

John 7: 1-18

The Galileans had been very impressed by Jesus' miracles, and no doubt by His teachings.

Some of them even thought He was Elias or one of the old prophets raised from the dead.

However, the feeding of the 5000 had revealed a shallowness in their expectations.

They were looking for a king that could make their life easier; not a Saviour who could redeem their souls.

Yes, "--- **the cares of this world**" and particularly "**the lusts of other things**

entering in" had choked the word, and it had become unfruitful.

It was a problem that Jesus had to address.

John 6:26-27 "-- **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.**

27: Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

And then He told them about the bread of God, which had come down from heaven --
- **"I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."**

His message was not well received.

In fact, John 6:66 tells us, **"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."**

Yes, John chapter 6 marks a major turning point in Jesus' public ministry.

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Last week we talked about Jesus' response when the people rejected His message --
- **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."**

There's no indication here that these people hadn't been given a free choice.

No, Jesus' words only indicated that because of God's foreknowledge, He already knew who would reject His Son and who would not.

However, there was something else that Jesus said that merits an explanation.

In John 6:43-44 when the Jews rejected His message, He said "--- **Murmur not among yourselves.**

44: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

What did He mean by the words "**draw him?**"

Was He suggesting that God influences man's free choice?

To help us understand the phrase "**draw him,**"

I would like to use a real-life illustration.

When I was a boy growing up on the farm, we had a little black dog.

He couldn't have been over 9 inches tall from his head to his feet, but he was smart.

In fact, my dad had been able to train him to bring the cows up from the pasture at milking time.

I think that job was the most important thing in that little dog's life. Every morning he would be waiting under the back stoop, and the moment my dad's foot hit the boards, he would be out of there like a shot out of a gun. By the time dad got to the barn, the cows would be waiting at the back door. It always amazed me how that little dog could take charge of those large animals. Any one of them could have squashed him into oblivion. How did he do it? Well, his secret weapon was intimidation. He would bark and nip at their heels, and they would obey him. And by the way, that's how Satan moves his herd along.

He uses fear, and lies, and any other means
at his disposal, to intimidate poor
sinners into obeying him.

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But that's not the way a shepherd works.
No, he leads, and they follow.
He doesn't drive, He draws.

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That day in Capernaum, after everyone else
had forsaken Jesus, the 12 disciples
remained.

As Peter said "--- **we believe and are sure
that thou art that Christ, the Son of
the living God.**"

Yes, they were simply drawn to Him --- "**the
sheep hear his voice: and he calleth
his own sheep by name.**"

But how did they become His sheep in the
first place?

I believe Jesus' words in John 6:44 give us the answer --- **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."**

Before we accepted Jesus Christ as our Saviour, scripture tells us we were the enemies of God.

And even now, because we are the sons of Adam, we have a fallen nature.

Oh, we have a free choice all right, but with a pedigree like that, what do you think our choice would be?

To answer that question, let's go back to the first man.

Adam had been given a free choice.

To be perfectly correct, he had been given three free choices.

First of all, he chose to ignore God's warning and eat the forbidden fruit.

When he was given his second free choice, he already had a fallen nature, and that's an important point to remember.

Because of his sin nature, and the fact he was naked, he chose to hide from God. And he would have spent the rest of his life in hiding had not his Heavenly Father drawn him.

No, Adam wasn't looking for God. God was looking for Adam.

However, God didn't hunt him down like some wild animal and corner him.

That's what Satan would have done, but that's not God's way.

No, He drew him --- **"Where art thou?"**

God didn't need an answer to that question; He already *knew* where he was.

No, He was simply giving him another free choice.

He could respond, or he could remain in
hiding.

However, while he was crouching behind those
trees, his ears were telling him that
God was seeking him, drawing him.

And without that prompting, nothing in his
fallen nature would have brought him
out of hiding.

1 John 4:10 **"Herein is love, not that we
loved God, but that he loved us, and
sent his Son to be the propitiation for
our sins."**

And even now, God is drawing mankind to
Himself by His Holy Spirit, by His
Word, and by His church ---

2 Corinthians 5:20 **"Now then we are
ambassadors for Christ, as though God
did beseech you by us: we pray you in**

**Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to
God."**

I think that's what Jesus was talking about
when He said in John 6:44 --- **"No man
can come to me, except the Father which
hath sent me draw him."**

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Before we leave chapter 6, I would like to
revisit Jesus' words in V 39 --- **"And
this is the Father's will which hath
sent me, that of all which he hath
given me I should lose nothing, but
should raise it up again at the last
day."**

I know we have talked about this verse
before, rejoicing in the fact that
Jesus has saved us in our entirety.
Yes, He has redeemed us, body, soul and
spirit.

But there's a little more gold that we can glean from the words, "**I should lose nothing.**"

To do this, I would like to imagine a day in the life of young David before he was a king.

It's only an illustration, and is not found in Scripture.

In my imagination, I can see David's father giving him the job of caring for his sheep.

No doubt he would be taking over from an older brother.

David my son, I'm giving you the complete care of my sheep.

I want you to feed them, and protect them from all their enemies, be they man or beast.

*And don't forget the enemy within, for my
sheep can be a foolish lot.*

*Of course, when the weather gets really bad,
you'll have to bring them home.*

*When that day comes, I sincerely hope all
will be present and accounted for.*

So, David kept His father's sheep, even to
the point of hazarding his life.

And then, after many weary days and nights,
he brought them home.

Drawing himself up to his full height, he
proudly announced, *Dad, they are all
here, I have lost nothing.*

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The Good Shepherd has made a similar
covenant with His Father.

Listen to His words in John 6:37-40 **"All
that the Father giveth me shall come to
me; and him that cometh to me I will in**

no wise cast out.

38: For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39: And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40: And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

Sometimes we don't follow our Shepherd, do we, for we can be a foolish lot.

Some of us may wander away, squandering precious opportunities to serve Him,

and making a general mess of our lives,
but Jesus will bring us home.

No, He will lose nothing that is His
Father's.

Our eternal security is tightly wrapped in
Jesus' promise to His Father --- **"And
this is the Father's will which hath
sent me, that of all which he hath
given me I should lose nothing, but
should raise it up again at the last
day."**

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And so we begin John chapter 7.

V 1 **"After these things Jesus walked in
Galilee: for he would not walk in
Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill
him."**

John Phillips, a well-known expositor, tells
us there was a six-month interval

between chapters 6 and 7, of which nothing was recorded in the book of John.

Even though the country folk of Galilee could get a little out of hand, there was none of the hostility among them that was so evident in Jerusalem.

As you will remember, Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath, an action that had infuriated the religious leaders.

In fact, John 5:16 tells us **"--- the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to slay him."**

And not only had He healed on the Sabbath, but He defended His right to do so in a most unusual way --- **"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."**

You can imagine their reaction.

John 5:18 **"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."**

As a consequence, the King of the Jews, who had every right to be in the city of the King, had chosen to spend His time in Galilee.

And that's where chapter 7 begins.

V 1 **"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him."**

He hadn't left town because He was afraid of the Jews.

No, He had faced their wrath before, and had always been in control.

It was simply a case of following God's timetable.

So for six months, they were the losers, and the Galileans were the winners.

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V 2 **"Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand."**

This was one of three feasts that required the personal attendance of all males in Jerusalem.

Of course, Jesus' brothers, or rather His half-brothers, would be going.

V 3-5 **"His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.**

4: For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these

things, shew thyself to the world.

**5: For neither did his brethren believe
in him."**

As far as I can see, there are two
possibilities here.

They simply might have been expressing their
opinion that He didn't know how to run
a campaign.

If He was the Messiah, He shouldn't be
wasting His time in the backwoods of
Galilee.

No, He should be up in Jerusalem.

After all, that's where the important people
were.

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There's an old saying that goes something
like this --- *Familiarity breeds
contempt.*

So, in spite of His wondrous works, which everyone in their area was talking about, He was just part of the family, and needed their advice.

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That's one possibility; the other is far more sinister.

Perhaps they had heard about the trouble in Jerusalem, and sensing what they thought was a reluctance to go into Judea, they were taunting Him.

Nice brothers, eh?

I wonder where Mary was when all this was going on?

Oh yes, she knew the pain of a house divided.

Whichever way it was, it is quite obvious that they were doing their best to make Jesus uncomfortable, for as V 5 tells

us, "--- **neither did his brethren believe in him.**"

That's quite a revelation, isn't it?

He was the oldest in the family, which means they had known Him all their lives.

He was the big brother that had always been kind and patient.

He had been a carpenter, but one day, He left home, and began to teach the Word of God.

His fame grew, and everyone was talking about His miracles.

Were they jealous? I really don't know.

But it is quite significant that they, of all people, didn't believe in Him.

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It must have been difficult for Jesus to listen to His brother's remarks.

Certainly, the meaning behind the words, "**If thou do these things**" was clear.

So, did Jesus give in to their suggestions, in order to save face?

Certainly not!

In fact, He wasn't all that concerned about their opinion, except, of course, as it affected His mother.

No, the only thing that mattered to Jesus was His Father's will, and, of course, His Father's timetable.

V 6-9 **"Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.**

7: The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

8: Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is

not yet full come.

9: When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee."

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We all know why the Jews wanted to kill Jesus.

Officially stated, it was because He had broken the Sabbath, and even made Himself equal with God.

Both were serious charges.

However, I don't think that was the real reason for their animosity.

No, it was much more personal than that.

As Jesus told His half-brothers, **"The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."**

Certainly their works were evil, and certainly Jesus had told them so.

In fact, He was just about to blow their
cover completely --- **"Ye are of your
father the devil, and the lusts of your
father ye will do."**

Oh yes, Jesus had enemies.

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Have you ever attended a funeral and heard
the minister say, "He didn't have an
enemy in the world?"

That's quite a testimony, isn't it, but it's
not one that could be said about Jesus.

No, He had quite a few enemies; and even
though we should try to be peacemakers,
if we truly follow Jesus, we will have
enemies also.

Jesus told us that, didn't He?

John 15:18-19 **"If the world hate you, ye
know that it hated me before it hated
you."**

19: If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Yes, if we try to please everybody, we will please everybody *but* Jesus.

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However, their animosity was not going to keep Him from attending the feast.

He would be going, but in His Father's good time --- **"My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready."**

Not many people live in a moment by moment awareness of God's leading in their lives.

Certainly Jesus' brethren didn't.

No, their time was their own.

However, Jesus had a great deal to accomplish in those 3-1/2 years of public ministry, and He was always conscious of His Father's agenda.

Some scholars think that at this particular time, Jesus was involved in sending forth the 70 disciples that we read about in Luke 10.

Whatever the case, there is certainly no doubt that He would be about His Father's business.

Someone has said *the confinement of busyness (if it be truly directed by the Lord) is a thousand times better than the liberation of idleness.*

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V 10 **"But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret."**

Taken by itself, this verse might lead us to believe that Jesus was afraid.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

As a matter of fact, it wouldn't be long before He would be standing in the midst of His enemies, teaching the people.

So whatever the reason, be it to avoid a disturbance on the part of the Roman government, or for some other reason, Jesus had decided to enter the city secretly.

Quite ironic, isn't it?

Here we see Israel's Messiah, the only One who had the right to command a royal entry into the city of the King, quietly entering one of the gates.

What condescension!

V 11 **"Then the Jews sought him at the feast,
and said, Where is he?"**

Certainly the common people would have been glad to see Him.

His words were mighty, and His miracles amazing.

However, the religious leaders had quite another reason for wanting to locate Him.

As far as they were concerned, this feast, which should have been an opportunity to draw nearer to God, was nothing more than a convenient trap.

Yes, tensions were high, and no one was really paying much attention to the real meaning of the feast.

V 12-13 **"And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said,**

Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

**13: Howbeit no man spake openly of him
for fear of the Jews."**

This feast was supposed to be a joyous occasion, but everyone was afraid to open their mouth, at least above a whisper.

Certainly, there were those that were for Jesus, but even they had stopped short of the real truth.

They simply said, "**He is a good man.**"

And even today there are a lot of people who acknowledge Jesus as "**a good man,**" a great teacher, and a grand example.

However, they never recognize Him as the One He says He is.

On the other hand, those that were against Him had no real basis for their accusations.

They said "**he deceiveth the people,**" in spite of the fact that His preaching was sound and could not be contested, and His miracles were real and could not be disproved.

V 13 "**Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.**"

There's no doubt about it; Jesus was stepping into a hornets' nest.

But, step He did.

John 7:14-15 "**Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.**

15: And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

In one sense they were right.

Jesus hadn't been educated in the schools of the prophets, or at the feet of a rabbi.

In fact, the only record we have of Him being taught by anyone was when He was a boy of 12.

As you will remember, His parents **"found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions."**

And even at that age, **"all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."**

And He was still doing it --- **"And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"**

Were they impressed by the degree of His understanding, or were they simply

criticizing Him for His lack of credentials?

V 16-17 **"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.**

17: If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

And then in V 18, Jesus gives them another way to test His doctrine, indeed, anyone's doctrine.

V 18 **"He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."**

Here we see one the characteristics of a false teacher.

He is one **"--- that speaketh of himself."**

By this I don't think Jesus mean, one that speaks *about* himself, rather, he is a person whose message is based upon his own personal wisdom rather than the Word of God.

He has no inspiration other than his own imagination.

If he were God's ambassador, then he would speak the words of his King.

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And Jesus also identifies another mark of the false teacher.

Listen to His words.

"He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory."

Yes, not only is his wisdom drawn from his own resources, but he seeks **"his own glory."**

Or, to put it another way, self-speakers are self-seekers.

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In next week's lesson, Jesus revisits a subject that most of us would have been anxious to avoid.

Believe it or not, it was the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda.

No, He wasn't afraid of the Jews, and He wasn't about to let sleeping dogs lie either.