authority. In verse 5, brothers wanted Him to take this show on the road. Verse 5 says:

For not even his brothers believed in him. Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.

Do you know what He was doing there? He was speaking with authority. He knows what's wrong and He knows what's right. The reason that the world was dividing around Him is because He was pointing out what was evil and wrong and speaking it with authority. Let's say I walk into Georgia Power, and I'm looking at their transformers. I'm looking at their grid and I walk over to their screens in a pointed that digital screen I say, "That's wrong. That's wrong. You want to do that." They are going to look at me and think, "Who are you?"

"I'm Carlos Sibley."

"Well, whatever - who are you?!"

"That's wrong, you can't do that."

"Well, do you have a badge or something? Do you understand electricity?"

"No, I was a horticulture major."

"You need to get out of here, you don't know what you're talking about!"

They would be right in saying that, because I have no authority there! I cannot speak with authority about what's going on there. Jesus Christ walks into Jerusalem, He walks into Judea, and He's speaking on time with authority. Listen to verse 14: "About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching."

He just walked in and started teaching like He's a Pharisee or He's in charge!

Verse 15: The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?"

It's almost like Jesus walks in the room saying, "I really don't have to study the book if I wrote the book. I am the word of life. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God, the word was with God, and the word took on flesh." He speaks with authority.

He spoke on time with authority from the Father. Where did He get this authority? Jesus acknowledges that He has the authority to speak about who He is because He got the authority from the Father. The crowd listening to Him on that day knew who the Father was. When He referred to the Father, He was talking about the God of Moses, the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors. He's saying to us that He has authority because of the Heavenly Father. For them it was to equate Himself with being equal with God. This is not just some random rabbi teacher guy who just showed up on the scene and started spouting things out because he had some certain degree.

Look in verse 16:

So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. 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. 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."

Jesus says in these verses (and He addresses this in future chapters of John) that what he's doing is what the Father's told Him to do. What He's saying is what the Father has told Him to say.

He's identifying Himself as being the Son of God, not as being the son of Joseph. He's identifying Himself as having an eternal existence. He's identifying as being the Son of the Father. He says, "I'm speaking according to the One who sent me here to come in the flesh." That's where He gets His authority - from the Father. As John is trying to lay out his case for Jesus being the Christ, he goes back to this again and again: Jesus is the Christ because of where He came from and because of what He said and where He got what He said. Jesus says, "I speak not what is mine. I speak what He who has sent me has told me to say."

Several years ago I was involved in the purchasing of a car. At this particular time there was negotiation going on about the price of the car. The salesman was talking about all the great things about this car, and there was a price being discussed. So the price was written down, and they said, "This is what we will sell the car for." And I said, "No, not that. That's all I can do. We will go."

And the salesman says, "Wait just a minute!" and disappears. And he comes back and says, "Let's talk about this." So he starts talking again about the car and tells me a new price. And I say, "I can't do that." The salesman replies again, "This is as low as I can go."

So I say, "That's fine. We're out." And he says again, "No! Wait, wait, wait, wait just a minute!" And he disappears. He comes back with yet another price. What was he doing? He was being honest and saying, "This is all I can do. The only thing I can do is what I've been told I can do." Jesus Christ is saying, "I'm from the Father. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me." This was John's way of showing that when Jesus spoke, He spoke on time with authority and He got this authority from the Father. Jesus said, "It's verifiable. If you want to see that what I say is true, then do what I say." In a way, He's saying, "If you obey me and you do the Father's will, what you'll find is that you will see that I am who I claim to be."

Listen real close to verse 17. He said, "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." If you want to believe, do the will of the Father. Some of you struggle with doubts. You may say, "I don't know. I used to believe this, but I'm not sure I believe anymore." Jesus is saying to do the will of the Father. Say yes to him, and you'll see that His word is true. His word is authoritative and His word works. He's real.

What happens when we get outside the will of God is that we find ourselves doubting and not believing. Several years ago, Tim Keller told a story about his college pastor and conversations he would have with college students that came home from school. Tim Keller is a pastor at Redeemer in New York. He said as his college pastor was meeting with a student one day, he, "I used to believe, but I've gone off to college now and I doubt. I've had these classes in seen life out here, and I'm hearing different things. I've realized there are different ways, and I just don't know if I really buy this God thing anymore." Tim Keller said his college pastor would ask this over and over again in those conversations that came up. He would say, "So who are you sleeping with?" And inevitably, the student would say, "Excuse me?"

"Who are you sleeping with?"

"What?"

He said that student's shoulders would fall, and he would say, "How did you know?"

He said, "Here's the way it works. There is no more definitive characteristic of a follower of Christ than what their sexual ethic. When you get outside the will of the Father in this area of sexual ethics, you'll find yourself not believing that God is more real. You'll find yourself believing that God is less real." In your life right now, go back and look and see where you have stepped outside the will of God. It may be showing up in a lot of different areas, but really what happened was back here, you started drifting into your will, not his will. Jesus is saying, "Do you want to verify who I am? Do the will of the Father."

Jesus spoke on time with authority from the Father. Lastly, Jesus spoke about the future. What did he say about the future? The first thing is that He predicted his death. Verse 33 says: "Jesus then said, 'I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me.'" This is a prediction of death. One of the cool things about where we are in the Gospel of John right now is that the calendar that we're on in everyday life is the same as the one in the Gospel of John. This Feast of Booths and Feast of Tabernacles was basically the Jewish Thanksgiving holiday. This was autumn, and it would be about six months away from the Passover. We're about six months away from Easter, the celebration the resurrection of Christ. So as we track through the Gospel of John over these next two weeks even on our own calendar, it is the very season that it is in Jerusalem. Jesus is saying here now at this time of Thanksgiving at the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles - "I'm going to be back here at Passover, and I'm going to die. I'll be arrested." And He begins to predict that. This is His first prediction, and then there are several others throughout the Gospel of John. He tells about how He will die and be raised again on the third day. There is a prediction of death, but He also says, "I'm going away." When He spoke about the future, He also promised that they could live. That's an incredible truth for us. Because of Jesus' death, you and I can live. We sang it earlier in one of our songs about how He took our place. He bore our sin on the cross. He died, paying with His blood for our sin. And by faith in Jesus Christ, we can have life.

John says it over and over and over again that whoever believes has life! He promised that they would live in verse 37. Here is how Jesus says it: "On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out-" Read slowly through this. Use your senses. Imagine His mouth as He's crying this out. See His body stand up in the crowd. See the veins pop on His face. Hear with your ears the shout:

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Jesus' way of talking about new life was speaking about living water. He said earlier to the woman at the well, "I am the living water." He said at the feeding of the 5,000, "I am the bread of life." Here, he's talking about eternal life by describing it as taking a drink of Him. He says, "When you come to me and drink of me and believe in me, you will never thirst again. You will live." This Feast of Booths that it refers to here was referred to as the Great Day. Verse 37 says that there was a ceremony. As they celebrated this with thanksgiving before the Lord for delivering them out of the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, they have a Feast of Booths. And to celebrate, they would take urns full of water from the pool of Siloam home and pour it out to symbolize God giving water to them from the rock to drink in the wilderness.

Jesus was seeing on that day that this water being poured out was commemorating what Jesus had done physically for them. Jesus stands up and says again, "I want you to know what I can do spiritually for you. I'm the living water, and when you take me in and out of you will flow life. Out of you will flow springs of living water." Amen? Jesus is saying to you, "You will live!" Jesus has gone to heaven. He has sent the Holy Spirit. You and I by God's gift, when we believe Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of our life, we receive life. The Holy Spirit comes to residence in us and we are marked in Christ by the Holy Spirit. See what Jesus did. Hear what Jesus said. He spoke on time with authority from the Father about the future. He said, "I'm going to die, but you can live."

Are you listening to what He's saying? The biggest question is not whether you will listen to what He says, but will you believe who He is? That's what John wants. That's what I'm pleading with you today. Adult, college student, teenager, child - would you believe Jesus as Savior? If you believe, you will have eternal life. Eternal life that shows up in everyday life as the living waters of the Spirit overflow.