

Lighthouse Bible Church

June 23rd, 2013

John 7: 40 – 52 *Scripture Reading Matthew 10: 32 - 39*

‘What group do you belong to?’

Stand – Read – Pray

Just to remind you of where we are in this passage, Jesus has been openly teaching in the temple to the crowds that were gathered there. Some in the crowd were the religious leaders that wanted Jesus dead because of His claims of being equal with God, coming from God, the only way to God and He’s going back to God.

Not only that but He had repeatedly broken their Sabbath traditions and called them out for their hypocritical self-righteous system of religion that puts burdens too hard to bear on the people.

During His time of teaching in the temple, Verse 31 says that many of the people in the crowd believed who He said He was and they began to voice their opinion to others around them.

Their murmuring about who they say Christ is came to the hearing of the Pharisees and chief priests, these religious leaders, so they ordered the temple officers, the temple police to take Him.

Well, Jesus continued teaching in the temple and no one laid a hand on Him because, as we have seen before, His time had not yet come. And when He had finished His teaching He offered an invitation to anyone who thirsted, in their soul, to come to Him to drink the living water of everlasting life.

He also said that if they would come to Him and believe in Him that out of their hearts would flow rivers of living water. By the power of the Holy Spirit, they would be born again and they would then share the gospel and be the source of living water, eternal life, to those with whom they share.

And as we approach our passage this morning, we get to see and hear the reaction of those who have been hearing His teaching and, as we shall find out, they are the same reactions that people have even today. So let's start in Verse 40.

Verse 40: Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said 'truly this is the Prophet.

They had come to believe who Jesus was based on what He had just told them about coming to Him, believing in Him so that out of their hearts would flow rivers of living water.

First of all this group says **truly**, *alethos*, means surely, indeed or of a truth. They are absolutely convinced of who Christ is and in this case they say 'truly **this is the Prophet**'.

What do they mean by 'the Prophet'? Well, remember back in **John 1: 21** the priests and Levites came to him asking him if he was the Christ, or Elijah or 'the Prophet'. And in **John 6: 14** some said **this is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world**. Well, who is this Prophet who is to come?

It goes all the way back to **Deuteronomy 18: 15 – 18** where Moses told the people that **God would raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren, Him you shall hear.**

Then if you go to **Acts 3: 22** Peter quotes that same verse from Deuteronomy 18 and applies it directly to Jesus and he says earlier in **Verse 15** that you killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead. So Jesus is ‘the Prophet’ foretold and anticipated by the people and they recognized Jesus as that Prophet.

Verse 41 others said ‘this is the Christ’.

Some not only recognized Jesus as the promised Prophet that was foretold but some also recognized Jesus as the **Christ** as the promised Messiah, the Savior. Remember Jesus told the woman at the well in **John 4: 26** that He was the Messiah and then many of the people in Samaria acknowledge in **John 4: 42** that **we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.**

This group of people in John 7: 40 – 41 believe who Jesus is, without any hesitation or doubt and they are NOW willing to voice that belief. Remember back in **John 7: 13** everyone was debating on who Jesus was but it says **however no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.**

Not any more, these who are convinced of who Jesus is and have put their faith and trust and belief in Him are now willing to share that belief openly without any fear from the Jews as to what would happen to them. That is the mark of a true believer isn’t it?

These are the ones who thirsted, these came to Jesus and drank and they believed in Him and out of their hearts will flow rivers of living waters in just a few short months. But there is another group at the end of Verse 41, look at them.

Verse 41b - 42: 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?’

Here we have the religious unbelievers. They hear the believers in the crowd saying ‘this is the Prophet, this is the Christ, the Messiah’. And their response is at the end of Verse 41 **will the Christ come out of Galilee?** And, again, the question in the original language demands a negative response. In other words they are saying ‘will the Christ come out of Galilee, no He won’t’.

Remember what Nathaniel said to Philip when Philip told him that they had found the one whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth. He said **can anything good come out of Nazareth**, which is in Galilee.

They knew that the prophesied Christ would not come out of Galilee and the reason they knew that is because of what the scripture said. Look at Verse 42

Verse 42 Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

They are reminding these new believers that **Micah 5: 2** says **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.**

These unbelieving religious people who know their bible, by the way, are saying you believers are mistaken about who this Jesus is. All they had to do was ask Jesus where He was born, right? But they don’t do that, because religious unbelief is smug isn’t it? It is always that way, self-satisfied, willfully ignorant saying ‘my mind is already made up, don’t confuse me with the facts’.

We also know from the lineage of **Matthew 1: 1, 6** that Jesus **was from the seed of David**. All they would have had to do is ask Jesus, but they wouldn’t do it because of their unbelief.

And Jesus won't tell them, because if someone doesn't want to know the truth, he won't know the truth, right, as we have seen before. These religious people heard all that Jesus has said and knew what the Old Testament taught and in their willful ignorance and unbelief, miss who Jesus is and consequently they miss the way to eternal life. Then look what happens as a result; Verse 43

Verse 43: So there was a division among the people because of Him.

The people were divided about who Jesus was and their division boiled down to whether you believed in Him or you didn't, that is the division. This kind of division is a good thing because that means the new believers were not persuaded by the intellectual religious unbelievers ignorant words. They stood their ground because that is what true faith does.

By the way, most if not all of those who became believers in Christ probably didn't know where He was born. It didn't matter at that point to them, all that mattered was that He claimed to be the Messiah, the Savior and the only way to have their sins forgiven, and they believed it, and that was good enough for them. It was by faith in Christ alone, in the words that He spoke, in the words of God.

Let me say this; Christ always divides doesn't He. Look at **Luke 12: 51 – 53** where it says **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.**

In a similar passage in **Matthew 10: 36 – 37** Jesus continues by saying **and a man's enemies will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And He who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.**

By virtue of who Christ is and who you are in Christ, divisions will happen. Remember that Jesus said in **John 15: 18 – 19** **if the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own, yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.** Then look at Verse 44

Verse 44: now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

Here again we see the sovereign hand of God not allowing anyone to do what they wanted to do against Jesus. He is there publically, He is unprotected, He is vulnerable, and they **wanted to take Him** but they couldn't, **no one laid hands on Him.** Why? As we saw in **7: 30** **'no one laid a hand on Him, why, because His hour had not yet come.** Then look at another group in Verses 45 – 46.

Verses 45 – 46: 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'**.

Remember back in **Verse 32** the Pharisees and chief priests had sent for the temple police and told them to take Him. And the idea of taking Him was to physically arrest Him and have a mock trial and to have him executed.

And they come back to the Pharisees and chief priests without Jesus and they say to them **'where is He, why have you not brought Him'**? Look at the response of the temple police **'no man ever spoke like this Man'**.

They were sent to arrest Him and they come back without Him and we know the reason why. It is not His time yet. They could order the officers to do anything they want to Jesus but until God says its time, they can do nothing. So they come back empty handed and all they can say is ‘no man ever spoke like this Man’.

They are awe struck and what they heard Jesus saying. But notice that they are neither saying they believe in Him nor are they saying they don’t believe in Him, they are just saying ‘we have never heard words like that’. They have been affected by what Jesus said by they have not acted on what He said.

They are confronted with life and death, heaven and hell and they do nothing, they stand there in their indecision. Jesus says come to Me and drink the water of eternal life freely and Satan says arrest Him and kill Him. They are wrestling with what to do, so they do nothing. There are people like that today; they hear the words of gospel of Jesus Christ and they say ‘I have never heard that before’ yet they stand there in their indecision and do nothing.

Then look what the Pharisees say to them in **Verse 47: then the Pharisees answered them, are you also deceived.**

They are challenging the indecisiveness of the officers and their lack of follow through with the orders given to them to bring Jesus back to them. And they do it by implying that **they are deceived** by what Jesus has been saying. They are, in essence, calling Jesus a liar and these officers ignorant for listening to His lies. Then look what they say to get these officers to believe them and not Jesus.

Verses 48 - 49: Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.

They are saying ‘you don’t see any of us believing in Him do you?’

We are the religious elite, the keepers and dispensers of the law, we know God and the Scriptures and you don't see any of us believing in Him and following Him, do you. And those people in the crowd, those lesser educated than anyone, **who don't know the law**, they are **accursed**. For being supposed shepherds, they sure hated their people. *Rabbinic laws about Pharisees compared to people*

You see, these Pharisee's are, in essence, telling these officers 'we will tell you who the Messiah is because we are the religious elite, the spiritually qualified and we know the law'. This crowd doesn't know anything and if you believe them, then you are as ignorant and accursed as they are.

These Pharisees are trying to make themselves look religiously astute and these officers look ignorant in comparison to them. And then they make these officers comparable to the crowd that they have just denounced as accursed.

They are putting the pressure on these indecisive people as to what to believe. O and let me tell you, does that not happen even today? Someone who is confused or indecisive about Christ and they expresses their indecision to a religious unbeliever and that religious unbeliever says don't listen to them, listen to me.

They say I am the religious leader, I have the education, I have the diplomas, I have the spiritual wisdom, I have all of these credentials and you have nothing; let me tell you what the truth is. I am the leader I know it all, you are a commoner and you know nothing, so listen to me.

That is the way many religions work today, keep the people ignorant and the leaders informed and they will be pressured or deceived, in their ignorance, to follow. The religious leaders of Israel had the whole nation following their supposed religious laws that made it more and more difficult to find God or to follow God.

You may be here today wrestling with the truth about Jesus, you may be indecisive and not sure but His words have caused you to stop and take note. Our counsel to you is to listen to the Word of God, listen to what Jesus says and then do what He says, because it is the truth. We won't tell you our way is right, we will tell you that the Word of God is absolute truth and follow it, as we are.

Verse 50 – 51 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?

The Pharisees said 'have any of the rulers or the Pharisee's believed in Him'? The obvious answer is no, because they knew of none that had. But there was one, his name is **Nicodemus**. He has not made a public profession about Christ yet but he will later.

Remember Nicodemus was the one who **came to Jesus by night** back in **John 3: 1 – 10** and Jesus said 'unless one is born again he can not see the kingdom of God'. Jesus identified Nicodemus as 'the teacher of Israel' he was a ruler of the Jews, he was **one of them**.

Nicodemus says to the Pharisees **does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?** Nicodemus is, in a half hearted way, trying to defend Jesus and perhaps keep Him from being arrested, but not overtly.

Nicodemus may have been alluding to **Deuteronomy 1: 16 – 18** which says ... **hear the cases between your brethren and judge righteously...you shall not show partiality in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great..**

Whatever the law was that he was quoting, whether it was a biblical law or one of their rabbinic laws, Nicodemus is trying to get them to listen to what Jesus has to say before making a judgment against Him.

But these religious leaders have already made up their minds about who Jesus is and they want nothing to do with Him. So they answer Nicodemus in Verse 52.

Verse 52: they answered and said to him ‘are you also from Galilee? Search and look for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee’.

They say to Nicodemus, who is one of them, part of their religious organization, **are you also from Galilee?** You know what they are doing? They are insulting him. To be called a Galilean was an insult. Boy, they hated the people and if you go against them, even being a part of them, they have no mercy on you. They are a hateful, spiteful, vengeful, people; and they are the one’s, at the time, leading the nation of Israel.

They say to Nicodemus **search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.** That is not where the Messiah is supposed to come from and yet that is where this Jesus is from.

You see, again, the religious leaders are the ignorant ones because Jesus didn’t arise out of Galilee, He came from Bethlehem, just where Verse 42 said the Christ would come from. And as we have seen before, in their ignorant unbelief they will not pursue the truth but follow after their own man made system of religion.

I want you to notice something, there is no recorded response from Nicodemus. Maybe because he felt intimidated by the rest of the Sanhedrin council or maybe he felt that by saying what he did was his sufficient stand for Jesus. I don’t know.

I do know this, there are many times when professing believers have an opportunity to defend Jesus, even today, that make only a half-hearted attempt and then go no further. When they know the truth should be shared and they don't share it or speak only in a limited way, we are actually denying Christ.

One writer said "Often a man finds himself in a situation in which he would like to defend Jesus and in which he knows he ought to show his colours. Often he makes a kind of half-hearted defense and is then reduced to an uncomfortable and ashamed silence. In our defense of Jesus Christ it is better to be reckless with our hearts than prudent with our heads. To stand up for him may bring us mockery and unpopularity; it may even mean hardship and sacrifice. But the fact remains that Jesus said he would confess before His Father the man who confessed Him on earth and deny before His Father the man who denied Him on earth. Loyalty to Christ may produce a cross on earth but it brings a crown in eternity." *William Barclay Pg 254 John.*

What about you? What group are you in right now?

Verse 53 & 8: 1: and everyone went to his own house but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

Everyone had a home to go to but Jesus. He went to the mount of Olives. Jesus said 'foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man has not place to lay His head'. The creator of the universe had no place to go.

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Introduction and Review

Verse 40

John 1: 21, John 6: 14, Deuteronomy 18: 15 – 18
Acts 3: 22

Verse 41a

John 4: 26, John 4: 42, John 7: 13

Verses 41b – 42

Micah 5: 2, Matthew 1: 1, 6

Verse 43

Luke 12: 51 – 53, Matthew 10: 36 – 37
John 15: 18 – 19

Verse 44

John 7: 30

Verses 45 – 53

John 3: 1 – 10, Deuteronomy 1: 16 – 18
John 7: 42

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Verse 41a

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Micah 5: 2, Matthew 1: 1, 6

Verse 43

Luke 12: 51 – 53, Matthew 10: 36 – 37
John 15: 18 – 19

Verse 44

John 7: 30

Verses 45 – 53

John 3: 1 – 10, Deuteronomy 1: 16 – 18
John 7: 42