

The Gospel of John
Week Eleven
John 6:66-7:24

Day One

66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. 67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." 70 Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" 71 (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

v. 66 – John was clear that these people were disciples and followers of Jesus. They were not just a crowd, they were committed to follow Him at some level. After the dialogue in John 6, however, these disciples became ex-disciples. They could not stomach, pardon the pun, all the talk about Jesus being the bread from heaven and their need to eat and drink His flesh and blood.

v. 67 – Jesus asked His closest associates if they also wanted to leave. The construct of this question in Greek, however, indicates that Jesus knew that they did not. Yet this question indicates that the exodus must have been significant and the dissatisfaction with Jesus visible and significant. The crowd never swayed Jesus, however, for He had a mission to accomplish in the will and purpose of the Father. Jesus took His identify not from the people but from the Father. **From where and whom do you derive your identify and security? If you are a leader, do you need to be needed by the people, or do you have your own identify in your purpose?**

vs. 68&69 – **Does Peter's response indicate that the disciples had considered their options of where they could possibly go?** Be that as it may, Peter spoke for the group when He said to Jesus that they had no other options. They had come to know that He was the way to eternal life. Charles Spurgeon used to say to anyone who felt they had a call to ministry, "If you can do anything else, then do it!" He said that because when you have a call, there is no other option possible. This was in essence what Peter was saying here.

Do you have a call? If so, why are you fighting it? Do you think you have a call to ministry? If you only think it's possible, then you probably do not. At any rate, the disciples had put their faith Christ as the Holy One of God and expected Jesus to fulfill the promises He had just made to preserve them through eternity.

vs. 70&71 – Jesus had chosen the Twelve closest to Him, yet one was a traitor. Jesus had chosen Judas, yet he was not one who would inherit eternal life. **Then why did Jesus choose Judas?** Of course He chose him so that Scripture could be fulfilled. And He was alerting His disciples to the fact that Judas' betrayal would not come as a surprise. What was about to happen during Jesus' betrayal and death was part of the plan of God, to

which Jesus submitted freely and willingly. He cooperated fully, even to the choosing of His own betrayer! That is an indication of the unity and obedience in the Godhead. What a magnificent Savior we have!

Day Two

1 After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. 2 But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near, 3 Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. 4 No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." 5 For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

v. 1 – The jurisdiction of the leaders in Jerusalem did not stretch north to Galilee, for that was not Herod's territory. The leaders in Jerusalem were angry and they are still angry today. They maintain a legalistic lifestyle that they zealously protect and enforce. It's amazing that nothing has changed in 2,000 years. When I am in that great city of Jerusalem, I can feel some of the spirit that must have existed when Jesus ministered and was eventually killed there.

v. 2 – The Feast of Tabernacles is held in September or October every year and is a weeklong festival. Israel decorates their stores and homes with lights and many still build small plastic covered or walled shelters on their balconies or on sidewalks. People come from all over the world to celebrate Tabernacles in Israel, especially Christians who desire to bless Israel.

v. 3 – I have always read this exchange between Jesus and His brothers as one filled with sarcasm on the brothers' part. Yet the context may not warrant such an interpretation. Perhaps the brothers were advising Him from their own point of view. **If Jesus was truly the Messiah, as many said He was, then why would He not, according to his brothers' faulty thinking, go to Jerusalem and create a big scene?**

What do you think? Were the brothers mocking Jesus or were they giving Him bad advice of how to launch and solidify His following and ministry? More importantly, we see that even though Jesus had moved from Nazareth, He must have come back home to visit His mother and family from time to time. Jesus was a man like us in every way. He loved His family, was a good Jew, worked for a living and had feelings and human needs. Jesus is truly able to identify with us firsthand at every level of our existence. **Do you draw on the strength that your human Savior can give? Do you see that He is intimately acquainted with all your ways, not only as your Creator but as your Elder Brother?**

vs. 4&5 – The brothers revealed their reasons for their advice. If Jesus was the Messiah whom most expected, then He should take every opportunity to gather a large public following to further His political and spiritual ends. They saw His miracles and heard the reports of the people but they did not believe in Him as did His disciples. Therefore they

gave Jesus sincere but misguided advice. **Has anyone ever given you sincere but mistaken guidance that wasn't right for you?** What makes it wrong for you is that it is not consistent with God's plan for your life. **Do you need to make any course corrections based on good-sounding but wrong advice that you received and acted upon?**

Day Three

6 Therefore Jesus told them, "The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil. 8 You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, because for me the right time has not yet come." 9 Having said this, he stayed in Galilee.

v. 6 – Jesus acknowledged that there was a great difference between His brothers and him. They could go to the Feast because they were commanded by Law to appear three times a year in Jerusalem. Jesus could not go because He operated according to His own timetable, and that came from the Father. Jesus was a wanted man, the leaders wanting to kill Him. He knew He would die by their hands, but He had to make sure that His death was in sync with the Father's will and plan. So while His brothers wanted Him to be more public and strategic, Jesus knew He had to be obedient.

v. 7 – The brothers could function in and think the way they did because they did not stand in opposition to the world. It is interesting that Jesus referred to the Jewish system that He opposed as the "world." What's more, He saw that the system He was condemning was "evil." Jesus was a Jew but He was willing to stand against the Jews in the will of the Father.

The Jewish system was bankrupt from God's perspective. Jesus was calling them to repentance, but many refused because they saw no need. They felt the system they had was just what God wanted, but it was not. I heard a pastor say that the problem with being deceived is that you don't know you are deceived! It's the very nature of deceit to hide itself. **How can you keep from being deceived?** You must rely on the Father's perspective for your life and not your own.

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me (John 16:7-9).

It is the Spirit's job to evaluate your life and actions and not yours. Your job is to cooperate and agree with what He shows you. **Are you effectively doing that now?**

v. 8 – Jesus' time had not yet come to go to Jerusalem. It wasn't a matter of it being the right season or with circumstances not lining up. It was that the Father had not sent Him. Many people talk about timing, but they are usually looking for a time when all the things go just as they would expect if God is working on their behalf. Yet God can release you

to do something and it seem like the wrong “time” because everything is going poorly. **Do you judge what “time it is” by how well things go or by the sense that you are doing God’s will, regardless of the outcome or response of people or circumstances?**

v. 9 – So Jesus stayed home. Everyone else left for Jerusalem, but Jesus did not. This put Jesus above the Law, which of course He was, for as a Jewish male, He was to go to Jerusalem. Yet Jesus had a higher Law and that was to do the will of the Father who sent Him, as He had repeatedly stated in John 6. I realize that some can abuse this concept by constantly saying, “The Lord has not released me” or “I don’t feel a release from the Lord.” They don’t do things that they should do and use God as an excuse. Yet obeying the voice and will of God for you today is the highest good you can perform. Don’t be pressured by others to do what you are not ready to do. At the same time, don’t be lazy or fearful and blame it on the Spirit’s leading.

Day Four

10 However, after his brothers had left for the Feast, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. 11 Now at the Feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, "Where is that man?" 12 Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people." 13 But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.

v. 10 – Jesus must have been given the “go ahead” from the Father, for He departed for Jerusalem (or to go “up” to Jerusalem; a Jew always went up to Jerusalem, no matter what direction from which he approached). He went, but did not want to go for the reasons that His brothers had offered. They wanted Him to do a promotional visit, so to speak, but Jesus wanted to go and minister according to the will of His Father.

Do you see the difference? In your own life and ministry, do you do expedient things or obedient things? There are many who know how to promote themselves and their ministry, but Jesus was the supreme example of self-service and sacrifice. If you want to emulate Jesus in the power of the Spirit, then go and read Philippians 2 and you will know what you should be doing.

v. 11 – The term “ the Jews” in that verse refers to the leaders who were waiting to arrest and kill Jesus. They were doing their own investigation as to Jesus’ whereabouts, not so they could learn from Him but to destroy Him! What a travesty of justice, that those who were entrusted with the things of God would use those things to actually assassinate God! That is how “far off” a religious spirit can take you. They were zealous for God, in a sense, but so zealous that they had forgotten the weightier issues of the Law, like justice, mercy and loving kindness.

This is why Jesus had come to declare the end of Judaism as it had existed and the establishment of a new covenant in His blood. God dismantled the Jewish infrastructure that was long past its point of effectiveness when the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD, about 37 years after this story in John 7. The leaders were asking where Jesus was. The

irony is that they never found out, even though they discovered His physical presence. They had no clue as to where He was spiritually, which is why they killed Him.

There are people today who are looking for Jesus, like He is only moving or working in a few places. **Are you one of them?** If you are, then you are in danger of being a Jesus groupie, trying to follow Him for the kicks and thrills of what He can do. I would suggest that you become a source of what Jesus is doing so people seek you out because they are seeking Him.

vs. 12&13 – There was a debate among the people, some believing that Jesus was a good man, others believing He was a fraud. Nothing has changed; that debate is still going on with people who still hold both opinions. Yet no one could publicly voice their opinions or air the debate for fear of the leadership. This is the power that leadership has to promote debate or to squelch it.

Leadership has power but what leadership does with that power will determine the quality of the leadership they offer. The Jews in this case were poor leaders, similar to the leadership that Pharaoh exhibited when He oppressed the Jews. **Isn't it ironic that centuries later Israel should manifest the same kind of leadership that Egypt had?** This shows that oppressive, authoritarian leadership is a both a spirit and part of the fallen nature of mankind. It is our sinful nature to oppress and control and our enemy Satan has the same modus operandi.

Day Five

14 Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. 15 The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" 16 Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. 17 If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

vs. 14&15 – The Feast was a weeklong celebration and Jesus left Galilee to go to Jerusalem halfway through the week. Rabbis customarily taught in the temple courts and Jesus took His place among them, gathering a crowd to teach on the Law and the prophets. **What did Jesus teach about?** He taught about the Law of God; Jesus was a “Word man.” He preached from God’s word and spoke not as the prophets but as God!

Every other prophet and teacher in Israel had said, “Thus saith the Lord.” Jesus said, “I say unto you.” **Do you see the difference?** Jesus did not bring a word from God; Jesus was (and is) God! The people wondered where He got this learning without studying. This did not mean that Jesus had not studied the Scriptures, but that He was not part of any rabbinical school or tradition. Jesus had no mentor in ministry for the Father was His mentor and teacher. **Who are your mentors?**

v. 16 – Jesus had already described the relationship He had with the Father, and readily acknowledged that the teaching He gave came from Him. **Who is your source for**

insight? If you say “The Lord,” then do you get good results? Do you sense heaven’s help in what you do? If so, how can you expand your influence and be even more successful for Him? If you are not, then where is the disconnect?

v. 17 – This verse is an important verse for the life and work of every believer. Jesus told the crowd that if anyone makes up his or her mind to do God’s will, then that person will always know whether or not the teaching or leading is from God. This contains an interesting principle. If I surrender my veto power, so to speak, and seek God’s will, committing to do it whatever it may be before I know what it is, then God will make His will clear.

God is a great communicator. He speaks every language, speaks through His word, through other people (those who know Him and those who don’t), speaks through circumstances, and even through a donkey if need be! God is always “broadcasting.” **Are you always listening?** God is always speaking. **Are you expecting to hear?**

If you expect that finding God’s will is difficult, then it will be. If you expect God to reveal His will and purpose and commit to do it beforehand, then finding God’s will is a simple process.

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does (James 1:5-8).

Are you doubleminded where the will of God is concerned?

Day Six

18 He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. 19 Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?" 20 "You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to kill you?" 21 Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle, and you are all astonished.

v. 18 – Wow! This is a powerful statement. One who comes on his own gains honor for himself. This is why it is so important to be sent and not just to go. Jesus was of course referring to Himself and probably contrasting His work with the many other rabbis who were teaching in the same Temple courts as He was. The Bible has much to say about faithful messengers. That is my goal, to be God’s faithful messenger. Is it your goal, too?

A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a trustworthy envoy brings healing (Proverbs 13:17).

Like a snow-cooled drink at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to the one who sends him; he refreshes the spirit of his master (Proverbs 25:13).

v. 19 – Jesus confronted the unspoken fact that there was a price on His head; He was a wanted man. He pointed out the irony that the teachers of Moses' law were trying to kill him, yet that Law forbid murder. The leaders saw nothing wrong with their attitude, but Jesus saw it for what it was. This was not just some religious disagreement, but one that had led the Jews to conspire and murder!

v. 20 – Either the crowd did not know about the plot to kill Jesus, or they added lying to their murderous bent. What's more, they accused the sinless Son of God of being in league with the devil himself! These people were wicked, not just confused or ignorant. They beheld Jesus' works and listened to His words, and concluded that He was demonically inspired. What an insult to God Almighty! The Jews were so far gone that they saw good as bad and right as wrong. This is why Jesus came to establish a whole new covenant, not just to improve the Old one.

"The time is coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

v. 21 – Jesus referred back to the incident in John 5 when He healed the man by the pool who had been ill for 38 years. Jesus happened to perform that miracle on the Sabbath and that was enough to set the leaders off on their murderous path. You can see why Jesus did not come to Jerusalem at the beginning of the Feast. He had to make sure He came in the timing of the Father, because He had to have this kind of confrontation with liars and killers! You don't do that on your own will and perspective!

Jesus was a courageous man, one of the things that I admire most about Him. By saying that I admire Jesus, I don't want to trivialize His divinity or majesty. Yet as a man, He was certainly a model of strength and courage. I want to be like Him in the power of the Spirit.

Day Seven

22 Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. 23 Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath? 24 Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment."

v. 22 – Jesus corrected what was probably a popular misstatement, for Moses did not give Israel the statute for circumcision. It came from Abraham, so it preceded the Law; it did not have its inception in the Law. This was an important point for later when Paul and others reached out to the Gentiles. They saw that the sign of the covenant was given to Abraham prior to the Law. During Paul’s ministry, believing Jews were arguing that the Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the Law. Paul pointed out that circumcision was a sign of faith, but under the new covenant the sign of faith was and is salvation in Christ.

v. 23 – Jesus argued that the Jews could circumcise on the eighth day after a child’s birth if that day happened to be on a Sabbath. **Why could He not heal a man on the Sabbath?** His argument was strong and it indicated the bad thinking that led to bad conclusions in Israel among the leaders. Jesus was doing good and it was “lawful” to do good on any day, including and especially on the Sabbath.

When one is legalistic, then things are always black and white; there are never shades of grey. The Jews were such legalists and it caused them to miss a more important issue while they focused on a minor one. While Jesus was instructing them on their own law, what He said was just a matter of common sense. It proved, however, to be uncommon sense for they were then seeking to kill Jesus rather than face the truth.

I don’t ever want to get to the place where I am so dogmatic that I can’t see an obvious truth because of my preconceived notions. *Open my eyes, Lord, to see things as they are and not as I want them to be or think they should be.*

v. 24 – Jesus gave them a command to stop judging by appearances and make judgments according to God’s principles. **What are God’s principles?** He told the Pharisees on one occasion:

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former" (Matthew 23:23).

Is there any situation that you are judging by appearances, perhaps how someone looks or acts? Ask the Lord to show you if there is.