

## **PRIDEFUL UNBELIEF SCORNS JESUS**

John 7:1-24 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Prideful unbelief comes in many forms, and before our text is barely begun, we read in John 7:5, “For not even His brothers believed in Him.” If you would have asked them, “Was Jesus a good older half-brother to you brothers, James, Joses, Jude, and Simon?” (Jesus also had sisters—how many or their names are unknown—Mark 6:3), They doubtless would have said, “Yes, he is a remarkable brother, kind, compassionate, merciful, and trustworthy, a great brother. “Does He do remarkable miracles?” “Yes, He does.” “Do you believe He is the promised Messiah to come?” “No, we don’t. We grew up with him, slept in the same house, ate together, worked, and played together; we know He is not the Son of God.”

Jesus after beginning His ministry in Judea, quickly moved His disciples to work in Galilee to the north. The Jews in Judea were out to kill Him. The October Feast of Tabernacles/Booths (Sukkot) was drawing near—seven days and then one last great day of the feast. Inhabitants of Jerusalem and Jews from all over Israel moved out of their houses to build temporary booths with tree limbs and boughs of trees, to celebrate the harvest and to commemorate God's protection of His people during their wandering in the desert during the Exodus. These Jews built a temporary shelter (called a Sukkah) and they ate their meals in this shelter for seven days to commemorate their time in the desert when they had little to no shelter and lived under the stars on the way from bondage in Egypt to Canaan.

Before this fall feast, Jesus’ brothers came to Him to advise Him as a self-appointed political action committee, saying, (1) You need a larger arena. Galilee is too small for you. Why stay here? Get down to Jerusalem, to Judea, the heart of Israel. (2) Your Judean disciples need to see the miracles You’re doing in Galilee. (3) Your plans are not worldly wise—You have no wise business model. Quit working in secret. Do Your miracles in the open square, not in obscure Galilee. (4) You’re wasting Your gifts here in the hills. Go show Yourself to the world. Sadly, Jesus’ brothers were just as unbelieving as the Jews in Judea wanting to kill Jesus. Let’s learn two lessons today about prideful unbelief—we as disciples of Jesus need to learn these lessons every bit as much or more than people that hate Jesus.

**PRIDEFUL UNBELIEF HATES JESUS FIVE DIFFERENT WAYS!** (I.) These five lessons are powerfully taught in this text. Do these lessons indict us?

**Prideful unbelief (1) hates Jesus’ doing all things well in His time.** Both believers and unbelievers want control over when things are to happen. Giving God the reins is something most people hate. Notice John 7:6-8. “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. You go to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, (meaning—with you) for My time has not yet fully come.” Jesus knew He was but six months away from the Passover Feast in March or April when He would give Himself up to die in our place as our Passover Lamb. This feast was not His feast to say everything He was soon to say at the coming Passover Feast. Jesus was saying, in verse 6, “My time (Gk-**kairos**)

has not yet come. Jesus never said kronos—chronology. A kairos moment is a God-appointed time for God to act. Jesus spoke of it not being yet His time to manifest Himself to the world. On the last day of the great feast—John 7:37, the 8th day, that would be His kairos moment to tell those at the feast to come to Him and drink if they believed on Him. God’s word tells us in Eccl. 3: 11 that “God has put eternity in our hearts, and He makes everything beautiful in His time.”

To illustrate this to us today, as God’s people here at the Rock Springs Ev. Free Church, we need to realize that since God took Pastor Larry Home to Himself last August 14th, this is a kairos moment in our history. Pastor Larry labored full time beside us here for 27 years. We are living now in a kairos moment. God is going to show us His precious vision for our future as a church, and by His grace and our obedience, we will move ahead in His time. Prideful unbelief hates the very idea that we are to be sensitive to God’s time, and not try to control His time our way. God has carried us through a number of different kairos moments as a church as I look back on the last 47 and a half years. He took us in 1983 past many families leaving our church, and He grew us back. He took us past our inability to pay our mortgage in 2005, and He helped us burn our mortgage. Whenever God’s people face kairos moments, if we listen and obey, God will always carry us through.

**Prideful unbelief (2) hates that Jesus makes us feel uncomfortable in His presence.** Notice John 7:7,11-13. In John 7:7, Jesus said to His brothers, “The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.” Wherever we realize Jesus is there, there is an invasion of our privacy. Even Jesus’ disciples like to have a sign on our door, “Do not disturb.” Who wants to be uncomfortable watching a movie that Jesus may not want us watching? Being aware of Jesus’ presence can often be a condemnation of our selfish actions. Even for Jesus’ brothers, as for us, how often did Jesus’ presence make them feel uncomfortable? Jesus’ presence polarizes people. Jesus said to them, “The world cannot hate you,” why, because both believers and unbelievers are living in conformity to the world—the way the world thinks, not raising questions or challenging this woke world we are now living in. If we choose to stand up for Jesus, and challenge the world’s woke agenda, that person, or that pastor will not be accepted, but hated, as Jesus was.

**Prideful unbelief (3) hates being amazed by Jesus, when in our hearts we either secretly or publicly want people to be amazed by us.** This is the daily test each of us must face Notice John 7:14-17. Listen as I read that these unbelieving Jews hated that everyone was marveling at Jesus’ teaching, when they thought they knew His origin in Nazareth. Even as a pastor, my temptation is to please all of you, when God has called me to lead us all in being amazed at our incomparable Jesus. You and I are not amazing. This very text amazes me and leaves me giving hours to try to understand the depth of what was happening there in Jerusalem. God has called me and you rather to point continually to the incomparable Christ. What amazed these Jews who wanted to kill Jesus? It was that Jesus had incredible wisdom, when as they believed it, He had no training, no time in one of the rabbinical schools—how could He be so wise. When the rabbis taught, they would

quote the Mishnah, the Talmud, or another rabbi. Jesus had no footnotes. He said in John 6:47, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.” John 7:15 rightly tells us, “The Jews therefore marveled, saying, “How is it that this man has learning, when He has never studied?” Jesus added in v. 17, “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.” It should ever amaze us that Jesus’ teaching is the reason why we are saved. Jesus’ good news, His teaching, His Gospel made all this joy we have in our hearts possible. If you want the attention and if you want to amaze others of us about your wisdom or knowledge, down deep, it may offend you and inwardly hurt you if Jesus is getting all the glory, and no one is bragging on you or me. Jesus’ true disciples can hate that their teaching is turning people’s amazement from them to Jesus. That hurt, until we confess it, is prideful unbelief.

**Prideful unbelief (4) hates Jesus’ purpose to always glorify His Father.** Notice John 7:18. This word from Jesus is indicting if we are seeking approval of men and seeking our own glory. Jesus said, “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.” It has been well said that many of us like to think of ourselves, whether we have been to school or not as “self-made men or women who worship our creator. None of us are self-made. I am totally powerless and impotent as a disciple of Jesus or as a pastor unless I realize, apart from Jesus, I can do nothing. (John 15:5) Ray Stedman spoke of what we must do to quit wanting the glory, for Jesus will not share His glory with another. (Isaiah 42:8) Ray Stedman said, “Practice what Jesus says. Obey His words, Repent of your sins. Come to Him, Cast yourself upon His mercy. Believe in His forgiveness and go out and treat people the ways He says to. Then you will know from an inside knowledge that no one can take away what He says is true, but His teaching is in line with reality. Do what Jesus says and you will begin to understand with a deep conviction that He knows what life is all about.”

**Prideful unbelief hates Jesus’ perception, always exposing truth and error.** Notice John 7:19-24. Listen to Jesus publicly debating the Jews that wished to kill Him. This whole interaction was based on the Jews accusing Him of being a lawbreaker for healing this invalid on the Sabbath. It is important to remember that up to now, Jesus had wrought many miracles in Galilee, but the only one John records as having happened in Judea was in John 5:1-18. He healed the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda, an invalid for 38 years. Jesus did it on the Sabbath. Jesus’ argument exposing truth from error began by asking the Jews why they were so hostile toward Him, seeking to murder Him. Jesus told them they broke the Sabbath as much as He did. The crowd interrupted Jesus saying, “Wait a minute! What are you talking about?” Who is trying to kill You? Most of the crowd was initially ignorant of the plots of their religious leaders. That’s why they said Jesus had a demon. By the time Jesus exposed the Jews’ hypocrisy, the desire to kill Him was heightened. Jesus told them that when a boy’s eighth day of being born fell on a Sabbath, the Jews broke the Sabbath, worked, and circumcised that little boy. How they had to hate Jesus more as they had no retort, as He concluded His words

saying, “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.” Yes, prideful unbelief hates Jesus at least, these five different ways. The second lesson:

### **PRIDEFUL UNBELIEF CAN LOOK GOOD OR BAD BUT STILL BE EVIL.**

Notice John 7:1-5 to see the seemingly “good looking unbelief of Jesus’ brothers and then contrast their unbelief in verse 19 to the unbelieving Jews wanting to kill Jesus. Early in Jesus’ ministry, in Mark 3:21, we read that Jesus’ family heard that He went home, and a crowd gathered, so that they could not even eat. And when His family heard it, they went out to seize Him, for they were saying, “He is out of His mind.” In Mark 3:31, when Jesus’ mother and His brothers were outside the house where Jesus was teaching, and it was told Jesus that they were outside seeking Him when folk in His hometown were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.” He responded to the desire for His brothers and mother to stop His teaching in Mark 3:35, “For whoever does the will of God, He is my brother and sister and mother.” We have no record of Jesus’ brothers believing until after Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. In I Cor. 15:7, we read Jesus appeared after His resurrection to James. Then in Acts 1:14, we read that in the upper room after Jesus’ ascension, before Pentecost, where there were 120 men and women praying, there was Mary, the mother of Jesus and His brothers. So, what evidence does John give to show us Jesus’ brothers’ unbelief was just as evil and unbelieving as the Jews unbelief in Jerusalem who sought to kill Him? Let’s look at Jesus’ brothers, and their unbelief and then at the Jews in Jerusalem. What was it about Jesus’ brothers to make John declare in John 7:5 they were unbelievers every bit as much as the Jews wanting to kill Jesus?

### **Prideful unbelief (1) can look good on the outside, but be evil at the core.**

Notice John 7:1-5 Listen to these words about Jesus’ brothers’ unbelief. It is shocking to read verses 3-5. We read in verse 5, “For not even His brothers believed in Him.” How were Jesus’ brothers unbelieving? This is shocking to read. What was at stake for Jesus’ brothers? Remember John wrote in John 20:31, “Many other signs Jesus did which are not written in this book, “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in His name.” In John 3:16, we know John is speaking about eternal life. What was at stake at this time for Jesus’ brothers? Eternal life means we are no longer under God’s wrath. John said, in John 3:36, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” God’s wrath at this moment was resting on Jesus’ brothers. What kind of faith is saving faith, real faith? We read in the Gospel passage of I Corinthians 15:1-4, in verses 1-2, “Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the Gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are saved, if you hold fast to the Word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.” We are both saved and sustained in our faith by the Word of God. If the Jewish crowds in Jerusalem and Jesus’ brothers both were unbelieving, how can these two kinds of unbelief be the same? Look at four threads of prideful unbelief that expose Jesus’ brothers.

**Jesus refused (a) to seek human approval the way His brothers wanted Him to; Jesus was not after their desire for human praise.** His brothers wanted Jesus to go up to Jerusalem to

the Feast of Booths—six months before Calvary—publicly, and Jesus rather went up privately. v. 10. These brothers were open for Jesus to show His stuff, if He had more, but they didn't yet believe He was Messiah, the Lamb of God, the Bread of Life. They to open to Jesus doing miracles in Judea. It would make them look good. **Jesus would go public (b) only when it would exalt His Father, but not when He would draw public attention merely to Himself and His miracles, as His brothers desired, v. 3, "for Him to show Himself to the world."** When it was His Father's time, not by miracles but by His truth, Jesus taught publicly about His identity in the temple, (John 7:14) to please His Father in the middle of the feast. Look at Jesus' words in verses 16-18. Jesus does direct attention to His own glory. He said in John 17:24, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world." They proudly rejected Jesus' Messianic call to suffer and His divine glory.

**Jesus (c) rejected His brothers' suggestion to go publicly with them to Jerusalem, because they had nothing to lose, and Jesus could only go in God's time for the world then and now hates Jesus.** Jesus told His brothers in verses 7, "The world cannot hate you (because they like the world, sought their own glory), but the world hates Me because I testify about it that its works are evil." Jesus knew as yet His brothers were not willing to be humbled, see Him crucified for the sins of the world, and be willing to subject themselves to persecution and giving their very lives as martyrs of the faith. No, all they wanted was men's approval. **Jesus rejected His brothers' advice (4) to go up publicly to Jerusalem because they didn't know seeking their own glory made belief in Jesus impossible.** What is the root of prideful sin and falsehood? It is wanting our own way, our own glory over the glory of God. Notice Jesus' words in verse 18. Like the angry Jewish crowds, these brothers sought their own glory. James, Joses, Jude, and Simon at this point were not yet believers, born again.

**Prideful unbelief (2) looks bad when it angrily explodes desiring to kill Jesus.** Notice what Jesus said about prideful unbelief way back in John 5:43-44. Why was Jesus' healing on the Sabbath day the final straw for the Jews? They prided themselves in the keeping of the law of Moses--their badge of goodness and ticket to heaven. Jesus exposed their pride, their law-breaking, and told them they were sinners. This crowd of hypocrites/Pharisees heard Jesus say in Mt. 23:6, "You love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogue, and v.33 "How are you to escape being sentenced to hell?" Pride is seeking human approval. Faith at its root, is a humble gladness in the God of grace. John 1:14.16. What keeps millions from receiving Jesus? When we at the root demand praise and approval of men, if we come preaching that salvation is all of grace and not because of what we have done, it results in a violent reaction to God's grace. Many are saying in their hearts, "If you tell me I can't or haven't earned my way to heaven, and that I can only be saved by God's grace through faith, so help me, I'll kill you." And that's why they cried to Pilate—"Crucify Him." Jesus' brothers until after the resurrection of Jesus would not believe in Jesus. Like the Pharisees, Jesus' brothers initially rejected God's grace come down to earth. For the disciples, they finally believed. Have we surrendered our seeking for praise to Jesus and believed?