

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #35

John 7:25-36

I would be willing to bet that most people in the United States and even in the world know something about the Christmas story. People, who have no real relationship with God, know things about Christmas. They know about the fact that the baby Jesus was born. They know that the baby Jesus was born in Bethlehem. They know about Mary and Joseph. They know about the angels who appeared to shepherds. They know about the wise men who came to see Jesus, bearing gifts. They know about a star that shined bright. These are facts that most people have down solid about Christmas. In fact, every year people visit Bethlehem at Christmastime. People travel about six miles south of Jerusalem to the famous city. There are some decorations. You may walk on a marble floor of a chapel and gaze on walls filled with pictures. You can look at a spot that superstition says was the exact place where Jesus was born. It is a place of popish relics and symbols which every year captures the attention of and lures millions. But let me suggest that most people who celebrate Christmas or most who visit Bethlehem really do not know Jesus Christ personally. They really have no real idea as to who He is. Most who know things about Christmas don't have a real personal relationship with Christ. Even some of the most vile and sinful people in the world go to church at Christmastime.

This is not just true in our day - this was also true when Jesus Christ was physically here on earth. Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem and eventually moved to Nazareth. Everybody thought they knew Him, but they really didn't. He was God in the flesh. He was God incarnate. It did not matter what He did or what He said to prove this reality, hardly anyone actually believed Him. Hardly anyone could really and truly figure out who Jesus Christ actually was. Never is that more evident than when you come to a text like this.

Jesus Christ had been doing spectacular miracles to prove He was God. He was teaching with power and authority and everyone assumed they knew who He was. The sad reality was, hardly anybody knew who He was.

There is a lesson to be learned from this passage:

THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY SAW AND HEARD JESUS CHRIST HAD NO CLUE AS TO WHO HE REALLY WAS AND MOST CRITICIZED HIM, REJECTED HIM AND EVENTUALLY SUPPORTED KILLING HIM.

Every year the Christmas story is acted out in various ways. But the truth is, had most people really been there, they would have rejected Jesus Christ. At Christmastime, they did not stand around Jesus and sing carols and remember His birth. Most rejected who He was. This point was something the Apostle John never forgot and by virtue of the fact he develops this in his gospel, it is something God never wants us to forget. There are some five realities to observe in this passage:

REALITY #1 – Some of the people observe rulers don't know Christ yet they also don't know Christ. 7:25-27

If this text weren't so sad, it would be humorous. I'll never forget one time I had a Mormon ask me a question about a Jehovah's Witness. The essence of the discussion was that the Jehovah's Witness were really confused. I thought to myself, this is unreal. Because neither the Mormon, nor the Jehovah's Witness have truly figured out who Jesus Christ really is. You had one lost cult member criticizing the belief system of another lost cult member.

Now some of the people were listening to Jesus Christ teach in the temple and they noticed that the rulers, who wanted Him dead, were not saying one word to Him. The people must have wondered, if He is such a threat, why didn't they silence Him? This confused the people. They felt if Jesus were not the Christ, these rulers should have silenced Him, but perhaps they have changed their minds about Him and believed He was their Messiah. They also felt if Jesus were the Christ, they should accept Him and believe in Him. So in this context they asked three logical questions:

- 1) Isn't Jesus the guy they want to kill (v. 25)? The answer to this is Yes!
- 2) Have the religious leaders concluded Jesus is our Messiah (v. 25)? The answer is No!
- 3) Will our Messiah do more miracles than this Jesus did (v. 31)? The answer is No!

Notice verse 26, the people knew that these rulers didn't really know whether or not He were the Christ and neither did they know. So in verse 27, they drew two of their own conclusions:

(Conclusion #1) - We know where this man is from - Bethlehem and Galilee.

(Conclusion #2) - We will not know where the Messiah will be from.

These people are making things up as they go along. The Scriptures never present the idea that you would never know where the Messiah would come from. In fact, the prophet Micah clearly predicted that He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). The O.T. is filled with one specific prediction after another specific prediction concerning the Messiah. In fact, in the O.T., Dr. Walvoord observed that there were 41 well defined types of Jesus Christ. Dr. Chafer said that there is so much about Jesus Christ in the O.T. that any who question things about Jesus Christ either have a very limited understanding of what is written or they blatantly reject the clearest of all revelations (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 5, p. 7). Now it is one thing to be ignorant of Scripture, but it is quite another to invent your own belief system. When these people said (v. 27) that "we know whenever the Christ may come no one knows where He is from," they are just making stuff up probably based on what they had been taught by rulers not right with God. Their conclusion was Jesus cannot be the Messiah because we know where He is from and when the Messiah comes, we have been taught, we will not know where He comes from.

People still make up religious stuff and invent their own belief system that doesn't square with the Word of God. I have heard of many who believe "God helps those who help themselves." Where do you see that? God helps those who cannot help themselves, especially when it comes to salvation. I know of a religious system that teaches you cannot be right with the Church unless you are baptized in water by that church. Where do you see that in Scripture?

Had the rulers and leaders actually taught the people the truth - they would have recognized Jesus was the Messiah. But they didn't. They kept their mouth shut. Hypocrites always keep their mouths shut to your face and do their satanic work behind your back. Woe to any teacher who knows the truth but does not teach the truth. Great judgment will come against such a one who does such a thing. It is not the mark of scholarliness to remain neutral about Jesus Christ, it is a sign of judgment.

REALITY #2 – Jesus responds to all the people who don't really know who He is. 7:28-29

The verb “cried out” means to cry out, to scream out with a very loud voice. It is so odd that in religious settings, most people who become very emotional do so because they don't know the actual truth. Jesus is very emotional here because He does know it; in fact, it was their rejection of truth that caused Him to scream. There is a place for getting emotional against those attacking truth.

Jesus became very emotional to these people who thought they knew Him. Even His Divine patience had limits. Their knowledge of Him was very superficial. What He basically says in these verses is this - **you may think you know something about Me, but you don't know God.** Christ is very confrontational. I watched Larry King one night and he had various religious leaders from various faith systems on his program, including two famous evangelicals. In front of a Muslim, a Rabbi and a Catholic Priest, he asked two leading evangelical religious figures (whom I will not name) whether or not they were saying that all these religious people would go to hell if they did not accept Jesus Christ. Instead of them saying, that is exactly what Scripture teaches and exactly what we are saying, they skirted the question, because they did not want to be too confrontational. This was precisely the type of setting that caused Jesus Christ to become unglued.

When Christ says, “You both know Me and know where I am from” - what He means is both groups of people knew He was from Galilee. They knew Joseph and Mary (John 6:42) and they knew of his stepbrothers (John 7:3). Jesus said you all know that. But what you don't know is I did not come here of Myself, but I am sent by the true God and none of you know the true God. I know Him because I came out of Him, and He is the One who sent Me here. None of you can figure that out. Jesus Christ was declaring His Deity in the temple. He was claiming that He was One with God the Father (John 10:30). Jesus said, “I know God because I am from God.” That preposition “from” (*para*), means that Jesus is stressing that He came from being right beside God the Father in actual location and position (Dana & Mantey, p. 108ff.). None of the great Biblical heroes ever made this kind of statement about themselves - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Elijah, Peter, Paul or John. None of them said, I came from being right beside God the Father and was at a coequal positional relationship with Him. This is a powerful Deity statement.

REALITY #3 – The Pharisees respond to Jesus and to the Multitude. 7:30-32

Jesus statement of Deity struck deep into the hearts of the Pharisees. They knew He was claiming to be God. Their desire was to seize Him and kill Him. But they could not do it, not because they did not want to but “because His hour had not yet come.” God would not permit any touch His Son until His hour came. God is the One calling the shots.

Don't miss this. There was a supernatural restraint and protection surrounding Jesus Christ. He was doing God's will and no one could touch Him apart from permission from heaven. This is so critical to see because the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was on God's perfect time schedule, not man's. Jesus was not arrested and killed by surprise, but by Divine Decree. They could not lay one hand on Him, until God the Father permitted it, even though that was their great desire.

Jesus Christ had no chance of dying of hypothermia even though when He was born as a human, He was born in a drafty animal outbuilding. Jesus Christ did not die on the cross as some helpless criminal. He could not even be touched until the precise moment in which there was perfect conformity to the will of God. Jesus Christ was invincible until the moment that He, of His own volition and in perfect conformity to God's plan, surrendered to the cross.

Martin Luther said he believed the same was true for every believer. He believed nothing could touch a believer unless it was God's explicit command and order (Boice, Vol. 2, p. 597).

The crowd was muttering, which means they were spreading all kinds of rumors around about Jesus Christ. There was a lot of talk about Jesus Christ. According to **verse 31**, many of the crowd believed on Christ, but not in the sense of seeing their need for a Personal Savior and His atoning death. They believed that He might be the Messiah because of all of the miraculous signs they had seen Him do. Donald Gray Barnhouse said there were three kinds of faith:

- 1) Faith in God - faith like the devil has - he believes and trembles;
- 2) Faith in Facts - mental assent of certain facts about Jesus, such as birth, death, resurrection;
- 3) Faith that Saves - personal moment in which one believes on Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

When the Pharisees heard that many were thinking in terms of Him being the Messiah, they sent officers to seize Him.

REALITY #4 – Jesus responds to everyone . 7:33-34

Jesus responded by saying, "I will be with you for a little while longer and then I am going back to the one who sent Me." Their plots against Jesus Christ would not work. You could nail Him to a cross, but no grave could hold Him because He is God. You will seek Me and will not find Me and you will not come to where I am because "you **cannot** come" (v. 34). Not you should not come, or may not come, **you cannot come**.

This is a solemn judgment. These Jews would die in their sins. After a short time, the Jewish nation would long for her Messiah, but she wouldn't find Him. He would be gone and most Jews would never see Him again. Most Jews were lost and going to hell, not heaven.

I believe there comes a point when you want to see Jesus Christ but cannot find Him. There comes a point when one really wants to be right with God, but it is too late. It is a very serious and dangerous thing to reject the Truth pertaining to Jesus Christ. Reject Truth that God sends your way and at some point God may shut you down.

I believe it is that way for most who celebrate Christmas and Easter. They like the baby Jesus story and the resurrection story, but most do not have a real relationship with Jesus Christ. They are totally and completely lost. They are shut off from eternal life.

REALITY #5 – The Jews don't have a clue what Christ is talking about. 7:35-36

These Jews did not believe He could hide from them, after all, they were intelligent people who knew the Jerusalem territory like the back of their hand. So they responded by saying, where does Christ intend to go that we cannot find Him? Is He going to some obscure Gentile place? Is He going to teach in the spread out Gentile land?

Truth is, that is exactly what He was going to do. He was going to go back up into heaven and send His Spirit and let His Word and program swing out to Gentile people. Jesus turned to them and said, "You will seek me and will not find me." Why? You are religious, you are dedicated to good works, you go to the Temple, you celebrate the Festivals, why can't you find Me? Because you are lost.

They could not see their own lost condition. They would not believe on Jesus Christ to be saved. A person may be a prominent, intelligent person in the church and not have any relationship with Jesus Christ.

It is possible to know many things about Jesus Christ and not personally know Jesus Christ. There is a big difference between thinking something and believing something.