

**John 7: 37-53; “What Christ Brings With Him”, Sermon # 49 in the series –
“That All May Honor the Son”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall,
on January 20th, 2019, in the Morning Worship Service.**

It is apparent from the words that I just read to you that many of the people of Jerusalem did not know what to think about Jesus, on that last day, that great day of the feast, when He stood up before them and gave them this great gospel invitation. He said – “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.” “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from with him shall flow rivers of living water.” You see how full of love and compassion that Jesus was, that He could take the most precious of spiritual truths, the truth of the Spirit’s indwelling of the believer, the Holy Spirit’s working in the heart of a person who believes in Him, and shout it out for all to hear. You and I must also try to learn to be plain-speaking people when it comes to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ ourselves. We must ask ourselves whether we have the same righteous and loving desire in our hearts to share the truth with people around us; the truth that will set them free and satisfy their souls, all during the time of their earthly journey.

At the time that Jesus spoke these words, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given yet; for Jesus had not been glorified yet. The Holy Spirit would be sent by the Father and the Son on the Day of Pentecost in order to begin the building of the New Testament Church. He would be sent in order that that all in the early Church would be able to know the reality of the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; the Lord Jesus being continually with their spirit, by means of His Spirit. Let me ask, as we begin our time together, do you know this blessed reality of Christ being in your life by the power and presence of His Spirit? When Christ is in your heart, He helps you to help others. If you have the Spirit you will help them, by your teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded you. You will show them the way of discipleship by your good example of Christ to them. You have come to know Him experientially; that is, you believe and you are coming to know experientially that He is with you always, even to the end of your life; even to the end of the age. And you want others to know this great salvation and this great reality also.

Well, how can we apply this text to ourselves and our own witness for Christ? I think that we can ask ourselves this question – What does Christ bring with Him when He speaks to the hearts of men? From these verses we can see that He 1st of all brings certainty to those who will believe in His words. 2nd – He brings division to those who will not look into His life more carefully. And 3rd – He brings with Him, the spiritual courage, to give to His disciples, the ability to speak up on His behalf. Let us see if we might learn something more of how we can be better witnesses to our Lord Jesus, and for our Lord Jesus.

1st of all – The Lord Jesus will bring with Him certainty of salvation to the minds and hearts of all those who will believe in His words. (verses 37-40)

It was when Jesus stood and cried out in the temple on the last day of the Feast, that many in Jerusalem heard these tremendous words of promise and blessing. It says that “many from the crowd, when they heard it said – “Truly this is the Prophet.” And others said – “This is the Christ.” Now when they said this, they were publicly confessing that they believed in Him. They had come to certain convictions about Jesus, and when He spoke the gracious words of Promise. He was telling them that they not only could drink from Him spiritually and have the water of eternal life, but also that that this water would flow out of their hearts so that they could give hope and help to others around them who might also believe when they heard about Him from them. When they heard this, they were convinced. They were convinced by the graciousness of His words! What wonderful words they were!

Is there anyone here this morning who would like to drink of Christ? Would you like to drink of spiritual things; of spiritual truths and realities which will bring refreshment and saving strength to your soul? Then come to Jesus. It will be good for us if we can understand what was Jesus doing here

when He said these gracious words. He was telling them how the inner thirst of a person, their spiritual thirst to understand the meaning of life and to partake of spiritual things, could be quenched. He was telling them how they could be refreshed and satisfied on an on-going basis in their lives. The only thing that you need to do is to drink from Him. When you drink from Him, you are receiving from His spiritual fullness when you exercise faith in Him. You believe that He has truth and grace to give to you which you cannot learn by your own strength of intellect, You are learning from Him that which no other person can give you. If you drink, if you believe in Him, and receive from Him, He then supplies you with the spiritual things that will truly profit your soul. And so, once you have Him, the Well of Living Waters, in your soul, He then enables you to help others by sharing with them the good news that they too can have this gift of salvation, and this gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell within them, so that they will be spiritually saved, spiritually refreshed, and continually blessed with all spiritual wisdom and all the satisfactions of knowing God. My listeners, do you have this experience of Christ?

You see, this is what all people need. They need this word of assurance, that Jesus can, and that He most certainly will, give you grace if you believe in Him; grace to know God and grace to have the strength and wisdom of how you can walk with God in holiness and truth. The Lord Jesus was promising them that He would reveal the truth to them about how they might come to know God the Father, and how they might come to have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them. All of this saving knowledge will come to you, through faith in Him. These people who were listening to Jesus came to realize by the way that He preached, that this was most certainly what He would give to them, and do for them. And you can know it too. At the Feast Jesus was proclaiming; He was shouting it out, that He would give this gift to anyone there who was hearing Him that day. He would give them that certainty of inner assurance, based upon the words of His promise, that if they would believe in Him, they would find the reality of these things. And my friends, He is saying the same thing to you today through my preaching to you from His words. Listen to His words again. He said to them – “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

What Scripture is He talking about? Well, I believe that He is speaking about the Scripture found in Isaiah 55, verse 1. “Ho!” “Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy, and eat.” “Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy?” “Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance.” “Incline your ear, and come to Me.” This is what Jesus was saying to them then, and this is what He is saying to you now; that if you thirst, it means that you have come to see your need of knowing God. And that thirsting desire is only satisfied when you come to the waters and drink of Christ’s grace. He is offering you the water of life. “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’” “And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’” “And let him who thirsts come.” “Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.” (Revelation 22: 17)

Your soul has a real need to drink spiritually, just as much as the body has the need to drink water physically; to have life. Listen to St. Augustine on this – “There is therefore an inner thirst and an inner belly, because there is an inner man.” “And that inner man is indeed invisible, but the outer man is visible; but yet better is the inner than the outer.” “And this which is not seen is the more loved; for it is certain that the inner man is loved more than the outer.” “How is this certain?” “Let every man prove it in himself.” “For although they who live ill may surrender their minds to the body, yet they do wish to live, and to live is the property of the mind only; and they who rule, manifest themselves more than those things that are ruled.”

“Now it is minds that rule, *it is the bodies which* are ruled.” “Every man rejoices in pleasure, and receives pleasure by the body: but separate the mind from it, and nothing remains in the body to rejoice; and if there is joy of the body, it is the mind that rejoices.” “If it has joy of its dwelling, ought it not to have joy of itself?” “And if the mind has whereof it may have delight outside itself, does it remain without delights within?” “It is quite certain that a man loves his soul more than his body.” “But further, a man loves the soul even in another man more than the body.” “What is it that is loved

in a friend, where the love is the purer and more sincere?” “What in the friend is loved — the mind, or the body?” “If fidelity is loved, the mind is loved; if benevolence is loved, the mind is the seat of benevolence: if this is what thou lovest in another, that he too loves thee, it is the mind thou lovest, because it is not the flesh, but the mind that loves. For therefore thou lovest, because he loves thee: ask why he loves thee, and then see what it is thou lovest.” “Consequently, it is more loved, and yet is not seen.” (End of Quote)

Now, what I am trying to convince you of, my brethren, is that Christ can, and He does, bring certainty to the mind and heart of the person trusting in Him. He may do this in a short period of time, as He did with these folks, or He may do it over a longer period of time according to His good purpose and pleasure in your life. But this certainty is an experiential conviction concerning your experience of Christ Himself being with You as a fountain of living waters, in accordance with your believing in His promise. When Jesus was speaking to the woman at the well in John 4, He said to her in verse 13 – “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.” “But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.

Where does all the spiritual certainty that you have Christ and eternal life, come from? Does it come from yourself? Certainly not! It comes, first of all, from believing in the truth of the gospel; what Jesus Christ has done for sinners such as ourselves. It is His finished work of obedience and sufferings on the cross which has procured our salvation. And this is outside of ourselves, but by faith we rest our souls upon it, and we believe it, and then we literally and spiritually receive from the fullness of grace which is found in Christ. We are accepted by the Father, in the Beloved. And when we receive of Christ’s fullness, we then also receive the witness of the Spirit to our own spirit that we are children of God. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children, and thus we are made heirs of eternal life. We know these things which have been freely given to us, by reading them in God’s word; but we come to know it as a sure and certain conviction, by His Spirit.

And so, you see, this certainty is only strengthened further by your daily knowing and experiencing the reality of the Holy Spirit’s working of Christ’s precious grace into your heart. His working in you produces the desire to cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit in your life. The Spirit’s produces in you the certain desire to act in love towards others around you; to manifest joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control in your heart. I am saying that it is this manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in your attitudes and actions which gives you evidence that you are a true Christian. There is this certainty that develops in your mind; a conviction that you truly know God, and that God is with you, continually helping you now, by the precious work of satisfying you with the Holy Spirit’s influences in your heart. The reality of His working in your life is as a fountain of blessing to you. This is seen prophetically in the Scripture as well in Isaiah 58: 11 – “The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.”

2nd – Christ will bring with Him division to those who will not look more carefully into His life. (verses 41-46)

Verse 41 says – “But some said, ‘Will the Christ come out of Galilee?’ “Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?” “So there was a division among the people because of Him.” “Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.” “Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, ‘Why have you not brought Him?’ “The officers answered, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’” So, here we find an amazing thing; that there were people there listening to Jesus who were hearing His gracious words and they were hearing the glorious promise of eternal life, and of the gift of the Holy Spirit which would be given to any who would believe, and some questioned Jesus as being their Promised Messiah because they thought that they knew that He was from Galilee originally, because He was born there in Nazareth. They then openly asserted the truth that the Scripture said that the

Christ would come from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, and that they thought that this disqualified Jesus.

And so it would have disqualified Jesus, if He weren't born at Bethlehem. For it says in Micah 5, verse 2 – “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.” But these people did not know of the providential working of God which led Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem because of the Census, and since Mary's time to deliver came while they were there, Jesus was born at Bethlehem. So, why, O why, you might ask, didn't they simply go to Jesus and ask Him where He was from? He was standing right nearby. Why didn't they go to Him personally and ask about his lineage and ask these questions of Jesus Himself? Why did they simply assume that they were right?

The answer appears to be, because they weren't really interested in investigating any further than what they had been told by others, nor were they interested in finding out the truth from Jesus' own mouth. They had already conceived a prejudice against Him. They had heard negative things about Jesus from the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and many of the rulers of Israel, and because of this, they did not want to believe that Jesus could be their Messiah. And so, they didn't go ask Jesus for themselves, and there was division among the people because of Him. My brethren, we must understand the power of prejudice in the human heart. Sometimes people who are common, ordinary, everyday people are all too often too ready to listen to prejudiced men in authority; those men who themselves, are not willing to look into the truth concerning Jesus.

These leaders in Israel had drawn the wrong conclusions about Jesus, based upon their own theological systems which they wanted to uphold and enforce with people around them. You should know, that the same kind of thing exists today; people who disqualify Jesus' credentials as being the Son of God because they have a prejudice against Him. And, we can see from this text, that these people who are prejudiced against Christ are usually of two sorts. They are either legalists who believe that they can actually keep the law of God, and by their own works-righteousness they think that they can bring themselves salvation. Or, they are people who do not believe that they need the Holy Spirit's working in their heart to be saved. Which means that they do not see that they need Christ at all to teach them, or to die for their sins. They do not believe that a person needs to be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven, and thus they are like the Sadducees, the theological liberals of that day.

In both cases they usually hold to a ritual religion; thinking that they will be saved their religious works. In that day, it was going to synagogue, having been circumcised, and continuing to observe the legal requirement of the law in the best way you knew how. In our day it is by going to church and being baptized, and taking the sacraments. It is usually by this means of self-righteous thought and action that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ's finished work comes to be seen as not necessary in order to obtain the gift of salvation, and working of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Both of these groups of people would be just prejudiced enough against Jesus, to think that they did not need to inquire of Him personally, about His lineage, or where He actually was born. But they would assure others, on the basis of their own authority, that they knew the truth about Him, when they did not.

This kind of prejudice, this kind of thinking that insisted that they knew, when they didn't really know, and their not thinking that needed to ask Jesus Himself about where He was born and what His lineage was, this would be eternally fatal to these people if they didn't repent of it. We need to remember this when we are attempting to be good witnesses for Jesus. People sometimes have these great prejudices against Christ or get great prejudices from listening to others who have them, because they want very much to be approved by those who are the leaders in their family, their community, and their nation. They have not read God's word, but they believe that they know better than you do where Christ came from and what He came to do. They think that they know better than you; the one who has read God's word, and does know the truth about Jesus, that they do not need to

be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven. There really is a lot of pride in this kind of thinking. We will think about this in our next point in this sermon.

But there is another thing that we should consider in this particular situation as well, and it is something which is not as well known to Christians as it should be. It is the truth that Jesus came into this world to bring this kind of division. It was Jesus' Person, that He was God's Son, and it was Jesus' words, saying that He was the only source of Salvation and blessing; this was what brought the division that day. He brought it so that those who do not know the Lord as well as those who do, will see how important the issue is; of believing in Jesus. This truth is found in Luke chapter 12, verses 49-53. Jesus says here – "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!" "Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth?" "I tell you, not at all, but rather division." For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three." "Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

I want you to notice that Jesus says that this is the very reason that He came. It was not to give peace on earth, but rather He came to bring division. Now, I want you to understand; He is not denying the personal peace that He brings as the Prince of Peace, to every believer in Him. Neither is He talking about eschatological peace; that world-wide peace that He will someday bring about between the nations in the time of the Millennium. Rather, He is talking about peace in terms of personal relationships in families. This division is of a very particular sort; it is the division that takes place between family members concerning what Jesus came to bring and to do, and what each one thinks about Him; whether they think that they need to be saved from their sins by Him, or not. If people, even within the same family, do not want to believe in Him and to receive His saving work in their lives, or they are too proud to think that they need Him, when they find someone in their own family who wants to share with them the gospel, they will fight against it with everything that is within them.

This is a division which takes place in thousands and millions of homes all over the world. It is true that the intention of the gospel is as the angels said to the shepherds at the time of Jesus' birth; "Peace on earth, and good will to men". It is true that God is willing to save to the uttermost all who will come to His Son in simple faith. But Jesus is saying here that He came to send fire on the earth; that is, that the truth of God's judgment upon all sin was being proclaimed by John the Baptist first, and then by Him and His disciples afterwards. John the Baptist said in Matthew 3, verse 11 – "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry." "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Jesus said that the baptism that He would be baptized with was the baptism of His sufferings which would come to Him instrumentally through the Pharisees and chief priests and rulers of Israel. It would be through that baptism of fire, through those sufferings, that He would triumph over sin and death. How distressed He was until it would be accomplished!

And Jesus says here that He came not to bring peace, but a sword; that is a sword of division in the family. Is this what Jesus really came to do, to divide? Yes, in this holy and challenging way of His gospel gaining entrance into a household, becoming established in some members of the household, and the truth bringing division within that household, so that such a witness would be born for Him that the unbelieving will not have any excuse in the Day of Judgment for their having not believed. God would not have any person to be ignorant of their true need. Your true need and the need of all people everywhere is to see Your need of Christ. You may fight and war against it, but you will do so to your own hurt. The double-edged sword proceeds from Christ's mouth and with it He conquers individual hearts, and with it He will someday conquer the nations.

In verse 44 it says that some of the people wanted to take Jesus; they wanted to have Him arrested, and so they sent to the chief priests and Pharisees, who then sent officers to go and get Jesus and bring Him to them. But lo, wonder of wonders, they come back empty-handed. And so these

leaders of the Jews say to them – “Why have you not brought Him? And the officers say – “No man ever spoke like this Man!” Now this is what Christ brought with Him that day; the power to so speak and preach and declare the truth. He spoke in such a way that that these officers were convinced of the truth of what He was saying, by their only hearing this one message. I am sure that it was simply the development of the message which I have already talked to you about in verses 37 and 38; Jesus’ opening up the truth of spiritual thirst and coming to Him to drink. These men were completely changed in their perspective of arresting Jesus and taking Him into custody. “No one ever spoke like this Man!” They weren’t going to lay a hand on Him, but they just might believe in Him!

3rd – He brings with Him, the spiritual courage to give to His disciples, the ability to speak up on His behalf. (verses 47-53)

“Then the Pharisees answered them, ‘Are you also deceived?’ ‘Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?’ ‘But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.’ ‘Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them said to them, ‘Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?’ ‘They answered and said to him, ‘Are you also from Galilee? ‘Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.’ ‘And everyone went to his own house.’ Now, you can see that what should have given the Pharisees, chief priests, and rulers of Israel pause, was that the very men who they sent to arrest Jesus came back being very impressed by Him, and confessing that no man ever spoke like this Man did! These false leaders of Israel should have said to themselves – Well, let us go hear Him for ourselves. Perhaps we have made a great mistake concerning Jesus. But they did not do this. They clung to their prejudiced view of Jesus, certain that they could justify all of their hatred of Jesus to everyone whom they knew.

They immediately think that those whom they had sent had been deceived by Jesus; that somehow He had bewitched them, somehow He had seduced them, or cast a spell on them. “Are you also deceived,” they say. But then they go a step farther. They begin to suspect that perhaps some one of the rulers of the Pharisees might have believed in Him. They are sure, they think, that the crowd who did not know the law was accursed, and that is why they listened to Jesus. They were very controlling men, and they were trying to hold everyone in lockstep against Jesus. Not one person would they allow to approve of Jesus or His teaching. This was how great the deception was in Israel in those days. The Messiah, the Lord of Glory, had come to them and let them taste of His power to heal and His glory in His teaching, and they will have none of it. See how deception lays hold of the most religious of men.

But Nicodemus, he who came to Jesus by night, being one of the 70 rulers of Israel, He was not going to be afraid any longer. Listening to Jesus and receiving His teaching had convinced him that He was the Son of God, that He was the King of Israel. And he could be silent no longer. Why? Because he now had grace, and that grace was giving him the courage that he needed to speak. He would speak though it might cost him his position, and he would speak even if it cost him his life. The Lord had brought him courage by grace. He now knew that he must question those who were spewing forth such hatred toward Jesus, and trying to control what everyone around them believed, also. He says – “Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?”

The others who heard Nicodemus speak, were not slowed down or stopped by his wise answer. No, the law does not judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing. Exodus 23: 1 and 2 – “You shall not circulate a false report.” “Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.” “You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice.” You can see, that the law states just the opposite. But at this point, no one in the Council wanted to hear what the law said. They all wanted to put Jesus to death. And so, instead of answering his good question, they ask him if he was from Galilee. And then they say that he should search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee. But this was not true either. Jonah, Nahum, and Elijah the Tishbite were all from Galilee. Let us see that you and I will need all the courage that the Lord Jesus can give to us, if we are to speak, and to stem the tide of prejudice which exists in the hearts and minds of religious men, against Jesus. But let us no fear; He is with us.

