

The Counsel of Unbelievers

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John 7:1-9 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

- I. His brethren did not believe in him, and so everything they said is wrong here.
 - A. Be careful the advice you listen to from other people.
 - B. Seek truly godly counsel from people who truly love the Lord and are submitted to him, and obviously believe in him.
 1. You can only tell this by how submitted they are to God and his will.
 2. It will show in their behavior, their speech, their spirit, and above all in their attitude toward others.
 - C. To the casual listener these words of counsel to the Lord, from people whose names we do not even know, might sound sensible and reasonable.
 1. Their first point was, "...so that others might see and hear and know."
 2. That sounds pretty spiritual to most people, but it came from the hearts and mouths of unbelievers.
 3. They were simply trying to manipulate the Lord to do what they wanted to see him do. (bring in his earthly kingdom immediately)
 - D. But the Lord rejected them right out of hand because He identified their intent and motive.
 - E. There is so much worldly counsel and advice out there now that everyone is drowning in it.
 - F. So much of it sounds like wisdom and good advice, until you stop and consider its source.
 1. And you must be able to recognize the source when it is not true believers in Christ.
 - G. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly."
 - H. People who do not believe in the Lord desire to give us advice on how to be a good Christian.
 - I. People who live in uncleanness and ungodliness and who sit at the devil's table continually, and who despise any kind of holiness or separation from the corruption of this world, are sages when it comes to what it means to be a Christian, and how a Christian ought to act.
 - J. While we need to be careful to not become detached from how lost people view church people, we need to be very careful that we do not start listening to the counsel of the ungodly more than we do the Word of God, and the example of Jesus.

- II. His brethren just did not like the way Jesus was doing things.
 - A. Their view of his work and purpose was only in the realm of earthly and self-centered thinking.
 - B. They were looking for him to be a super star, a celebrity, someone of renown, and they were trying to advise him on how to accomplish that.
 - C. They believed in the world's way of getting things done and making something of oneself, and they didn't hesitate to tell the Lord how to do things.
 - D. They took for granted that Jesus had the same thing in mind about his life and purpose as they did.
 - E. They took for granted that He wanted to be known and famous.
 - F. And then they set about to instruct the Lord on how to be what they thought He should be, and do what they thought He should do, and go where they thought He should go, and show himself to whom they thought He should show himself.
 - G. This is where most people make the same mistake about the Lord and his working in their lives.
 - H. We assume that He wants the same thing for us that we want for ourselves.
 - 1. We may have a holy and noble desire to do some work for God, but that does not constitute a calling from God to that work.
 - 2. Many times that desire, and the waiting for it, is part of the preparation for what God is going to use you for in the future.
 - I. We go about trying to promote and assist the Lord in accomplishing our own purposes and dreams and goals.
 - 1. Our prayers consist many times of instructing the Lord on how to fix our problems, or someone else's problems, or situations.
 - 2. Many times we make major decisions about where to live, where to go to church, what to do for a living, with our hand on the steering wheel trying to help God do what we want him to do with us.

- III. Let's just look a little closer at their advice to the Lord.
 - A. "Depart hence..." – that means to get out of this place where you are.
 - B. You cannot serve God at your best here, you need to be over there.
 - C. The opportunities are much greater there than they are here.
 - D. No one is seeing or hearing you here, or just these few.
 - E. If you want to be successful and really make a difference you need to get out of this place and go someplace else.
 - F. But serving God in his will is to do what you can, with what you have, where you are.
 - 1. If we want to serve God and pray for him to use us, He will give us opportunities to serve him where we are.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; ...

- 2. Whatsoever thy HAND findeth to do – not whatsoever thy HEART findeth to do.
- 3. Serve God with what is at hand; do not ignore the opportunities to serve God where you are while dreaming of what you might be able to do somewhere else.
- G. This is the view of unbelievers, not true believers.
- H. Jesus went up to the feast, but not at their command, or counsel, or advice.
- I. He went when it was HIS time and not when it was THEIR time.
- J. The true believer is not moved and motivated by desires, but by the Lord himself.