

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Jesus Justifies His Ministry

Scripture: John 7:14-24

Code: 1516

Verifying the Claims of Christ

John chapter 7, we shall consider verses 14 to 24, even as we read a little earlier. Now in John's gospel, and I'm not going to take a lot of time to review this morning, in John's gospel John has already recorded for us the claims of Jesus Christ. Now Jesus Christ went about making some very, very astonishing claims about Himself. In fact, He made some claims that were absolutely beyond human possibility. He made some completely astonishing claims.

For example, John tells us that He claimed to be from heaven. He claimed that He came out of heaven. He claimed that He would die and by His own power He would rise again. Quite a claim. He also claimed to be the only hope of eternal life. He claimed also to be the gift of God sent to redeem the world. He claimed to be the person by whom every man's salvation, or every man's damnation would be determined. Quite a claim. He claimed to be the Messiah, the promised Deliverer. He claimed to be equal with God. He claimed, in fact, to be the Son of God. He claimed to be the sovereign Judge of all men to whom had been committed all judgment. He claimed to be the source and giver of life. He claimed to be the only object that deserved honor. He claimed to be the one who would raise the dead, both the redeemed dead and the unsaved dead at the last days. He claimed to be the subject of all the Old Testament Scriptures. He claimed to be the only object of saving faith. He claimed to be the bread of life, the only genuine soul food. He claimed that He would give His life for the world and that anybody who believed in Him would come alive in an abundant and eternal life. Those are astonishing claims.

Was I to stand here and make those claims, I would be classified immediately. And so was Jesus Christ. And you only have two options with somebody who makes those kind of claims, either Jesus Christ is the most deranged, egotistical, religious freak that ever lived, or He is exactly who He claimed to be. Those are the only two options.

You say, "Well, when He made these claims did anybody believe Him?" Yeah, some people believed Him. John the Baptist did. John the Baptist said, "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," which is like saying, "I believe." Andrew believed. Andrew came running and said, "We have found the Christ." Philip believed, he said, "We have found Him of whom Moses wrote."

Nathanael believed. He said to Jesus, "Thou art the Son of God." The Samaritans believed. They said, "This is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." Peter believed. He said, "We know that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Some believed. Some still believe. I believe. Most of you believe.

But you know something? Most people don't believe. Most people didn't believe. He made astonishing, astounding, unbelievable claims and most of the world not only turned Him off but they hated Him. In fact, they hated Him so much that they decided they ought to kill Him. And they did.

In John 1 John told us this, verse 10, "He was in the world and the world was made by Him...that is Jesus...and the world knew Him not...watch this...He came unto His own and His own...what?...received Him not." Most of them didn't believe. Over in chapter 5 we see it again. Verse 16, "And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus and they sought to slay Him because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, 'My Father works hitherto and I work.'" Whew...He's associating Himself with God. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him because He had not only broken the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making himself equal with God."

No, most people didn't believe Him. They didn't believe Him at all. And they weren't just sort of indifferent in unbelief, they became hostile. Over in chapter 6 you see the same thing, verse 41, "The Jews then murmured at Him because He said I am the bread that came down from heaven." Over in verse 66 of the same chapter, a whole lot of would-be disciples packed up their duds and left. And it says, "From that time, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." They didn't believe Him. Too far out, Jesus, I can take you to a point, but hold it.

And most people still don't believe Him. By the time you come to chapter 7 verse 1 it says He had to be in Galilee, He wouldn't walk in Judea because the Jews sought to kill Him. No, the world didn't believe Jesus. They still don't believe Him. And Jesus still stands and He still makes the same claim and the world still does not believe.

Now, as we approach our text we're going to find Jesus Christ confronting Jerusalem again with the same claim. He never let up. He is relentless. He keeps making the same claims, the same claims, the same claims. And instead of people coming to Him and starting to believe, the hostility gets hotter and hotter and hotter and hotter until you finally get His crucifixion. But that doesn't stop Jesus Christ because for those who do believe, and those who do hear, He makes the claims even if it costs Him His life. And incidentally, in losing His life He won life for you and for me and for all who believe.

So, as we come to verses 14 to 24 we leave the section that we studied last week where He was in Galilee. You remember, He had seven quiet months in Galilee? Seven quiet months spent with the Twelve where He taught them, nurtured them, built His life into them, seven critical months because they were going to be the bearers of the gospel when He left. And now He leaves the quiet placid hillsides of the beautiful area of Galilee and He's ready to move into Jerusalem, right into the maelstrom, right into the teeth of the gale. He's going right back where the hostility and persecution and hatred is and He's going to face it dead-square on because He has to. And so as we come to verse 14 we see Jesus Christ moving to Jerusalem, not only to Jerusalem but moving into the temple, ready to make those same claims again and again confront men and again make men make a decision about who He is and whether they believe or don't believe. His time has come. October 15 to October 22, 29 A.D., God's time and Jesus moves to Jerusalem. He reenters Jerusalem secretly but when the right moment comes, He acts.

In Jerusalem at this time the Feast of Tabernacles is going on. All the Jews from all over the land of Israel have migrated to Jerusalem. They've built these booths all over the place, typical of the booths that they lived in the wilderness, which is the symbolic meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. And all the pilgrims are living in these booths. The place is jammed with people. And the week...the feast lasted one week and in the middle of that week Jesus makes His move. Again the same thing, confront the people, make your claims and watch them react.

Verse 14, let's pick it up at that point. "Now at about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught." Now up to this time He had been in secret, see. He went by Himself. Verse 10 tells us that He went secretly. And now in the middle of the week He moves out publicly, moves to the temple. His time was right. Back in verse 6 of the same chapter He told His brothers He wasn't going to the feast when they went because, He said, "My time is not yet ready." In verse 8 He repeated it, "My time is not yet fully come." But now the time is right. Now He makes His move...all in God's good time. And He moves into the temple.

That's always the custom of the rabbi. Whenever there was a famous rabbi, a traveling teacher, they always went to the temple and they would sit down, you know, cross legged, the rabbinical custom, and the whole gob of people would be around him. And they would be sitting there and they would just expound the Old Testament and teach the people. That was rabbinic custom. And so Jesus did that exactly. Went in there, sat down and there must have been a mob of people in there. And wringing...wringing physically, the mob in the middle were the Jewish leaders, you know, sort of...Hmm...you know, standing back eyeing the whole deal. And Jesus began to teach.

You say, "What did He teach?" The Bible doesn't say, but I can take a pretty good guess. I can imagine that He went right back there and did what He did every other time He was there, He told them who He was and made His great claims. He took the Old Testament Scriptures, as was always His custom, and applied them to Himself. And so what would He be doing again? He'd be saying the

same things He had already said, "I am from heaven, I am equal with God, I have come as a Redeemer of the world, believe in Me and you're saved, refuse Me and you're damned." He had become the criterion for a man's life in eternity and He claimed these fantastic claims again. He confronts them with His teaching, reviewing the same claims. Here am I and here are My claims. This is who I claim to be.

Now when Jesus makes these claims, the natural response is to say, "Now wait a minute," see. "I mean, it's all right, I understand You're making these claims, but why should I believe You? I mean, there's an awful lot of other deals going on in the world, why should I believe You?" And I'm sure those Jews sitting there were thinking to themselves, "I mean, I've heard a lot of rabbis, right? A lot of rabbis come and go, and this guy, He says it's all wrapped up in Him. Now why should I believe Him? I mean, I don't know Him. And to make it worse, He's from the crummy town of Nazareth. What does He know?" And they're very, very skeptical and naturally so.

Why should you believe in Jesus? Why? For what reason? Is there any proof that He's who He claimed to be? Why should I believe in Him anymore than those Jews should then?

This passage is going to answer that question for you. You ready? This passage, these verses are going to give you five reasons to believe Jesus...five reasons. Five reasons to believe Jesus. He made some astounding claims. You know what? They weren't just claims, my friend, they weren't just ad-libbed grab bag type deals. He backed them up with five great proofs of who He was. And I want to show them to you because they're very unique and they're woven into the dialogue of this passage. It's an undercurrent. Some messages aren't an undercurrent. Sometimes when I teach a passage, it's just teaching you exactly what it says. But in this passage I want you to dive in a little bit, get a little bit wet because there's an undercurrent here where Jesus is very subtly defending His claim, and I want you to see it because it's critical. Five reasons why the claims of Christ are true. Five reasons to believe Jesus. Now you've probably got a little outline there we've provided for you in the bulletin, it will help you to focus on them.

Reason number one, His knowledge...His knowledge. Verse 15, now after He had taught these astounding words, John records for us this, "And the Jews marveled saying, 'How knoweth this man letters having never learned?'" Now Jesus had just finished teaching them divine truth or they wouldn't have recognized divine truth from poor arithmetic. They didn't know what was happening anyway. They had just heard divine truth straight from the mouth of God in human flesh. They had just heard...mark it...divine revelation, straight stuff. And I imagine they were absolutely flabbergasted at what Jesus said. It says, "They marveled," they were astonished at what He said. And you know something? They couldn't argue with what He said. He was too devastating a teacher to argue with. You know, there are some teachers you just don't tackle. Jesus was too much, too sharp. His

knowledge was unbelievable. And so dumbfounded and startled by His flawless and adept ability to teach and feeling in their heart hatred, but knowing that they couldn't just come out and debate against Him...every time they tried to debate Him they got shut down so bad it was pathetic...they weren't really ready to confront Him on the terms of His knowledge and so they had to find something that they could get Him on. So you know what they said to Him? They said this, they didn't really say it to Him, they said it to the whole crowd, these are the Jewish leaders. The term "Jews" is John's way of speaking of the Jewish leaders. It doesn't necessarily mean the people. He'll designate the people in verse 20 as "the people." "The Jews" has more reference to the...to a leadership.

So the Jews said...here's where they find their loophole, they think, "How knoweth this man letters, or writings, having never learned?" They think they've got Him. I can just hear them...Humm...humm...humm, we've got Him. Well what do they say here? You know what they're doing? They're saying, "What is this guy? I mean, He didn't even go to the rabbinical school, right? What...He doesn't even have a BA. What does He know? I mean, who is this guy? Well how can He know any truth, He's never learned. He hasn't been to the rabbinical school." See. If you can't knock His speaking, knock His education, right? They're trying to discredit Jesus Christ. They know they can't get in to a tangle with His knowledge, man, or they'll get wiped out. He's devastating as a teacher. So they try to tackle Him on the basis of His background and say, "Well, He's not prepared, what is He, just shooting off His head? He has no teaching." They're really grasping at straws. The other time I mentioned to you they tried to discredit Him by saying He came from Nazareth, as if that was a criterion. "Well what does He know, He came from Nazareth?" Big deal. They're always grasping at something, you know, to try to discredit Jesus' words. They were so shattered by His claims, they had reacted with such violent hatred because of what He was doing and yet they were so in awe of His masterful teaching that they didn't dare tackle Him on that level...especially since they were the harbingers of error and He was the depository of truth. And so they decided, "We better not tackle His knowledge, folks, let's knock His education."

So they say, "What does this guy know? He's never been to school." See. Jesus could have fallen into their trap, He really could. But He didn't. He didn't fall into their trap. He was plenty sharp, far too sharp to fall into any trap that they would set for Him. You know, if He had said to them, "Well, you're right, I am self-taught, I have learned it all myself, I'm telling you what I think," they would have just turned Him off. But He doesn't say that. In fact, in verse 16, look what He says. "Jesus answered them and said, 'My doctrine is not Mine.'" See, that's what they wanted to hear. "Do You have a teacher? You're not just shooting off Your mouth? The Jews say You're just shooting off Your mouth?" No, no, "My doctrine is not Mine, it is His...what?...that sent Me." Who's that? God.

You know what He says to them? He says, "I'm not teaching you what I think, I got it straight from God." Oh, how do you argue with that one? "I got it straight from headquarters." So they're charging

Him with incompetency, they're saying, "He doesn't know anything. What does He know?" They always did that to Him. They did that to Him all the time. Over in Matthew chapter 13 verse 54 when He went to His own town of Nazareth, they said, "What is this guy telling us? He's the son of the carpenter." See. You know, as if carpenter's sons don't know anything. And you remember Peter and John in Acts chapter 4 verse 13, it says, "All the Jews marveled because they knew so much having never learned." Being unlearned Galileans, they said, what do these Galileans know? See. Always discrediting their education.

Well, Jesus didn't fall into their trap. No way. He says, "My doctrine isn't Mine, it came from God." What a dynamic unbelievable answer? "I got it straight from God." Which implies, that's why it's different from your truth. You get that one? The reason my teaching is so different is I got it from God, you got yours from the rabbi. That hurts. But Jesus always claimed that His teaching came from God. In chapter 3 and verse 11 He says, "Verily, verily I say unto thee," talking to Nicodemus, "we speak that we do know. I'm not just shooting off My mouth, I'm saying what I know...watch this...and testify to that which we have seen." Jesus says, "I know what I'm talking about." Over in chapter 8 verse 28, tremendous verse, "Then said Jesus unto them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I am He...watch this...and that I do nothing of Myself but as My Father hath taught Me I speak these things.'"

Jesus isn't shooting off His mouth, He's getting it straight from God...right straight from God. Over in chapter 12, I can't resist looking at this one, verse 49, I think, yes, 49 and 50, it says this, Christ again is talking, listen how devastating these words are, He says to these same Jewish people again, "I have not spoken of Myself, I'm not just shooting off My own mouth, I'm not just spitting out things in My own brain, but the Father who sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak."

Boy, that's one thing you can't argue with. You know, I've had people who come to me on occasion they'll say to me, "God told me to tell you this." Have you heard anybody say that? Well, we can't say anything to them. Oh, you did! I had somebody come up to me and say, "God told me...one time...God told me that you ought to have a certain kind of meeting every day of the week and you ought to have it at a certain place." I said, "Oh," you really can't argue with that. I mean, you assume that God didn't really tell him, but you can't convince them of that. There's no argument. And here Jesus says, "I'm getting My words from God." What are you going to say? They had no answer. Over in chapter 14 verse...I think it's verse 10, He says, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me...listen...the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the words." Well, that's enough, there's many more. Back to chapter 7.

Anyway, Jesus says, "I'm not just talking off the top of my head, I'm not teaching you my opinion, it came straight from God." And, my friends, that is absolutely a devastating reply. The implications of that would make a sermon series. That is so overwhelming, those Jews must have been collapsing in their robes. That is a dynamic...you know what that is? That's not only a defense of Christ's claims, that's an indictment of the whole Jewish system. He says, in effect, "You're right...you're right, My teaching is different, but it's different because it came from God." If theirs had come from God it wouldn't have been different, right? Oh that really, really struck home. The knowledge of Jesus is incomprehensible. They wouldn't dare tackle Him on the basis of His knowledge. He said, "I got it from God," and they couldn't argue with it.

You say, "Well how vast was His knowledge? What did He know?" Listen, if He was God I suppose He knew everything God knows, right? Is that true? I'll show you. Do you know that Jesus actually knew the thoughts of God? Do you know God's thoughts? God says, "My thoughts are not...what?...your thoughts." You can't know His thoughts. Jesus did. He knew the mind of God. Back in chapter 6 verse 39, this is terrific, "This is the Father's will who has sent Me." Now how do You know that's the Father's will? Verse 40, "And this is the will of Him that sent Me." How do You know that's His will? Only one way you can know the mind of God, you've got to be God. Chapter 5, backing up, verse 17, He says, "I work and the Father works," verse 18, "the Jews condemn Him," watch what He says in verse 19. "Jesus says, 'Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do.'" He has the complete consciousness of God's mind and actions. And I'll show you one that's really exciting. In the tenth chapter and the fifteenth verse, just listen, don't look it up, "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." I know God like He knows Me. Listen, there is nothing hidden from the knowledge of Christ, it's equal to God's knowledge. And it's the same thing that occurred over in Matthew chapter 11 and verse 27, "All things are delivered unto Me by the Father," Jesus said, "and no man knows the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son." I know the mind of God, He says. Now listen, no human being can ever claim anything as astounding as that.

But not only did He know the mind of God, He also knew the mind of men. Chapter 2 verse 24 of John. He knew the men that faced Him, He could read their minds like an open book. Verse 24, "Jesus did not commit Himself unto them," that is the men in Jerusalem, "because He knew all men," 25, 2:25, "and needed not that any should testify of man...watch it...for He knew what was in man." And He illustrates it in the next chapter when Nicodemus walks up to Him and asks Him a question and Jesus ignores the question and answers the question in Nicodemus' heart, not the one on his mouth. He knew everything. He knew everything.

In chapter 5, a fantastic illustration, verse 42, "But I know you," He says, listen to this, "that you have not the love of God in you." How do You know that? How do You...how can You look at somebody and say, "I know you, you have not the love of God in you?" Jesus knows not only the mind of God, He knows the mind of man. He knows everything, supernatural knowledge. No wonder...no wonder in John chapter 7 verse 46 those officers said, "Never man spoke like this man." This guy is absolutely astounding. What claims He makes. No man ever talked like that. Listen, His knowledge was so overwhelming that they knew it couldn't be human. "Never man spoke like this man." Oh, this isn't a man talking, who is it? God...it's God.

Proof number one, you know why you ought to believe Jesus? His knowledge. His knowledge alone ought to convince you that He's the Son of God, God in human flesh. Second thing, not only His knowledge, but His test. In verse 17 He gives a test. You really want to know whether He's God, do you really want to know? You're honest, you want to know? Legitimate, honest, square, straight, genuine...here's the test, verse 17 and I want to add one word that belongs here in the Greek, it's left out in your English version, it should read like this, "If any man shall will to do His will," that's the way that phrase should read, "If any man shall will to do His will." In other words, if anybody really wants to do the will of God, then notice the rest, "He shall...what?...know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself."

Jesus says, "You don't know whether I'm just shooting it off the top of My head or whether I've really got it from God, here's the test. Are you ready for the test?" "If you honestly, genuinely really down in your heart are willing to do what God wants, you'll know the answer." And the sad part of it is, most people come to Jesus Christ with reservations and they say, "Well, I'd kind of like Christ but I'm not sure I want to commit myself to all that God wants." And you know what? You'll never know. Jesus says if you are willing to do God's will, you will know. Just that simple. That's the test.

Now you remember that we've studied for the last month the simple principle that keeps recurring here. Jesus never commits Himself to...what?...to unbelief, never does. You come to Jesus Christ with unbelief in your heart, you won't know anything. You remember how the unbelieving Jews kept getting confounded and the more Jesus talked to them the more confused they got? Jesus never commits Himself to unbelief, never. He'd rather confounds it and condemns it, He never yields to an unwilling hard, faithless heart, never does. There always must be that honest desire to really know and do His will.

Listen, if you want to know if Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, here's the test. You come to Him and you say, "God, I genuinely, honestly want to know and I'm willing to do Your will." I promise you by the very Word of God you will know, God will reveal it. Wherever and whenever a person is honest and really wants to do God's will, God will give to that person the capacity to understand His

truth. But God does not grant His truth to unbelief or to an unwillingness to obey it. He has no time for hypocrites.

Do you remember what God told Israel through Moses? He said this, "If thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him." Then there's a comma and it says this, "If thou shalt seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." See? Got to be genuine. God never commits Himself to unbelief. Psalm 119:2 the psalmist said, "Blessed are they that seek Him...watch it...with the whole heart." You come to Jesus Christ with reservations, my friend, you'll never know. You'll never know. You've got to be willing to throw it all on Him. That's the test, to be willing to do His will, whatever it costs.

It worked. In what way? They came and they said, "Well, we'd like to know who You are but we're not going to get too involved," see. The character of this ministry of Christ and the reaction is beautifully pictured for us in Proverbs chapter 1, I want you to look at it. Proverbs chapter 1, really a potent chapter, I want you to see it, it's right after the book of Psalms there, and I want you to hang on to your hat because I want to show you how beautifully the ministry of Christ is characterized right here in Proverbs. Chapter 1 verse 20, and this is...this is talking about wisdom, wisdom as seen as crying out in the streets, and telling its truth. And we might assume that instead of wisdom this could be Jesus Christ, for it perfectly pictures what happened to Christ. Verse 20, "Wisdom cries outside, she utters her voice in the street." Exactly what Christ did. He went up and down the street proclaiming truth. "She cries in the chief place of the concourse, the openings of the gates in the city, she utters her word saying, 'How long, ye simple ones, will you love simplicity, and the scoffers delight in their scoffing, and fools hate knowledge?' That's what Jesus kept saying to them. Verse 23, "Turn you at My reproof, if you'll only turn I'll pour out My Spirit unto you, I'll make known My words unto you."

You see, God says if you'll only turn and be willing to follow, I'll tell you My truth. But I'll tell you something, if you're not willing to turn and turn your back on all of the past, and all of the old life, and all of that which you don't understand and turn toward God, and in honesty seek Him, you'll never know the truth. And verse 24 characterizes exactly what happens to those who refuse to turn. "Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out My hand and no man regarded, but you have set it nought all my counsel, would have none of My reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh."

You know, that's exactly what happens to people who refuse the gospel. Jesus says, "I'm calling and you refuse. I'm stretching out My hand and you won't take it. Everything I say you twist it around. You don't want any of the things that I tell you. You refuse Me that way so long and I will laugh at your calamity." Verse 28, "Then shall they call upon Me but I will not answer. They shall seek Me early but they shall not find Me." Why? "Because they hated...what?...knowledge and did not choose

the fear of the Lord." Verse 33, "But who so hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely and shall be quiet from fear of evil." Now back to John 7.

You see, that's what's always happened with God's truth. God has proclaimed His truth and men have hardened their unbelief and they have refused it. And so, they are judged. But to that one who turns and with a whole heart seeks to know God's will, God reveals His will. If you want to honestly to know God's plan for your life, if you honestly want to know Jesus Christ and love Him, if you honestly want the will of God in your life, if you honestly want real abundant thrilling life, it's there...it's there if you're honest. Jesus came and He taught and He taught openly in the crowds and in the temples and in the streets and He spoke the knowledge of God and He spoke the wisdom of God and He cried for men to come and He cried for men to believe and they stood back and they mocked Him and they spit on Him and then they killed Him. And He still cries today, He cries this morning and if you treat Him with indifference, with unbelief, with willful ignorance, if you have no desire to do God's will, then you never will know Him and you'll never know the truth. But if you come with all your heart seeking to know the truth, seeking to do His will, you'll know the truth. And Jesus said, when you know the truth, the truth shall make you...what?...free. And then He said, if you be free knowing the truth, you are free indeed. To know the truth of Jesus Christ is to set your soul at liberty. That's the sermon for chapter 8, we'll be there in a month.

Hosea said, I think it's chapter 6 verse 2, Hosea said, "Then shall we know...now watch it...then shall we know if we follow on to know." Did you get that? Pascal's wager's pretty good. Pascal once said, here's a test, do this, if I come to Jesus Christ, ask Him to come into my life, give Him my life and nothing happens, what have I lost? I haven't lost anything. But if He turns out to be true, what have I gained? Everything. Just come to Him, He can stand the test. Promise you.

I went into this store up in Oregon to buy my wife some dishes. And she needed them. It was no luxury. And I was looking at certain dishes, she had picked out the kind of dishes she wanted and so this lady was telling us what wonderful dishes they were. And she said, "These are terrific dishes because you can throw them down on the marble floor, which was there, throw them down and they won't break."

So I said, "Right." I said, "What are they? Metal dishes?"

She said, "No, they're just plain China but they've been baked a long time."

I said, "Does that really work?"

She said, "Sure." She grab a dish, wham....she threw it right down on this marble floor. You know what happened? No, it didn't break. It bounced. That thing bounced up in the air and just....wallop...and finally flat on the floor, not a mark on it. That dish stood the test. By the way, I bought them. That's the kind of dishes we need. Those dishes stood the test.

You want to know something? Jesus says, "Take My test, I can stand it...I can stand the test. Come to Me genuinely, honestly and see if I don't change your life." No false messiah can say that, do you know that? No false messiah can ask people to take the test, they'll fail. You want to know whether He's for real? Take the test. If you know to do His will, you'll know the truth. That's what He says.

Third reason why you ought to believe Jesus, verse 18, His selflessness. This is beautiful, this is really beautiful. You know, every phony baloney messiah, every false teacher, every charlatan, every crook, every false Savior the world's ever known has been in it for one reason...money and ego. That's why all the phony religious leaders are in it. Man, listen, it's no wonder some of these days government is going to start to tax religion. I mean, people are making a fortune off of it. False messiahs and fake saviors are all over the place and they're a dime a dozen and have been since the beginning of the world. And they're in it for one or two reasons, money and ego, usually a combination. They usually have got an unbelievably glorified ego and a fantastic scheme to make a fortune. And you know what? They're all occupied with themselves, everything focuses around them. They're false teachers, they're self-centered fleecers of the flock. And Peter says in 2 Peter 2:1 to 3, just mark it down and look it up later, he says they're in it for the money and they get a whole bunch of people in there and it says this, they make merchandise of you. See. All you are is a commodity to feed them money. And the world is full of a bunch of religious phonies but they're in it for the money. Every false messiah seeks his own glory. You know something? You know how you can tell that Jesus is true? He never sought His own glory. That makes Him the one and only false Messiah, true Messiah...I should say. That makes Him the one and only true Messiah. Every one of them is in it for the money, that's what He says in verse 18, look at it.

"He that speaketh of himself seeks his own glory." If I'm just somebody coming along shooting out my own thoughts, I'm seeking my own glory, right? Well watch this, "But He that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true and no unrighteousness is in Him."

You know how you can pick out the true Savior, folks? Check them all out. You know how you can pick out the true Savior? He's the one who doesn't seek His own glory, see. The phony ones want their own glory. You can pick out the true Savior, He's the one who doesn't want His own glory. He's the one who stoops down and washes the dirty feet of disciples. HE's the one who came not to be ministered unto but to...what?...minister and to give His life a ransom for many. He's the one who humbles Himself in love. He's the one who lies down flat on a cross while they nail Him there. That's the true Messiah. He's the one who makes no money, has no home, takes nothing, just gives, gives, gives, gives. False messiahs don't do that. He's the one who gives all the glory to God and takes

none for Himself.

I challenge you this morning, or any time, to name for me one other would-be messiah who fits those kind of selfless features. Jesus says, "If I talk of Myself, I'd be seeking My own glory. I'm not." And you know something? He wasn't. He had nothing. He said, "The foxes have holes, the birds have nests, the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Philippians 2, the apostle Paul says, "He humbled Himself and took upon Himself the form of a man and He died." Humiliation. False saviors rattle their piggy banks. False saviors glorify themselves. The true Savior seeks the glory of God. And that, my friend, is evidence of Jesus Christ's genuineness. You remember in John 17 in that wonderful prayer that He prayed with the Father, He said, "Father, I have finished the task that Thou givest Me to do. Now...He said...glorify Me with the glory that I had with Thee before the world began." You know, there was a gap in there when Jesus didn't have any glory in the sense of receiving glory from man? He was humiliated and mocked and spit upon. Listen, no false phony-baloney messiah is going to put himself in that position. Jesus says, "Can't you tell I'm the real thing because I'm seeking to give glory to God?" You know, in that same statement was just an arrow shot to the heart of hypocritical Judaism, see. They were all out there seeking their own glory, you know. They were the ones that every time they wanted to pray, put on dirty clothes and dumped ashes all over their heads and sat in the corner, you know, like a sign...I am super-spiritual, notice me. See. They were always seeking their own glorification. I used to say that the Pharisees were the ones looking for the vacancy in the Trinity. They are the most grandiose ideas of their own person. But not Jesus...not Jesus. You know something? There's an interesting footnote to this. We as Christians should be the very same, never seeking the glory for ourselves, always giving the glory to God. The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whatever you do whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all...what?...to the glory of God." And Peter...that's a great verse, 1 Peter 4:11, Peter says, "If you're going to minister, minister to the glory of God. If you're going to speak, speak to the oracles of God in order that God might receive the glory through Jesus Christ." That's what we're to do.

And so, Christ was selfless. Paul characterized His selflessness when Paul said, "He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Peter characterized His selflessness when Peter said, "He who bore our sins in His own body on the tree," what selflessness. O such selfless love could not be the love of a false messiah. No false messiah ever said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

So, His knowledge, His test, and His selflessness. Fourthly, and quickly, His impact. He had such a startling impact on the world that He had to be for real. You see, if He was a phony, mark this, here's ...this is a twist and I want you to get it, if He was a phony, another religious fake, He never would have caused the hatred that He caused. Jesus said, importantly so in John 15:18 and 19, He said, "The world loves its own," right? "And if the world hates you, it's because you're not part of it." Well

by that very statement in effect He was saying, "I'm not a part of this world," wasn't He? The world hates Me because I don't belong here.

You know something? Jesus came, He never hurt anybody. He was harmless. He did wonderful little miracles and He was teaching and all. You know, I believe that actually if He had actually just been a man, they would have loved Him. They probably would have glorified Him and made Him some kind of a saint. They would have had Him be the greatest rabbi that ever lived. He probably would have substituted for Santa Claus, He would have been kind of a wonderful little guy and everybody would have loved Jesus...that wonderful guy, He's a little, you know, screws loose, thinks He's God and stuff like that, but other than that He does nice things if He had just been another man. But you know what? He kept claiming to be God and every time He said that He just rattled their cage. And their indifference turned to hostility and their hostility turned to a plot to murder and their plot to murder turned to murder. And that's the problem. No false messiah ever hit the world with the impact that Jesus did. The world can tolerate its own, even though some of them had a few screws loose. But the world can't tolerate Jesus. You either seek to receive Him or to eliminate Him. He's absolutely a demanding person. Had He just been some worldly person, a little bit deranged, the world would have tolerated Him. But not so. He hit this world with such a dynamic impact like four-thousand A-bombs landing on the same square inch. He disrupted every thought, every attitude that was around Him. And if He had been one of them, they would have tolerated Him, but not so. And thus in verse 19 we read, Jesus replies to this kind of thinking, "Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you keepeth the Law? Why go you about to kill Me?"

See, He knew what their attitude was. He knew the impact He made. They were after Him. They wanted to kill Him. And here He's talking again to these leaders, He says, "You're the guys who are going around saying, 'We are the followers of Mosheh...Moses. We are the ones that keep the Law. We are the ones that prescribe to the Law. We are the great obeyers of the Law. You're the guys...He says...always bragging about the Law. Then why do you seek to kill Me?' We say, "What is that implying?" It's implying this, do you remember that one part of the Law that says, "Thou shalt not kill?" You see, again He's indicting them. You hypocrites, you're the great possessors of the Mosaic Law and in your hearts you are full of murder. Don't you know Moses said, "Don't kill," you phonies...you phonies?

Well, He knew their reaction. The impact that He had on their lives was so great they had to eliminate Him. He didn't fit. Well in verse 20, evidently the people didn't know the plot that was in the minds of the leaders. Jesus read their minds. The people were probably a little bit shaken. They said in verse 20, "Ye have a demon, who wants to kill You?" Where do You get this idea? Well they had...you know...maybe the plot hadn't sifted down through the populace yet. It will get there though, right? And you have the whole population shouting, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," eventually. He

says...You've got a demon...we don't know anything about this wanting to kill You. But Jesus knew His impact, didn't He? No mere man ever hit the world with an impact like Jesus. Seeing that He came from so far it's no wonder He hit so hard, right? And so He says, "My very impact ought to be evidence of who I am."

Fifth and last and very quickly...His deeds speak of who He is. He had done so many miracles...so many of them. Oh, He had done some wonderful miracles. We've gone through them. We won't go over them again. In fact, He did so many miracles the first time He was in Jerusalem, that Nicodemus came to Him by night and He says, "Rabbi," he says, "we know...you know, our brains tell us, you know, one thing we know, we know You must be a teacher come from God." Why? "Because no man can do these things which Thou doest." See. Good thinking, Nicodemus, sharp. That's not human stuff, creating fish and creating barley cakes for 15 thousand to 20 thousand people. No, no, that's not human activity. Healing sick people, that's not human. His deeds should have been enough evidence.

They weren't. You know what they did with His deeds? They twisted them around. Jesus came to Jerusalem in chapter 5, there's a guy laying by the pool, 38 years he's been sick. Jesus says, "How would you like to be well?"

"Yeah, I'd like."

Jesus says, "Rise up, take up thy bed and walk." Guess what he did? Rose up, took up his bed and walked. And the Jews said to him, "Hey, you, what are you doing carrying your bed on the Sabbath?" Here he is walking, you know, who's worried about my bed, fella, I haven't walked in 38 years? And the Bible says, "They sought to kill Jesus," John 5 says, "They sought to kill Jesus because He had healed on the Sabbath." They took the deeds of Jesus Christ which should have convinced them of who He was and they trampled them, under the footsteps of their unbelief. And they were going to kill Him because He broke the Sabbath.

Jesus remembers that and so He replies to it in verses 21 to 23. "Jesus answered and said unto them, 'I have done one work and you all marvel, or you all wonder about it.'" And that one work He's referring to is the one He did back in chapter 5 with the man I just told you about. Then He makes this little analogy that really devastates. "If...He says...Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision," this is true, not because it is of Moses but of the Father. In other words, it's not just of Moses. Circumcision was God-ordained, which, you see, is a pointed statement because they're claiming their authority from Moses, He's claiming His from God. So He says, "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, not because it is of Moses but of the Father, and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man." You know, you're not supposed to do any work on the Sabbath. No, no, can't do any work on

the Sabbath. But Moses said on the eighth day after that male child is born, you've got to circumcise that child. And if the Sabbath happened to be the eighth day, brother, they circumcised that baby. So He says to them, "Moses told you to circumcise, so you do that on the Sabbath." Notice verse 23, "If a man on the Sabbath receives circumcision that the Law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I have made a man entirely well on the Sabbath day?"

In other words, if it's okay for you to take care of one member of the physical body, would it be okay for Me to take care of the whole physical body on the Sabbath day? If the ceremonial cleansing of one organ of the body is okay on the Sabbath, what about the healing of the entire body? Would that be okay on the Sabbath? Unanswerable, my friend, and thus there is no answer. Is Jesus who He claimed to be? His knowledge, His test, His selflessness, His impact and His deeds say a resounding YES.

Verse 24 wraps it up. Are you ready for verse 24? Listen to it. If you're looking at Jesus Christ, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." You know what that says? That says this, don't come to Jesus Christ and make your decision superficially. Get in there and see who He is. Don't judge just on the surface, give Him a chance to show you the evidence and be fair about Jesus Christ. Don't judge superficially. Jesus said to those Jews, don't write Me off too fast, here's the evidence. Weigh it, consider who I am, take the test, come to Me genuinely, honestly and see if I'm not who I claim to be.

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