

John 7 (Part 1) :1–24 • Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles

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All right. Are you guys ready to do this? John, chapter seven. We're going to start with prayer this time, so pray with me.

Father, I just thank You so much that we can gather together like this as the body of Christ. What a delight it is to get together with Your kids. And LORD, the most important thing about our gathering here today is You, Your presence, Your grace among us, and the power of Your Spirit that allows the Word of God to come alive in our hearts.

LORD, we pray for Your Holy Spirit to move powerfully in each and every individual here, and also watching us online. We pray, Father, for truth and wisdom and insight and understanding, because that's what You give. You are the source of all those things, the true wisdom that comes from above. Be with us today as we dig into the Scriptures. We pray in Jesus' Name, amen. Amen.

Hey, as we get into chapter seven here, I want you to know ahead of time that the entire story that we're going to be looking at here in this chapter— and we're not going to get through the whole chapter because there's just kind of too much going on— but this whole thing kind of centers around the Feast of Tabernacles, and I want to talk to you a little bit about this.

Because this is one of what we call the pilgrimage feasts, meaning that it was required of Jewish males living within a certain distance to pilgrimage or travel to Jerusalem to celebrate this feast. It was a required feast. It was also called— is also called— the Feast of Booths, or the Jews refer to it as Succoth (suk'-oth).

And it is a celebration essentially, of the fall harvest, because it would obviously happen in the fall of the year. But it was also a commemoration of the 40 years that the Jews wandered in the wilderness. And I want to share with you, first of all, from the book of Leviticus, a little bit about the LORD giving this and laying out this feast. So on the screen Leviticus chapter 23.

Leviticus 23:39-43 (ESV)

“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. You shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”

It says, (God is speaking to Moses), ³⁹ *“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the Lord seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest.”* ⁴⁰ *And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.”* So you have this Sabbath on each end of this celebration with this celebration feasting in between. Then He goes on to say, ⁴¹ *“You shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month.”* ⁴² *You shall dwell in booths (or tents, if you will) for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths,* ⁴³ *that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am (Yahweh) the LORD your God.”*

Okay so it's kind of interesting, isn't it, to get a little bit of the backstory here? A little bit of the history of exactly what they were doing. God wanted the people to remember, and that's why we commemorate things. That's why we do communion today. But God has always been interested in this— that we might remember— and in this particular case, that they might remember that their forefathers dwelt in tents during that total of 40 years that they literally lived and wandered in the wilderness.

You guys all know because you know this story, the journey from Egypt to the land of promise, shouldn't have taken anywhere close to 40 years to complete. The fact is, when they first left Egypt, God kept them in the wilderness for two years on purpose; for the main reason of— just to give them the law, speak to them about the things that He wanted to speak to them about and bring them to a place of understanding.

It was during that two years, that first two years, that He gave them the Law of Moses, which of course is the law of the LORD; it just came through Moses. But you know, it was a lot to convey that people had been living in Egypt for 400 years and many of them had lost touch with their heritage from the standpoint of, you know, who they were as Jews and what they believed.

And so there was this two year kind of, you know, Bible College, for the nation of Israel there in the wilderness. And it was during that time that the Lord was teaching them to rely on Him and trust in the LORD for their daily bread, literally, for their daily bread and all of that, in hope that when they finally reach the land and got to the place where— that God had promised their forefathers through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that they would be ready to receive it by faith.

But you guys know the story. When they got to Kadesh-Barnea (kā' dīsh bār' niə) and sent spies into the land to kind of check it out. The spies came back and gave a very bad report, and the vast majority of them determined in their hearts not to trust the LORD, but in fact failed in that whole issue related to faith. And because of their unbelief, He sent them back into the wilderness to wander for an additional 38 years. That's where you get the total of 40 years.

So, the Feast of Tabernacles comes along, and this is a period of time that is a time of remembrance for the people of Israel to remember that time. But I— it's interesting to me that— and I have to— I always ask myself questions when I read the Bible. And I think to myself, “Well you know, why is it, why do you think it is, that God wanted them to remember this time of unbelief?” I mean think about that for a little bit. Why would God want them to remember this time that was literally marked, characterized, with unbelief?

And, because remember, this is one of the three feasts that they were *required* to commemorate and to attend. And so you're required to be there. God says, “I want you to come and be there because I want you to remember this time of incredible unbelief that marked your history.”

Well, I think God wanted them to remember two important things. First of all, I think He wanted them to remember the fact that we bring so much stress and unnecessary complication and *injury* into our lives through our simple unwillingness to trust the LORD. You know? Because we believe all kinds of things about God *in our brain*.

But walking those things out in our daily life is a completely different matter, you know? And most of us here in this room could get a hundred percent on a

“Christian test.” God doesn't care what you score on a test. What He's really kind of looking for is where the rubber meets the road, and you walk out what you believe.

Many of us believe that God is good. We believe that we can trust God. We would get all those questions right on a test. But when it comes to actually walking out trusting God, you know day-to-day— with your job, with your family, with your home, with your money, with your health and all those other things, that's where we fail miserably. Usually. And God wanted them to remember that there was this time in their history when they brought this kind of stuff onto and into their lives *simply because of unbelief*.

And that's an important thing to remember. You know? It's not like He's rubbing their nose in it; that's not the point. “But I just want you to remember, all this— 40 years, a total of 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, because you just simply wouldn't believe God;” He said, “I've given you this land, I'll take care of you and you'll be able to conquer the people in it.”

And the people came back and said, “No way that's going to happen.”

And the vast majority said, “I agree. I agree. We're out of here. We are out of here.”

[God says,] “And look what you brought into your lives because of your unbelief.”

But I think that there was another reason why God wanted them to commemorate the Feast of Tabernacles, and that was to remember that even, and this is important, *even* in their unbelief, *God remained faithful*. Right?

You know, during those additional 38 years after that major failure at Kadesh-Barnea when the spies went into the land and so forth; even after that major failure, do you guys ever notice the manna kept coming? And God kept protecting them? And kept dealing with them and responding to them and so forth. Let me show you what Paul wrote to Timothy.

2 Timothy 2:13 (ESV)

... if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.

This is one of those interesting statements. He said, you know, *“if we're faithless, He remains faithful.”* You know why? Because, *“He can't deny Himself.”* He can't deny who He is.

Listen People, God doesn't just act faithful; **He is faithful**; *He can't be otherwise.*

That's so important for you to remember. We're sitting there, we're sitting there calling upon God, “Oh God, please be faithful to me.” He can't be otherwise. He couldn't if He tried, because that would deny who He is. It would literally— He'd have to deny Himself, (laughing) you know? And here we are prevailing upon Him to be faithful. You know? So I love that verse for that very reason.

So here it is. We're at this very feast. I know we haven't gotten even into John chapter seven yet, but here we are at the Feast of Tabernacles in which the— you know, Jews are being called to, you know, recall their unbelief and recall God's faithful provision, and so on. And so on.

But this feast presented a bit of a challenge for Jesus. And that challenge is outlined essentially in verse one. So look with me in your Bible in verse one, where John writes, *“After this, Jesus went about in Galilee, He would not go about in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.”*

Let me explain what that means, because he, John, is about to tell you that the Feast of Tabernacles is just about to happen. This presents a problem for Jesus because you see, the violent intentions of the Jewish religious leaders made it such that it was no longer safe for Jesus to hang out much in the area of Judea or around Jerusalem because of what they wanted to do to Him.

And yet, this feast is *required*. Now, remember, Jesus came to keep the law *perfectly*. You with me? So He's got to go, He's got to attend. There's no ifs, ands, or buts about it. Jesus has to go to this feast. But there's a problem you see, the people, they're gunning for Him. They want to kill Him.

So here we go, verse two. This is where John says, “Now the Jews' Feast of Booths,” what he refers to it there, *“was at hand. So His brothers said to Him,”* and this is the brothers of Jesus, *“Leave here and go to Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works You're doing. For no one works in secret [you know] if he seeks to be known openly. If You do these things [hey] show Yourself to the world.”*

Here, what are His brothers doing? They're challenging Him almost in a sarcastic kind of a way, "Hey you know, You ought to go up to Jerusalem and show everybody Your magic tricks." That's essentially what they're kind of—they're kind of goading Him if you will, here. And we're told why in verse five. It says, "*For not even His brothers believed in Him.*"

That's what's going on. See, they didn't believe. They didn't believe anything related. And when we say 'His brothers' we're talking about His half-brothers, okay? Because these are the guys who were the sons of Mary and Joseph. Jesus is a half-brother of course, as you know, because His mother is Mary. But God the Father is His Father. Joseph is not His father.

But in verse six, Jesus responds to His brothers, and this is interesting. Jesus said to them, "*My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.*" And that's the reason why this whole time, this thing, became kind of a challenge for Jesus to go to Jerusalem, even though they were wanting to kill Him.

He says, "*My time has not yet come.*" And He's saying— but He says to them, "Your time... there's no issues here with you." And He's saying, in essence, "There's nothing critical about the timing of when you go. Because you know, nothing as it relates to this feast is really all that important to you, except that you just go."

He says in verse seven, "*The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify about it— that its works are evil. You go up to the feast. I'm not going up to this feast for My time has not yet fully come.*' After saying this, He remained in Galilee."

Now I want to just comment here for a moment that the reason for this conversation or the reason that Jesus is saying what He's saying to His half brothers is because of timing. And Jesus was always very keenly aware of the Father's timing in terms of His ministry because Jesus knew, you know, He knew there was going to come a time that He was going to surrender Himself to the Jewish religious authorities. And He would surrender Himself, in fact, to crucifixion by the Romans.

And that was going to happen. And Jesus knew that it was going to happen, but it had to happen within a very specific time frame. And Jesus understood that time frame and He knew that He had to walk circumspectly related to that timing and that timing was not 'now.' This was not the time for all of those things to unfold. So His arrival at this particular feast had to be carefully timed. So Jesus held back.

In verse 10, if you look with me in your Bible there, we're told that, "*But after His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He also went up, not publicly, but in private.*" And I'm kind of assuming when it says 'not publicly' that that simply means He didn't go with the crowds because you know, people traveled in crowds when they went to these feasts because it was safer.

There were bandits along the way that would rob people and you know, there's strength in numbers. There's safety in numbers, and people would often travel that way. And I'm assuming here that this means that Jesus went just with His disciples, which was much more discreetly— maybe even traveling at night. But I want to remind you, this is not a matter of fear. Jesus isn't afraid. He's not scared of what might happen. This is a timing issue.

All right verse 11, here we go, "*The Jews were looking for Him at the feast saying, 'Where is He?'*" So you can see Jesus is the subject of their conversation, "*And there was much muttering about Him among the people. While some people said, 'He is a good man,' others said, 'No, He is leading the people astray. Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of Him.*" So you can see there was this—there was this, going back and forth. Some people are saying this; some people saying that. I find it interesting that people are still just as divided about Jesus.

We don't hear that a lot, among our own Christian people. We're all pretty decided you know, on who Jesus is and that sort of thing. But you know, the world is still pretty divided about Him and what He came to do.

But you'll notice here that the people were being forced to kind of keep it under their breath. They were kind of— their talk was on the down low because the Jews, meaning the religious leaders, had been threatening the people and saying that if anyone spoke openly about Jesus, that they would risk their membership to the synagogue, literally. They held that over the people's heads so that people kind of kept their voices low as it relates to talking about Jesus.

Then in verse 14 we read that, "*About the middle of the feast,*" suddenly Jesus arrives, "*Jesus went up,*" in fact, "*into the temple area and began teaching.*" Now, this is fascinating and this shows you that He's not afraid of what's going on. He knows that the religious leaders have already been talking about killing Him, but He goes right up to the temple and He starts to teach. And it says, "*The Jews therefore marveled, saying, 'How is it that this Man has learning when He has never studied?'*"

In other words what they were saying is, “We recognize that this Man has some skill and ability in speaking and expounding upon the Scriptures, and there's incredible insight and power that we recognize in His language and in His speech. And we're wondering about that because we know that He didn't go into any of the typical rabbinical schools. We know that He doesn't have a degree you know, from the School of Whatever.”

You know even Paul you'll remember, the apostle Paul, before he became a Believer, he went through all those schools and learning, and was taught at the feet of Gamaliel. And Jesus had none of that of course. And they know that.

And you know, it's interesting; of course it's the work of the Spirit. But this is something that's always going to amaze people. And what I mean by that is, well you know, remember there was a similar amazement after the resurrection of Jesus, when the disciples began to go forth.

You remember in Acts chapter four? [correction: chapters 3 & 4] Peter and John are going up to the temple during the time for prayer; there's a crippled man begging and he says he wants some money from them. Peter says; he says, “*Silver and gold, I don't have, but what I have, I give to you. In the name of Jesus rise up and walk.*” [Acts 3:6]

And of course they get arrested, [Acts 4:3] you know, ‘no good deed goes unpunished’ sort of a thing. And so they get arrested and they're hauled in front of the Sanhedrin. And they start you know, witnessing to these guys, the very guys who condemned Jesus and handed him over you know, to the Romans and so forth. Let me show you this from Acts chapter four, verse 13. Interesting.

Acts 4:13 (ESV)

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

It says, “*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were,*” look at this, “*uneducated, common men. They were astonished. And they recognized that they'd been with Jesus.*”

Can I submit to you this morning that there are some people in this world who are always— *will never cease to be*— astonished when they perceive the work of the Spirit which they, well they actually don't perceive the work of the Spirit; what they perceive is they're talking to somebody who's got their stuff together,

but they don't know how, because “You don't even have a degree. You haven't even been to cemetery, er, (joking) or seminary. You haven't been... you didn't go to any of those things. You don't have all these— and yet you've got this thing dialed in. What's going...?” And that's, and there's always going to be people that are going to feel that way.

And you know what, there are still a good many people in the body of Christ who don't understand that calling and anointing is more important than education. Nothing wrong with education. At all. But education can never be equated with calling and anointing. Okay?

That's what they're, you know, recognizing in Jesus. That's what they recognized in Peter and John; this anointing by the Spirit. And just because somebody's educated doesn't mean they are anointed or called. You know?

There are churches that won't even look at a pastor unless he has a Master's Degree in Theology. And I say, “That's really sad.” That means Peter wouldn't have gotten into that church . Or John. Or frankly any of the other guys. You know? “Well, we can't let you in. You don't have a Master's Degree, you know.” That's too bad.

Verse 16 goes on and it says, “*So Jesus answered them,*” and I want you to— I'm going to read this slowly, okay? Because this is a good; this is a cool passage. He says, “*My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. ¹⁷ If anyone's will,*” and that means ‘desire’ is to do God's will, “*he will know....*” Listen, and that's important, those words right there, “*he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on My own authority.*”

Now stop there. It's a great passage because this is not just something that Jesus spoke to the people in His day as applicable only to their day. This is something that is applicable to you and to me right now, right here and onward. Because what Jesus is saying here is, that when an individual has a simple desire to know God and to know His will, and to know truth and to understand and so forth; that the LORD Himself will do a work of confirming, in that person, the reality of His Word in such a way that they will know beyond a shadow of a doubt that what they are hearing is in fact true.

But God does that. But He does it in response to someone who simply desires to know. In other words, *this is great people*, it's like, “You want to know the truth? I mean, do you really want to know the truth? Then you will know the truth!” *And God will make sure of it!* That's what Jesus is saying, and again, I think this is a promise for all time.

You want to really truly know? See there's some people that don't. This is the thing that's hard for some Christians to understand. There are people who are alive right now who don't want to know the truth, and so they hear it and they're going, "Well, yeah I have my doubts about that." Why do they have their doubts?

Because they don't want to know the truth, and the Spirit isn't active, working in their life confirming the truth because they don't really want to know. There's no desire to know the truth. They just simply want to stay in their own, you know, firmly held beliefs regardless of what God says. But the beauty here is if you want to know the truth, you will know. God will make sure.

And you know, it's always kind of amazed me, I have to tell you that there's this universal work when Believers hear the Word. They just, they're like, "Yes!" They, whether they say Amen— or— you can just see it on their face. You know that there's a confirmational work that's going on through the Spirit when you hear the scripture.

Have you ever done that? You're just, you hear the Scripture and you just go, "Boing." (Pastor raises his hands in victory.) It just resonates in you, you know. You know; you know that you've just heard the truth, "That's the truth right there. Amen!" Right? That's why we say amen. That means 'that's true.' That's the Spirit doing that.

That's not you. You thought you were so smart. No. It's a work of God's grace. And it's essentially the same promise that Jesus is going to give later in this chapter. Let me show you on the screen from John chapter 16.

John 16:13 (ESV)

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...

Jesus said, "*When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth.*" That's what He does. That's His job. He guides you into— that's one of His jobs: to guide you into all truth. And He does a really good job of it, by the way.

All right, so Jesus goes on; verse 18. He says, and this is interesting too, "*The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory.*" Now listen; hear that, "*The one who speaks on his own authority,*" He says, "*he does so for his own glory.*" In other words, so that people will look at him and go, "Whoa, you're really something."

“The One Who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him is true. And in Him, there is no falsehood,” All right, this is an interesting statement. Now obviously, it should be the goal of every Believer who speaks to others in the Name of the LORD to glorify God and not to seek any glory for him or herself.

The problem is none of us is entirely free from impure motives. Myself included. And that means that we're not always going to be perfect in the way that we respond to others or speak to others. But Jesus was and what He's really saying is— He's making a point about Himself. He's declaring Himself to be perfectly pure in His motives.

Jesus is essentially saying to the religious leaders, and to you and me, in this verse, “I have absolutely no motive other than bringing glory to My Father. That is it. That is it. And you can trust Me, that what I'm saying is true.”

All right, now beginning in verse 19 and going forward there, Jesus is going to be alluding as He talks to the crowd and to the religious leaders, who I'm assuming are kind of mixed in with the crowd. He's going to be alluding back to what happened the last time He was in Jerusalem.

And we read about this when we were back in chapter five. And it was when, you remember, when He came to Jerusalem and He found— He was going by the pool of Bethesda and there were all these people; crippled and blind and lame and da, da, da, da, da, da, da. And they were waiting, you remember, for the water to be stirred, by an angel? That was the local belief, and the first person in the water gets healed. We talked about that when we went through that chapter and it was just kind of a local belief. But you guys remember all that, right?

You remember Jesus healed one of the guys? He didn't heal everybody, but He healed one of the guys. And do you also remember He did it on the Sabbath? That was a major no-no. Anyway. So... and not only did He heal this guy on the Sabbath, but you'll remember that Jesus started talking about God as His Father, *personal*. And the Jews considered that a statement of blasphemy. Okay?

So you need to kind of keep that all in mind because that's still in Jesus' mind. It's still in, in the sense of... He's going to be talking about this. But if you let me show you this actually, on the screen from John five.

John 5:18 (ESV)

This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

It says after He did these things and said these things, “*This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him because not only was He breaking the Sabbath,*” by healing that guy by the pool of Bethesda, “*but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.*”

And you know, that He did. You know why He did that? *Because He is equal with God.* Yeah, that's why He said that. But anyway, they didn't like it very much.

So now reflecting on all of that previous stuff, this is where we get into verse 19. It says— He says, “*Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill Me?*” And He's referring to what happened, you know, last time He was in Jerusalem. The people you know, Jesus was speaking to here, they believe themselves capable of keeping the law. They believed they were keeping the law. But their hearts were full of evil because they wanted to kill the very Lord who gave them the law, crazy as that may sound. Right?

And so the crowd comes back in verse 20, and they go, “You have a demon! Who's seeking to kill You?” So the common people were somewhat unaware of what the religious leaders were plotting. So they're answering; they say, “Oooh, who's trying to kill You?” Anyway.

Verse 21, Jesus answered them, “I did one work and you all marvel at it.” And again, He's referring to the healing of the cripple at the pool when He says, “I did one work.” He's not saying, “I've only done one work.” He did lots of works, but they're talking about one thing right now. And keep in mind the religious leaders believe that was a violation of the Sabbath.

So He goes on to say in verse 22, “*Moses gave you circumcision, not that it was from Moses, but from the fathers.*” And He's referring to the fact that circumcision was actually introduced in the time of Abraham, way before Moses.

And He goes on to say this. Now look at this at the end of verse 22, “*And you [YOU] circumcise a man,*” or a child, if you will, a man child, “*on the*

Sabbath.” So you see what He's saying? He's saying, “If healing a man on the Sabbath is considered a labor or a work...” which they thought it was,

“You can't heal somebody on the Sabbath– that's working!”

And so Jesus is saying, “Well what about circumcising a baby on the eighth day?” What if a baby is born and you know, they had to circumcise him on the eighth day? Well, what if the eighth day landed on the Sabbath?

Do you wait till the ninth day? Uh-uh, you do it on the eighth day. He (Jesus) says, “Well you guys have decided that circumcising a baby boy on the Sabbath is okay.” Right? “So why is healing a man on the Sabbath forbidden?” That's basically what He's essentially asking. Right?

So verse 23, He says, “If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with Me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well?” There you go. I mean, that's that. You can see what's happening. He's exposing their duplicity. Right? Simple as that.

And that's when Jesus says in verse 24, and by the way, this is the last verse we're going to cover this morning because we're going to talk about this for just a minute. Verse 24 is very important. This is something you should have underlined in your Bible, or highlighted, or tattooed on your arm. Whatever.

“Do not judge by appearances,” which by the way, we all do, *“but judge with right judgment.”* Okay? Very important verse.

Sounds like kind of a simple verse, but it's a really important verse. And the reason it's so important is because it brings correction, I believe, to one of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible because I'm pretty sure all of us at one time or another have had someone look us, you know– when we're talking about something or other– and they'll look us in the eye and they'll say, “Well, we're not to judge. Who are you to judge? And you know the Bible says ‘Thou shall not jud....’” And you notice they always quote King James when they really want to make it powerful, (Pastor raises his voice.) “Thou shall not judge!” Right? Because you want to get that point across.

And usually when somebody says it, everybody in the room kinda goes, “Yeah, that's right....” And will kind of nod in agreement, “Yeah. We're not supposed to do that, you know.” But you see that statement is an oversimplification of

what Jesus actually said in some remarks He made in the Sermon on the Mount. And I want to show you what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 7:1-5 (ESV)

“Judge not, that you be not judged.”

He said in Matthew chapter seven, first of all, in verse one, He said, *“Judge, not that you be not judged.”* Now, you'll notice I only put that portion up because that's all people ever quote. There's a lot more that comes after it, but that's all they quote and that's all they want to quote because they want you to be quiet. That's why they do that.

If you read your Bible and you study your Bible, and if they knew about what the Bible really said, they would realize that there is more to this passage than just simply, *“Judge not, that you be not judged.”*

Matthew 7:1-5 (ESV)

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”

Here's what it goes on and says, *“¹Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.”* Now, He goes on to explain what He means by that, *“³Why do you see the little tiny speck that is in your brother's eye, but you do not know the log that is in your own eye?”* Obviously, Jesus is using hyperbole here to make a point. He says, *“⁴Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Here, let me take that speck out of your eye when there is a log in your own eye?’”*

Now, check out these words, *“⁵You hypocrite!”* And that one word should tell you what kind of a judgment is actually being condemned right there, *“You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”*

So we'll leave that passage up here for a bit. You see what's going on here? Do you see what's actually being forbidden? The judgment that God forbids is the—

when I judge other people and I'm guilty of the same thing. And I've got the same thing going on in my life, but I'm going, "Oh brother, here, let me help you. Let me help you remove that— get that *little* speck out of your eye." And I don't even realize I've got this board sticking out of my own. You know?

And it's kind of almost humorous language, and it's meant to get our attention about how ridiculous it is that we judge people in that way. Jesus calls it a hypocritical judgment; that's what we are forbidden from making. But Heavens— God's Word never forbids the making of judgments. *Never*.

The Bible does not say in any and all circumstances, "Don't you ever judge." Good grief! We make judgments every day, and we need to. We have to. Are you familiar with the verse that says, "*You shall know them by their fruit*"? (Matthew 7:16, 20)

He's talking about false prophets and false teachers and that sort of thing. "*You should know them by their fruit,*" what does that require? That you judge their fruit. You have to make a judgment. You have to look at it and go, "That's rotten or "That's good,"" but you have to make a judgment.

And frankly we should see here in the verse that we're looking at; in verse 24 of John chapter seven, that God never forbids the making of all judgments when Jesus says— tells them, "*Stop judging by appearances, but judge with right judgment.*" Your NIV says, "Stop judging by mere appearances and make a right judgment." [NIV actually says, "*Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.*"]

In other words, He's (Jesus) telling you, "Make it. If you're going to make a judgment, make it a good one." You know? Because the interesting thing about humankind is that the things that we hate the most in others are the very things that we are usually guilty of doing ourselves. And that's just the fact of the matter.

And you know, we'll talk about people, you know, "She just loves to talk about people behind their backs." Well, what are you doing? You know?

The problem is that we are very astute at uncovering the faults of others, but we have a frightful inability at discovering our own faults. And that's one of the reasons why Paul, when he was writing to the Romans, he said this— let me show you.

Romans 2:21-22 (ESV)

... you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

Romans chapter two. He says, “...you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself?” Yes.

“While you preach against stealing, do you steal?” I mean there— is there any aspect of your life where there's some stealing going on?

“You who say that one must not commit adultery? Do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?”

People, these are mostly— these are rhetorical questions. They're not meant to be answered specifically. You're not meant to look at this and go, “No, I have never robbed a temple in my life.” You know.

What they're meant to do is to bring you to one single and rather obvious conclusion, and that is that you are no better than anyone else. Right? That's it. You're no better.

And when someone commits a horrible sin, it is the blind person who says, “How could they?” It is the person who has a Biblical self-awareness who says, “I know how they could. I get it. Because I know that I have the same sinful nature inside of me and that every capability of that sinful nature is to do just what that person did.” That's the person who understands their— who they really are. Because we share the same weaknesses. You know? And ultimately it makes us— once we realize all this stuff— it makes us more compassionate as people.

We stop looking down our nose at people thinking, “Oh you!” And we start thinking, “Yeah *us*. Me too.” And I'm more able to extend grace *and forgiveness*.

Do you know that unforgiveness is predicated on the idea that, “I would never do such a thing?” Oh yes, you would. And could. *And probably have*. You know? So on that perky note, that's where we're going to stop. So there you go.

Let's go ahead and stand together and we'll close in prayer. We're going to have some people from our prayer team that Aaron was talking about, down front here to pray with you if you have a prayer need this morning.

Father, thank You for Your Word. Your Word is always so good, so insightful. We learn so much, LORD every time we dig into it, and I pray that You'd help us to keep doing that; keep digging, keep opening our hearts, keep understanding.

Be with us, LORD God, as we just continue to open our hearts to You and to be taught by You, to grow in the grace and knowledge of Who You are. We thank You and praise You for Your love for us that is faithful even when we are faithless.

We thank You and praise You in the Name of Jesus. And all God's people said together, amen.

God bless.