

Lighthouse Bible Church

June 9th, 2013

John 7: 32 - 39 *Scripture Reading Hebrews 3: 7 - 15*

‘Today is the day of Salvation’

Stand – Read – Pray

You remember that Jesus came to Jerusalem because of the Feast of Tabernacles and He came secretly because He knew the Jews wanted to kill Him for violating their Sabbath traditions and for making Himself equal with God in His teaching.

When the time was right, He revealed Himself at the temple and began to teach the people about the kingdom of heaven, about who He is and about how someone gets to heaven and He was using Old Testament texts to teach them.

He confronts the religious leaders with their hypocrisy and publically denounces them and their self-righteous religious practices and all but calls them hypocrites and the people standing around notice that no one says or does anything to Jesus, not even the Jews who were listening and wanted Him dead.

So they speak up and challenge the religious leaders by saying ‘do you think this is the Christ, because you are not taking Him, the One you wanted to kill, He is speaking boldly and you’re doing nothing about it.

So Jesus, in somewhat anger and sarcastically, tells them you don’t know the God you say you worship and I do, because I was sent from Him and I know Him. This upset the Jews so they sought to lay hands on Him to arrest Him and to kill Him but they couldn’t because **His hour had not yet come.**

God, who sovereignly controls everything, is not ready for Jesus to be delivered over to them yet. It will be another 6 months before that happens. And as a result of what Jesus had taught in the temple so far, some people believed and some people did not.

The people that did believe were beginning to say ‘this must be the Christ because of what He is saying and what He has done by way of signs and miracles’. And that saying comes back to the ears of the religious leaders and that is where we pick it up this morning in Verse 32.

Verse 32: the Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.

The religious leaders hear all this murmuring about Jesus possibly being the Christ and they ordered the temple police to go and arrest Jesus. They are thinking ‘now we not only have to contend with Him we will have to contend with His new found followers as well, we need to get rid of this guy’.

They think to themselves that ‘this guy has just publically told us that He is equal with God and that we don’t know God or the scriptures and now some of the people think He’s the Messiah, we need to take care of Him’ so they send for the officers to take Him. Then Jesus says to them in Verses 33 – 34

Verses 33 – 34: Then Jesus said to them ‘I shall be with you a little while longer and then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me and not find Me and where I am you cannot come.

Jesus says I will only be with you a little while longer, time is running out for Me, but more importantly time is running out for you. We know that in about 6 months their plan to take Him and kill Him will finally be accomplished and then **He will go to Him who sent Him** and that is God.

Veiled in that statement is the fact of His resurrection. Jesus has said over and over again that He is going back to the Father and that will be accomplished, as we know, at His death. As **Philippians 2: 9 – 10** says **He will be exalted and given a name above every name so that every knee will bow. Romans 8: 34** and many other places say that Jesus, after His resurrection, **is at the right hand of the Father** in heaven.

Then He says in Verse 34 **You will seek Me and not find Me and where I am you cannot come.**

There is coming a time for these Jews and the nation of Israel and any unbeliever that they will come to the realization, in their own despair, that Jesus was right. They will seek Him and they will not be able to find Him, it will be too late for them. What a frightening thing, for someone who rejects Jesus now.

Jesus is saying what Isaiah said in **Isaiah 55: 6** **Seek the Lord WHILE He may be found, call upon Him WHILE He is near.** The indication is, is that He is not always going to be able to be found and to be near, especially to a heart of unbelief.

It is just like what the writer of Hebrews said that was read earlier in **Hebrews 3: 7 – 15** **TODAY if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart.** Don't delay to seek Jesus, while He can still be found.

The story is told of D.L. Moody, a famous preacher, who was preaching to his congregation and when He was finished he said to them 'now go home and think about Jesus and come back tomorrow ready to make a decision'. Well, that night the Chicago fire broke out and 50% of his congregation was killed in that fire. He said 'that is the last time I tell anyone to go home and think about it'.

Don't delay, because there may come a time when you seek Him and He will not be found. One of the greatest lies of the devil is that you have time before you make a decision about Christ.

The demon apprentices, wanting to please Satan, said 'I know how to get people not to believe in God, I will tell them there is no heaven'. Another demon said 'I will tell them that there is no hell' and the third demon said 'I will tell them that there is no hurry', to which Satan replied 'you will bring many souls to hell'.

The tragedy of a wasted life is thinking that you have time to make a decision for Christ. I will do it when I am older. I will do it after I get married. I will do it after I have kids. I will do it when I bring my children to church. I will do it after I retire. I will do it when I know the time is near. **You will seek Him and you will not find Him.**

There is coming a day when you will not be able to find Jesus because He will not be presented in His word to people. In **Amos 3: 11 – 12** says this **behold, the days are coming says the Lord God, that I will send a famine on the land. Not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east they shall run to and fro seeking the word of the Lord but shall not find it.**

Then Jesus tells these unbelieving Jews at the end of Verse 34 **and where I am you cannot come.** Jesus says 'I'm going back to My Father but since you have rejected Me you are rejecting Him and you cannot come to Me in heaven'. Jesus says 'there is no room in heaven for those who refuse to accept His Son.

Jesus says a similar thing in **John 13: 31 – 36** *Read.* Jesus says **you will seek Me** and He stops there and doesn't say 'but you will not find Me', because they will be able to. He says **you cannot follow Me NOW, but you shall afterward.**

He doesn't say that to the Jews, to the unbelievers, but He does to those who are called, to those who believe and to those who come and receive Jesus.

Remember in **John 14: 3 -4** where Jesus told His disciples that He is going to prepare a place for them and will come again and receive them to Himself so that where He is they shall be also. Then Thomas says in **Verse 5: Lord, we do not know where You are going and how can we know the way.** And you remember Jesus' response in **Verse 6: I am the way and the truth...** Then look at their response in Verses 35 – 36. See also **John 8: 21**

Verses 35 – 36: then the Jews said among themselves ‘where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach Greeks? What is this that He said ‘you will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come’.

They totally missed the spiritual point that He was telling them, because of their spiritual blindness and unbelief. He has told them repeatedly that He was from the Father, sent by the Father and going back to the Father and they won't find Him anywhere and they cannot go to where He is because of their unbelief.

The **Dispersion among the Greeks** were the Jewish people scattered abroad due to persecution and threats. You can read about it in **Acts 8: 1** where it says **Saul was consenting to his death and that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.**

They are living among the Greeks, among the gentile unbelievers and the Jews say somewhat sarcastically ‘is He going to teach them, is that where He is going’? And what they say in sarcasm will actually come to pass in reality. Because the Jews will reject Jesus and He and His disciples will go to the Gentiles. See also **Matthew 23: 37 - 39**

Verses 37 - 38 on the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, if anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

Three or four days have passed since Jesus first appeared publically in the temple to teach the people. It is now the final **great day** of the Feast of Tabernacles and Jesus is back in the temple again.

Let me remind you, once again, about what would have been happening in the temple at this time. According to **Numbers 29: 12 – 38** the people would bring a certain number of animals for their sacrifice of worship. Each day the number would be less and less.

Just prior to the sacrifice and offerings of these animals the priests would go down to the pool of Siloam and fill the golden pitcher and bring it back up and in a ceremonious way pour the water on to the altar. He was accompanied by other priests and many of the people followed them out and back into the temple.

On days one through seven the priest would walk around the altar one time and then pour the water onto the altar. On the last, great day, he would walk around the altar 7 times, symbolically of the nation of Israel walking 7 times around the city of Jericho as they entered the promised land.

And right after the pouring of the water the priests, Levite choir and all the people sang and chanted from the Psalms what is known as the Hallel, Psalms 113 - 118. As they are repeating the Psalms the people would then say from **‘Isaiah 12: 3** **therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation** or they would say ‘O then, work now salvation Jehovah, O Lord, send now prosperity. As they are doing that, they are shaking their branches toward the altar.

Then, just after the praise of the Hillel and just before the beginning of the sacrificial offerings, there is a short time of silence and then the offerings begin. It is at that short time of silence that Jesus stands up in Verse 37 and **cries out saying if anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.**

This is Jesus public invitation to all who hear to come to Him for salvation. To drink the waters of salvation, to draw water from the wells of salvation that He alone offers. (He **cried out** before in anger against the Jews, no He is crying out in love for the lost). It is the offer of salvation from sin that He has offered over and over again in the book of John. *John 3: 16 – 18, John 5: 24 – 25, 39 – 40, John 6: 27, 35, 40, 47.* And He has used the metaphor of water for salvation before, like with the woman at the well in **John 4: 14** and for all in **John 6: 35.**

And, by the way, with every offer of salvation He has also told them the eternal consequences of not coming to Him, of not following Him, of not believing in Him as the Redeemer, Savior and God in human form and the only way to heaven.

And right at that moment, the people are confronted with a decision about who Jesus is and if they will follow Him or not. It is the same confrontation that you, as an unbeliever, face here this morning and every time you hear the gospel message. And you, like they, don't know if this will be your last chance to hear or not.

Right at that moment Jesus says to the people, 'you are worshipping and thanking God for the physical water that will quench your thirst and reminds you of God's provision of water during your wilderness wanderings, but I am offering the water of life that will save your thirsty soul. Jesus says 'you have a thirsty soul, all you have to do is come and I will give you to drink.

That is the gospel message; realizing the need for a Savior because your soul is sinful and wretched and in that realization, repenting and coming to Christ in faith and belief and confessing with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.

Remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well in **John 4: 14**: **whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.** Then look what He says in Verse 38.

Verse 38: **He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of HIS heart will flow rivers of living water.**

Jesus says come to Me for salvation, like you would go to the fountain when you are thirsty and **when you believe in Me, as the Scripture says, out of your heart will flow rivers of living water.** In other words, believing and receiving Jesus brings everlasting life but that is just the beginning for you. After that, you then become the supplier of living water to others.

This is an incredible truth; you are saved by Christ to be used by Him in the offering of living water, the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that others can be saved. You are a well-house where living water should flow to be shared with a thirsty world.

The problem with some Christians is, is that their water has become stagnant from lack of flow, lack of use. Compare a stagnant pond to a flowing river. Which are you? If your water pipes are stopped up, you need some spiritual roto rootering. Then look at Verse 39

Verse 39: **but this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**

If you go back to Verse 38 I want you to notice something. It says ‘He who believes’ is in the present tense, the here and now. And ‘will flow’ is in the future tense, meaning this part will happen at some point in the future. And Verse 39 describes this future event of flowing rivers of water as the Spirit of God that will come after Jesus ascends to heaven.

They can come to Christ by faith now but they will receive the fullness of Christ by the power of the Spirit in the future, specifically at Pentecost as **Acts 2: 1 – 4** describes, when the Holy Spirit will indwell them.

Then they will have such power in sharing the gospel that they will turn Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the entire world upside down with their flow of living water just as **Acts 1: 8** says **But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.**

You see, Christ needed to die and be raised from the dead and ascend into heaven for the Holy Spirit to come, right. Jesus will say later in **John 14: 16 - 17: I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him, but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.**

Remember Jesus at the final Passover meal said to His disciples when Judas went out to betray Him and He knew that He would be killed soon in **John 13: 13**, He said **now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in Him.** In **Acts 3: 13** it says that **God... glorified His servant Jesus...**

Jesus also said in **John 15: 26 – 27: but when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me...**

Just as a side note on this particular verse. It says **whom those believing in Him** or those who have believed in Him will have the Holy Spirit of God. The simple truth of this verse is; if you don't have the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Christ you are not a believer and if you are a believer then you have the Holy Spirit living within you.

Being saved, being born again means that you have received the Holy Spirit from God which is confirmation that you have been born again. Isn't that what **Romans 8: 9** says **but you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**

I want you to look at a very important Verse in **Acts 10: 44 – 48** *Read*

Closing prayer

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Introduction and Review:

Verses 32 – 34

Philippians 2: 9 – 10, Romans 8: 34
Isaiah 55: 6, Hebrews 3: 7 – 15
Amos 3: 11 – 12, John 13: 31 – 36
John 14: 3 – 6

Verses 35 – 36

Acts 8: 1

Verses 37 – 38

Numbers 29: 12 – 38, Isaiah 12: 3
John 4: 14, John 6: 35

Verse 39

Acts 2: 1 – 4, Acts 1: 8
John 14: 16 – 17, John 13: 13
Acts 3: 13, John 15: 26 – 27
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