

Sermon- Perfect Revelation Attacked with Scorn and Confusion

Scripture: John 7: 40-52

Sunday, July 8, 2018

In our journey through John chapter 7 we have seen Jesus teach many things and each of his teachings, be it about some general principles or about Himself is met with a range of responses. In previous sections, of the chapter we have had both comments from Jesus and crowd reactions. In today's section as we close out chapter 7, Jesus does not do any speaking. The focus is just on the crowds reaction to what Jesus has already said. We are also going to look at the enemies plan to counter this powerful revelation of God.

To start with today I want to summarize some communication principles that Jesus has introduced in this chapter. Remember in all communication there is a sender and a receiver. Now, when God speaks to us, except in very rare instances of dreams, visions and angelic representations, God always uses human speakers to speak for him. So now when people are speaking for **God**, Jesus tells us in this chapter that there is a special validation required for both sender and receiver. In verse 17, of this chapter Jesus says to be a valid receiver of God's Word, the person should be someone who wants to do the will of God. In verse 18, Jesus says, to be a valid Speaker of God's Word, the person has to be someone who seeks to glorify God and not himself. Because if not the person will be speaking lies and not the truth. That sets the stage for us to look at yet another dimension to divine communication, the interference the enemy introduces to sow confusion on the receiver side.

To look at this, I am going to start with the message that Jesus has communicated about himself so far. In verse 28 Jesus had told them that He is the one who is come from God, he was sent by God, He speaks for God, and then cryptically he tells them in verse 34 that he is going back to God. He also tells them that he is the source of living water, the

very thing they were celebrating with so much joy at the festival. Also Jesus spoke with authority and he spoke with clarity. And people were getting the Message that He was the Messiah, they were waiting for. And the amazing aspect of this is that Jesus lays out His spectacular resume to the people without a sense of self promotion because he is constantly telling people that he does not speak with his own authority and does nothing with his own power and that he is an agent of and completely in submission to His Father who is greater than he is. And by this, Jesus of course passes the Divine messenger Test. That means that Jesus is transmitting God's Word in the purest and most perfect way possible. It is because the transmission is perfect that we get to see something we would never really be able to see properly otherwise, the enemy interference to God's revelation.

Now because the transmission is perfect, many people are convinced that Jesus is the Messiah or the Prophet who represents the Jewish hope of ages. This include even the guards who had been sent to arrest Jesus. And yet there are many who don't get the message. Half the crowd still thinks Jesus could not be the prophet. Why? The argument being introduced is that Jesus could not be the Messiah because Jesus came from Galilee and no prophet comes from Galilee. The scholars that make this argument say that the scripture is very clear, the Messiah has to come from the line of David and has to be born in Bethlehem. Therefore, Jesus cannot be the Messiah. Now there are two things I need to point out about this argument. Firstly, this argument is pure deception, because we know that Jesus did come from the line of David and was born in Bethlehem. But because he spent most of his time in active ministry in Galilee, the Pharisees were giving the impression that he came from Galilee and therefore he could not be the Messiah. There is another lie in this argument I want to point out to you. There is no scripture that says, no prophet can come from Galilee. This is just a bald-faced lie. Actually, there is a very famous prophet that comes from Galilee, a prophet that Jesus himself references in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke. The prophet

Jonah. We know that Jonah came from a place called Gath-hepher, which is in Galilee. Surely the Pharisees should have known that. Actually, scholars tell us that it is quite likely that even prophets Nahum and Hosea came from somewhere in Galilee. The Pharisees as you can see were fake news experts. They were willing to say anything for the sake of their agenda. Do you see the agenda of the Pharisees in operation here? Their agenda was only one thing, to maintain their own place of prominence and to maintain control of the temple for the sake of their wealth and prestige. As a result, their noses were buried too deep in worldly things to care about doing God's will. If you are not interested in doing God's will and have great influence you not only fail the Receiver Tests, but you have the effect of jamming the signal from God. They were not just closing their heart to what God was saying, they were sowing confusion and messing it for others. This is Satan's agenda and Satan found the perfect vessels in these worldly Pharisees to reduce the effectiveness of the perfect revelation from God.

There is another technique that Satan is using through the Pharisees, belittling the believer. There are two interesting examples just in our passage today. The first is when the temple guards come back empty handed. When the Pharisees question them, the guards tell them that they had not seen anybody with such spiritual authority right? The Pharisees are very unnerved by this reaction of the guards and they respond by telling them, not a single one of the Pharisees believe that Jesus is the Messiah. They tell the guards, only the crowd follows Jesus but that is because the crowds are foolish and ignorant of the law. And because they are ignorant of the law, they are cursed by God. So basically, they are telling the guards, if you fall for Jesus, that makes you all like the foolish crowds who are ignorant of the law and cursed by God. That would have been a tough message to resist. Satan is not shy about playing dirty to get his way.

But every time the Pharisees speak, the Gospel writer is capturing beautifully the irony of the situation. Because just after he says, not one Pharisee believes, Nicodemus the Pharisee who had a conversation with Jesus way back in John 3 is the one who speaks

up to his colleagues. Nicodemus comes up to these legal scholars as asks them a simple but powerful question in legal language, “is it legal to convict a man before he has been given a hearing?” Now Nicodemus intended this as a rhetorical question. He already knew the answer to this question because we know from other sources that the Pharisees had just made it a law that you would not convict a man before he was brought to trial. So Nicodemus was pointing out to his colleagues that they were not being faithful even to their own standards. Of course, the self-serving Pharisees would not be convicted of anything, but because they have no way to argue back they turn instead to the tactic of belittling Nicodemus. They tell him, “are you from Galilee too? Search the scripture and you will see that no prophet ever comes from Galilee”. If you are wondering, why is Galilee getting such a bad rap? Well, it is because Galilee, was next to Samaria in the Northern kingdom and so from a spiritual stand point there were a lot of non-Jews living there and so it was considered practically Gentile territory. But even before the Northern and Southern kingdom was divided this part of the country did not have any impressive cities even in Solomon’s time and the King of Tyre called the cities from this region gifted to him “Cabul” meaning worthless. So when Nicodemus questioned the Pharisees the best they could do was resort to name calling by saying, maybe you come from worthless Galilee.

So what are our takeaways from this passage. I want to point out three things.

First, no matter how pure the revelation from God, Satan will do his best to sow confusion by throwing in half truths and outright lies into the mix. Think about this. The main fact that the Pharisees were using to cast doubt on Jesus was the Messianic prophesy that the Messiah had to come from the line of David and be born in Bethlehem. This is according to Micah 5:2. This was perfectly true! What they were actually doing was confusing people about where Jesus was born. Now in the book of John, the evangelist makes no attempt to clarify this. He simply leaves it for the reader to appreciate the irony because he assumes that the reader knows where Jesus was

born. This is part of the writing style of John. But people who hear the authorities talk about this Messianic requirement can be easily confused because it was not possible for them to do a quick google search to figure out where Jesus was actually born. They would have to interview people who would know this information firsthand and that takes much more effort and the Pharisees knew that very few would actually do it. Then there was the outright lie about no prophets coming from Galilee. Jesus was always lifting up low places and low people, like he lifted up the Samaritans in his parables. But it was impossible or extremely ignorant of the Pharisees to not know about the prophets who came from Galilee. So whether it was the half truth about the Messiah who had to be born in Bethelhem, but Jesus was not or the lie that no prophet could come from Galilee, the idea is to create confusion in the minds of the receiver.

So what are we to do, if we are receivers? As receivers then, we start by praying for a deeper desire to do God's will. This makes our heart highly receptive to God's truth. Then we have to make sure we do our own research. Study God's Word well so we become familiar with where God's heart is on various issues and know God's track record in different situations. Then it will be hard for Satan to confuse you. Remember Rev 12:9 tells us clearly that Satan is the deceiver of the whole world. And our task is to make sure that we ourselves are not deceived and we help others to might be deceived. Where there is revelation, often there will also be the spirit of confusion. Ask God to give you the ability to discern His truth in the midst of all the confusion, because we are called to be light even in the midst of the fog of confusion.

Secondly, if you are someone who desires to follow Jesus, know that people will try to slander you and destroy your credibility. When the enemy cannot counter the truth, they will slander the person who upholds it. This is a classic technique. When a defense attorney wants to confuse the jury, the first thing they do is find ways to poke holes in

the character of the victim. Sometimes the so called victim may be lying, but many times they are not. But when a persons credibility is broken nothing they say has validity. Many criminals get away because their attorney has found a way to destroy the credibility of the victim. When a politician knows that a negative story will come out about them in the press they try to get ahead of the story by dismissing the credibility of the press as “fake news”. When a person in power knows that an investigation is going to expose their misdeeds then they do their best to discredit the investigation itself. When the people of this world want to discredit the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they will belittle the evangelist who bears the Good News. This has been going on from the beginning of time. But know this friends, if you are on mission for God, do not get derailed from your God given mission by people who may offend you or trash your credibility. God will restore your credibility and expose the lies. That is God’s track record from the beginning of time.

Thirdly, no matter how hard Satan tries, those who truly desire to do his will, will be able to see the truth, understand who Jesus is and be transformed by his power. Confusion may last for a night, but clarity comes in the morning. Even though the many Biblical scholars and religious leaders tried their best to sow confusion about the revelation of Jesus Christ, in the end, it was that group of people that lost. Even on that day, many people realized the truth about Jesus Christ to the extent that they could without the benefit of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Later on we know that from the day of Pentecost, the people who received God’s revelation exploded in numbers and filled the whole world.

Today, God’s revelation and the confusion sown by the enemy continues in this nation. The church wants this nation to live by a high moral standard where there is no abortion in the nation. The church wants to play Moses and tell this secular nation, “thou shall not”. Of course we know that the “thou shall not” approach did not work even when God did it. But nevertheless large sections of the American church blindly supports the

party that promises to pass laws banning abortion. But when the church aligns itself the agenda of a particular political party or president, then the people outside the church look as aligned with a political party and all aspects of the party's agenda are seen as the churches agenda or it makes the church look like a bunch of hypocrites. And the churches profession of the values of the kingdom of God is lost.

Friends, we live in a time of great confusion. And it is going to get worse because the church in this country is failing deeply in its role as Christ's ambassador because it is lusting after political power. But know this, where there are faithful transmitters and receivers of God's word, there the light of God's revelation will burn up the fog of confusion. Friends, pray for this kind of faithfulness, pray for this lifting of the fog and pray that there may be light! Let us pray.