

Seeing the Real Jesus
The Gospel of John: That You May Believe | John 7:1-24
Southern Hills Baptist Church
January 8, 2017

Introduction: Who is Jesus? This is one of, if not the most important question you will ever answer. Even if you have answered this question in the past it is one we need to revisit regularly as we live in a culture that is continually redefining who Jesus is to fit Him in to cultural norms. This leaves us with nothing more than a cheap, 2-dimensional caricature, propped up to serve selfish purposes. We can't define Jesus by what we want Him to be, but rather by how He has revealed Himself. John helps us consider this matter tonight.

Unbelief: Seeing Jesus For Who You Want Him To Be

- **Example 1: Jesus' Brothers**
 - **Context:** Jesus' brothers recommended that He go to Jerusalem at the Feast of Booths and show the large crowds His miraculous abilities so He could gain a greater following from a bigger stage.
 - **Question:** This seemed to be good advice, but John adds that they gave the advice b/c they didn't believe in Jesus. That is odd. Why would they want Jesus to go perform miracles for large numbers of people if they didn't believe in Him? They had seen His miracles; they knew His ability was real. From other passages, we know they care for Him as a brother. What kind of unbelief is this?
 - **Unbelief:** Jesus said (vs. 24) to judge rightly and not by appearance. The brothers were captivated by Jesus' ability to perform miracles, but couldn't see beyond those miracles to the greater miracle that Jesus had come to perform. They saw in Jesus what they wanted to see, they didn't look beyond the surface. Their faith was placed in a version of Jesus, not His full person and mission. Jesus was a power to be harnessed or a meal ticket to be cashed, just a means to an end.
 - **Application:** How often do we see this in our culture? People boil Jesus down to love or forgiveness to find a safe version of Jesus who will affirm their life, rather than a Lord who is to be followed at all costs. John calls this unbelief! Who is Jesus? Do you worship a version of Jesus recreated in your own image or the Jesus of the Bible? When left unchecked our hearts easily wander to this unbelief.
- **Example 2: Jewish Leaders in Jerusalem**
 - **Context:** Jesus healed a disabled man (John 5) on the Sabbath and sadly the Jewish leaders overlooked the incredible miracle for the fact that this work took place on the Sabbath. This led these leaders to conspire around Jesus' death.

- **Unbelief:** The unbelief of these Jewish leaders stemmed from finding their purpose, power, and self-worth in their observation of the law. They, as well as Jesus' brothers, struggled with the idol of self-exaltation.

Belief: Seeing Jesus For Who He Has Revealed Himself To Be

- **Question:** Jesus' closes with a call to not judge by appearance alone, but to judge rightly. What should our judgment about Jesus be?
- **Context:** Jesus is teaching in Jerusalem and the crowd marvels over how a man who has not formal education can teach with such knowledge and authority. Jesus deflects the praise sent His way, saying His teaching is not His, but the Father's.
- **Significance:** Jesus doesn't merely say that this teaching is from God, any other prophet would have. He says, His teaching is from God, meaning all that He teaches is God's. This puts Jesus in a class all His own. Every word that Jesus utters is God's b/c He is God (Jn 10:30).
- **God's Work:** How can we know if Jesus is the perfect message of God? Jesus reveals this in verse 17, it is anyone who wills the will of God. Our acceptance of Jesus will come from a will that is aligned to God's will.
 - **Question:** How could we change our heart/will before making an assessment of what is in front of us?
 - **Answer:** This is God's Work. He draws (Jn 6:44), He changes hearts (Ezk 36:26-27). He gives us new life and affections.
 - **Application:** We MUST pray for God to change the hearts of those we are sharing the Gospel with. Our efforts are in vain apart from God's work.
- **Our Work:** If God has done this work, how might we assess Jesus? How can we know He is the perfect message/revelation from God? Jesus tell us to examine Him. If He lives for God's glory and not His own, if His life words, actions, attitudes are God-ward as opposed to self-exalting, then we can know He is God's perfect self-disclosure.
 - **Assessing Jesus:** Jesus came to serve, not be served, and to be a ransom for many (Mt 20:28); He was gentle and lowly in heart (Mt 11:29); He humbled Himself to take on the form of a servant, becoming human (Phil 2:6-8); He wasn't controlled by a love of the material, He had no place to lay His head (Lk 9:58) He served others in lowly ways (Jn 13:4-5). He can be trusted. He lived for God's glory in every way.

Conclusion: Who is Jesus? Christian, it is easy to drift on your answer as our culture tries to redefine Jesus. Tether yourself to the Word of God so that we will seek and know Jesus for who He has revealed Himself to be.