



DATE: October 4, 2009

TITLE: "John XIX: Opposing Jesus"

TEXT: John 7: 1-13

Let me share with you where we are in the life of our Lord Jesus. The year, most likely is 29 AD. Chapter 6 takes place around Passover.... that would be in April. Chapter 7 takes place around the Feast of Tabernacles. That would be in early October. This year the Feast of Tabernacles began yesterday and continues to the 9th of October. It is always 7 days long. This Jewish feast is based on *Leviticus 23*. *It states....*

39 " 'So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days; the first day is a day of rest, and the eighth day also is a day of rest. 40 On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. 41 Celebrate this as a festival to the LORD for seven days each year. Live in booths for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in booths 43 so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.' "

44 So Moses announced to the Israelites the appointed feasts of the LORD.

The Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths was a joyous celebration. The most joyous celebration of all the Jewish holidays. There were three aspects of the Celebration. A present. A past and a future aspect of the celebration.

First, it was a harvest celebration. In Israel this is the time of the harvest of the fruit trees.

This was a time to praise God for the harvest.

Second, this was a time to remember the Exodus. The people lived in booths... to remember the temporary housing in the Wilderness.

Third, this was the time to celebrate the coming Messiah. It was expected by many that it was during this joyous celebration that the Messiah would come.

You need to understand this to understand our text. Jesus again and again spoke about time in our text. He is saying.... “No, this is not the time I will go to Jerusalem and proclaim that I am the Messiah... I don’t care what the expectations of the people are.”

We see that from chapter 6 of John to chapter 7 of John, 6 months has passed. What did Jesus do in that 6 months? We know this..... he journeyed around Galilee with his disciples sharing truth and parables. These are taught in Matthew, Mark and Luke. He avoided Judea because they were attempting to arrest him. His official time to go back to Jerusalem was to be 6 months in the future during Passover... we call it Palm Sunday. In other words... we are nearing the end. The time of massive crowds were over... until Palm Sunday... and the time of opposition

was at hand. We see in our text 3 groups of opposition. I want to briefly look at each group.

Group of opposition # 1 The family of Jesus opposed him. We see this again and again in

the Gospels. Our text says this.... *John 7: 3-5*

Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. 4No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." 5For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

Allow me to also read *Matthew 13: 53-58*

53When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. 54Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. 55"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? 56Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" 57And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor."

58And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

Jesus, after months of teaching decides to come home to Nazareth for a visit. Upon arrival the people he grew up with.... his friends and neighbors rejected him. He then goes home... he is greeted by his mother.... half brothers four of them named in our text.... and his half sisters.

They too reject and mock. The words we read in our text is mockery.... "Hey Jesus.... why don't you go to Jerusalem and proclaim yourself the Messiah. No one does miracles just in Galilee...

yeah... go to Jerusalem.” The text is clear... they were not believers.

I left last week with a statement about the discouragement of Jesus. Again imagine his emotions at this time. His friends reject him. His family reject him. But again we see Jesus carrying out the will of His heavenly Father. He does indeed go to the Festival in Jerusalem. He does indeed proclaim himself to be the Messiah. We will see this in the next couple of weeks.

The lesson is this... In face of opposition, proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ. When others oppose the truth... in love continue to share the truth. In many ways... this is the beginning of the journey to the cross. Step by step he acts in obedience in spite of the opposition. O by the way, we know that a number of the brothers and possibly the sisters became followers of Jesus after his resurrection. James and Jude wrote books that are now in the bible. We do not know about the other members of the family.. But it is possible that many became Christians. This leads us to the second group of opposition...

Lesson # 2 The crowd oppose the Lord. From our text *John 7: 11-13*

**Now at the Feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, "Where is that man?"
12Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a**

good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people." 13But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.

Jesus would not go with his brothers... but he and his disciples went a couple of days later... privately..... unlike Palm Sunday. Notice the uncertainty and the fear of the crowd. They were afraid to publically oppose the Jewish leadership. They were all wrong. Some thought he was good... they were wrong.... he is far more than a good man. Some thought he was a deceiver. They were wrong.... he spoke the truth. None of them understood the truth. I will not repeat last week's sermon... but Jesus can not be just good... or even a deceiver... he is Lord or nothing. This same crowd 6 months later would first shout "Hosanna".... and four days later shout "Crucify Him" No, we must believe Jesus is the Christ. We must believe Jesus is God... if we do not we will abandon him when the times get tough. Let us not be like the fickle crowd.

Finally, Lesson # 3 Jesus is opposed by the world. *John 7:7 states...*

The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil

The world hates Jesus. Jesus repeated this lesson later in John. In *John 15* he states...

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19If you belonged to the world,

it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

Jesus did not come to win a popularity contest. At his death he may have had 100 followers... maybe far fewer. He was put to death as a common criminal. He was hated by the religious establishment. All he had to do was compromise a little bit and Pilate would have set him free. Jesus never compromised. Jesus spoke the truth... and the truth was not popular.

We need to face a truth... the same is true today.

- Jesus speaks truth in a world that like lies
- Jesus teaches morality in a world that desires immorality
- Jesus teaches forgiveness in a world that teaches anger and bitterness.
- Jesus teaches life in a world that teaches convenience and choice
- Jesus teaches peace in a world that desires violence
- Jesus teaches commitment in a world that teaches selfishness

Truthfully I could go on and on. We can never expect the truth of Jesus to win an election... the truth is often very unpopular. Remember the words of Jesus the world hates Jesus because he speaks the truth. He calls evil, evil. We call evil “alternative understanding.” or “difference of opinion”

This is true on both the societal level and on the individual level. I like to be liked. I very much like to be liked. It is difficult for me to speak a truth from scripture and be disliked. But a

Christians we must stand on the truth.... Let me hasten to add two thoughts to this statement... because they are critically important.

Thought # 1 We must always remember that truth must be shared in love. Truth is never to be used as a club. Truth must be used as a guide. When people are living a life that is contrary to the truth... we must love them even more. This is the most difficult task I have as a preacher. I will stand in this pulpit and speak the truth as taught in Scripture... but I do not want to hammer people.... especially people who have taken a wrong path. But at the same time I am aware of the consequences of going down the wrong path. I try to find a balance. I do not know if I have found the proper balance. Truth in love. Love is truth.

Thought # 2 The truth must be the truth of Jesus not our interpretation of the truth of Jesus. Again this can be difficult. We all have opinions. We all at times filter Scripture through our opinions. I do. We must be true to the Word of God. I do believe the truths of Jesus are fairly clear. The Bible is, for the most part clear on issues of morality and the issues of the identity of Jesus. But we must be careful in our own opinions. We must never be arrogant.

Truth is a gift given to us by the Lord.

Jesus is God. Jesus is the Christ. Jesus is our Lord. Yes, opposition still exists to those truths. It existed 2000 years ago.. It exists today. Allow me to close with the Word of God found in Hebrews 12....

1Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

We come to the communion Table this morning. It is a celebration. It is a remembrance of the Cross and resurrection. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus and only Jesus.... he is the author and perfecter of our faith.

AMEN