

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

Embracing the Claims of Christ

Scripture: John 7:14-24

Code: 43-41

Open your Bible to the seventh chapter of the Gospel of John, the seventh chapter of the Gospel of John. The wonderful experience of going through the Gospel of John is that it's all about Christ in every page and virtually every verse. And you can't improve upon the subject by any means. So what a delight, again, for us to share this hour on this, and for every hour that I spend with you on this, there are probably ten hours that I have spent at least before that in these individual passages being so profoundly blessed. I wish you could share my joy. You only get a little bit of the overflow of the opportunity that I have to dig down into these great portions of Scripture which present Christ in all his majesty.

Now as we come to the portion before us, I want to read it – we're gonna cover verses 14 to 24. So let me read it to you. "But when it was now the midst of the feast –' the Feast of Tabernacles, as you know, 'Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach. The Jews then were astonished, saying, 'How has this man become learned, having never been educated?' So Jesus answered them and said, 'My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?' The crowd answered, 'You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?' Jesus answered them, 'I did one deed, and you all marvel. For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath? Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.'"

The claims of Jesus were astonishing. They were shocking. They were beyond bold. They were really outrageous claims. The man Jesus was indistinguishable from any other Galilean man. He most likely had a Galilean accent and his deity was completely invisible. What was visible was his humanity. There was no way to see him any different than you would see any other man. But men did not make the claims that he made.

Jesus said that he had come down from heaven, that he had eternally existed, that he had been sent into the world by the Father. He claimed to be the savior of the world and the only savior of the world. He claimed to be the determiner of everyone's eternal destiny. He claimed to be the source of everlasting life, and the only source. He claimed to be the only way to God.

He claimed to have the right to be honored and worshipped on an equal basis with the eternal God. He claimed to be one with the Father. He claimed to have the power to give life and even to raise the dead. He claimed to be able to raise himself from the dead. He claimed to be the one of whom the Old Testament Scripture spoke and the one who was the main subject of the Old Testament.

He claimed to be the supreme judge of all men who would one day judge them all at this return in glory. He claimed to be without sin. He claimed to have all authority in heaven and earth. He claimed to be able to forgive sins legitimately, to have both the power and the authority to do that. He claimed to rule over the Sabbath. He claimed to have the right to answer prayer.

He claimed to be greater than the temple, greater than Jonah, greater than Solomon, greater than Jacob, greater than Abraham. He claimed to have been alive before Abraham even was born. He claimed to be the only source of soul sustenance, the only bread that could feed the soul. He claimed to be the light of the world. He claimed to be the resurrection and the life. He claimed to be the anointed one, the Christ, the Messiah, claimed to be the son of God. He claimed that he had the privilege and one day would enter into that privilege of being seated at the right hand of God to reign forever.

This from a man who was physically, by appearance, indistinguishable from any other Galilean man. These claims were just beyond comprehension. The Jewish leaders judged him as a blasphemer. Their decision was, to simply say, this is the most extreme of blasphemy conceivable or inconceivable. He is a blasphemer.

This level of blasphemy, they said, is beyond what any human being would do. Therefore, he must be under the overwhelming influence of the ultimate blasphemer who is Satan himself. He does what he does by the power of Satan. He has a demon. He is likely possessed by Satan himself.

Other people were more charitable than the leaders – a bit more charitable, anyway. They said he was insane. He was insane. They used a word that is also used in Acts Chapter 12 and translated this way. It's translated "You're out of your mind." He's a mad man.

There were others perhaps even more charitable, but they were damningly wrong about Jesus. They would be the disciples who followed him for a while, and then as we saw in Chapter 6, departed and left him. And they left because they didn't like his words. They didn't believe in his words. They couldn't accept his words. They may have judged him as a false teacher.

But whether you say he's merely a false teacher, we can't believe. Or whether you say he's an insane maniac and a madman, or whether he's possessed of Satan and the ultimate blasphemer, you have made a judgment on Jesus Christ that has severe implications forever.

On the other hand, there was John the Baptist, who said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." There was Andrew, in John Chapter 1, who said, "We found the Christ. We found the Messiah." There was Philip, who said, "We found him of whom Moses spoke." There was Nicodemus who came to Jesus on behalf of other people and said, "We know that you are a teacher come from God, because no one can do what you do unless God is with him."

And there were the Samaritans from the little village of Sychar, who basically concluded this is indeed the Messiah, the Savior of the world. And then there was Peter and the disciples in 6:69 who said, "We have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God." It was Peter who said, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God."

So on one hand, you had people who rejected him. You had on the other people who accepted him. The vast majority of people could be basically placed into group one, following the lead of their religious heads. They went down the path of rejecting Jesus either as a blasphemer, a demon-possessed blasphemer, a mad man, or somebody whose teaching's couldn't be believed or understood.

In fact, it all ended up with even the crowd that may have deferred to him and thought he was a good man and said he was a good man and questioned why Jesus thought they wanted to kill him, ultimately screaming for his death, Mark 15:11 to 15.

He was largely rejected. It was a very small group. Only 120 showed up in the upper room in Judea on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came. That was all of all Judea.

When Jesus was called before the Sanhedrin for his trial, they said to him, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." He had told them again and again and again and again, and they hadn't believed. They asked it again and he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe. You will not believe." In John Chapter 8, in verse 48, the Jews answered and said to him, "Do we not say rightly that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" That was their diagnosis.

And that was pretty much the standard diagnosis of Jesus, to one extreme or another. And we know that from the very opening of the Gospel of John, John 1:10, "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him."

Chapter 3 repeats it again in verse 11. Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony." Verse 32, "What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony." Chapter 5, verse 16, "For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus." He was saying, "My Father is working and now, and I Myself am working. For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him." So it goes rejection, rejection, rejection.

Chapter 5 and verse 38, "You do not have His word abiding in you," Jesus says, " for you do not believe Him whom He sent." Verse 43, "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me." That was how it was. His claims were rejected. He was rejected. Again and again we're going to see it, chapter after chapter after chapter, all the way until they scream for his blood at his death about six months after the events recorded here.

Now, as we approach the text that I read, Chapter 7, verse 14, Jesus leave Galilee after seven quiet months of training with the Twelve, spending time with them. Yes, there were some public ministry and miracles and teaching, but primarily his emphasis was with the Twelve and he stayed in the outlying areas far north, northwest, southeast, to give time to prepare them. But now in the midst of the feast he goes to Jerusalem and he began to teach. He reenters Jerusalem.

Remember from last time? He didn't go when everybody went to the Feast of Tabernacles. He waited until the middle of the week because he knew the rulers wanted to kill him, Chapter 7, verse 1, they were seeking to kill him. And when the feast was just gathering, just beginning, they were looking for him. They were wanting to capture him early on.

He didn't go. Verse 11, the Jews were seeking him at the Feast, saying, "Where is he? Where is he?" Well, he waits till midweek and then he goes. When everything is settled in, when the people are all there, when it'll be a whole lot harder to arrest him, he shows up.

You remember he took a secret journey through Samaria? Luke records that journey. He reenters secretly. At the right moment, he walks into the Temple. The time, 29 A.D. if you want to calculate the calendar, this would be around October 15th, the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Booths, which commemorates the wilderness wandering when they dwelled in Booths for those 40 years in the wilderness.

He reenters. He faces the world that hates him. He faces Jerusalem, where the leaders are already determined to execute him – puts his life on the line. Jerusalem is now filled with masses of people, pilgrims who have come from everywhere. Those in the diaspora have all come back for one of the three feasts a year. They had to be in Jerusalem.

Well, in the middle of the week he shows up. This catches the leaders off guard, 'cause they don't think he's there. It's unexpected. And in some ways they're neutralized by the crowd and the public exposure that Jesus already has. This is his time. His time is so precise that back in verse 6, he wouldn't go a few days earlier, because he said, "My time is not yet here." In verse 8, "My time has not yet fully come." When we're talking about time, we're not talking about epochs. We're talking about hours and days. He was on that kind of schedule.

He goes up to the temple, draws, no doubt, a huge crowd, 'cause they'd been looking for him. Back in verse 12, there was grumbling among the crowd, murmuring, saying where is he and what is he and who is he? He's a good man. Others say, no, on the contrary he leads people astray. He was the topic of conversation even though he wasn't there. Now he is there.

The leaders would have wanted to arrest him, and they made an attempt at it, over in verse 32. The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priest and the Pharisees sent officers to seize him. They got the temple police to go and arrest him.

They couldn't pull it off. Verse 44, some of them wanted to seize him; no one laid hands on him. The officers then came to the chief priest and the Pharisees and they said to them, "Why didn't you bring him? We sent you to arrest him. You went. Why didn't you arrest him?" The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." To which the Pharisees said, "You've not also been led astray, have you?" They just couldn't get past what he said. Stopped them dead in their intentions.

So here he is in the temple. They're not gonna be able to arrest him in that environment. His time has come. And what is he doing there? Chapter 7 says he's teaching. He's doing what rabbis did. Rabbis would go to the temple, and the temple courtyard is a massive, massive area. And they would find a location in the temple courtyard and they would start school. And they would sit down somewhere, and their disciples would come around and they would teach in the temple ground – very traditional pattern. So Jesus did that. He took the role of a rabbi or a teacher; he found a place and he began to teach.

Well, what is he going to be teaching? Well, he's gonna be teaching what he always taught. He's gonna be teaching about the kingdom. He's gonna be teaching about sin and righteousness. He's gonna be teaching about salvation, gonna be teaching about hypocrisy, gonna be teaching the true way of God. He's gonna teach what he's always taught, all the things that I just repeated to you. He's gonna make all those claims in one way or another.

So he sets up class and he starts teaching in the middle of the week of the Feast in the temple courtyard. And in the unfolding passage, he provides five reasons to believe his claims – five reasons

to believe his claims. He knows what the opinions of the people are. He knows that. But he has not yet shut them down. He said, "You better believe while you can believe. You better come to the light while the light is shining, because it's not always gonna be here."

So here is another opportunity in which he will teach them the truth and call them to put their trust in him. This is extension of patience, of grace, of mercy. Five reasons why the claims of Christ are true. They unfold in these verses.

Reason number one – and by the way, these are good for non-believers to consider. Number one: The divine source of his teaching. The divine source of his teaching. There were lots of rabbis teaching. Maybe every day there were rabbis all over that place teaching, not just at the feast time, but on a general daily basis. And perhaps at the Feast there were even more, and there was a cacophony of classes going on in that open-air courtyard.

But this is what rabbis did. They found their place. They began to teach. And in order to give authority to what they said, they quoted other rabbis. This did two things. This had the effect of validating what they said, so that people wouldn't think they invented it. And secondly, it kept them in the tradition. You wanted to quote other rabbis who were respected, so that you could give authority to what you said. And you wanted to quote other rabbis so that you were in the tradition, 'cause tradition was so important.

That's what they would do. That's not what Jesus did. He didn't quote any other rabbis. People noted that at the beginning of his ministry at the sermon on the mound. At the end, Matthew 7:28 and 29, the people were amazed because he taught as one having authority, possessing authority, which means he didn't quote any rabbis. He stood alone on the sermon on the mound, with his amazing teaching.

The first reason to believe the claims of Christ is his teaching, his doctrine, his knowledge. So we go back to verse 15, "The Jews then were astonished, saying how has this man become learned?" Stop at that point. They acknowledged his learning. They acknowledge his learning. It was beyond anybody else. Even the temple police, who regularly would have heard the teaching of rabbis, because that's where rabbis were often teaching. They never heard anybody like this. Never a man spoke like this man.

Rabbis would expound the Scripture and explain Scripture and quote other rabbis to validate their interpretation. But this kind of teaching was beyond anything anybody had ever heard. It was a level of wisdom, a level of knowledge, a level of understanding without equal. The people are dumbfounded. They are shocked. They are startled by this flawless, adept instruction, the likes of which they have never heard. He doesn't quote rabbis. He doesn't validate his teaching by any human source. He doesn't necessarily connect with the tradition. But there's never been anything like

it.

They're overwhelmed by the lucidity of it, the clarity of it, the profundity of it, the truthfulness of it, the ringing reality of it. So how are they gonna discredit him? They attack him, not his teaching. Verse 15, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?" This is an ad hominem argument. They didn't want to argue with him. They didn't want to debate him. So they tried to discredit him by calling into question his training, or lack of training.

Another time, when they wanted to discredit him and they didn't want to attack what he said because they couldn't, they said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" So they attacked his hometown – not a very powerful argument.

But they knew every time they did enter into a discussion or a debate or a confrontation with him, they were just humiliated. So they're grasping at straws. They're shattered by his claims, his astonishing claims. They're shattered by the, no doubt, the Biblical support he gives for those claims, the masterful teaching. They can't cope with it. They can't argue with it. They can't debate with it. They can't contradict it. They are trapped in their own self-centered, hypocritical system. He will dismantle them, so they just discredit him. They speak in a derisive way.

"How has this man?" Some of the older translations say "this fellow, this nobody." They don't want to use his name. That's an expression, by the way, of derision. Don't let this nobody, who's giving you his own opinion, pass himself off as some truth teller who truly the meaning of Scripture, who truly the Word of God and the will of God. He's just shooting off his uneducated mouth.

It's a popular thing to do, by the way, even today, to those who speak Biblical truth from the Word of God accurately and truthfully – popular for them to be mocked by the established academic elite, for their lack of training in the proper schools. Unless you go to a school full of heretics, you aren't qualified to be profound.

This is nothing new. All the way back in Matthew Chapter 13 and verse 54, we see a similar situation. "He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, 'Where did this man get this wisdom?'" This is his own hometown. When he's in his own hometown, they say, "Where did he get this wisdom? He didn't get it here." When he's in another town, they say, "How could anything good come out of that town?" Now they simply say, "How could he possibly get this teaching when he hasn't been to the rabbinical schools?" If you can't knock the truth, you knock the truth teller. That's exactly what they did. They just openly discredited him. This happens a lot.

Now, he could have defended himself by simply saying, "You're absolutely right. This isn't from the rabbis. This is my truth. I'm God. I'm telling you the truth." But that would have exacerbated the issue

even more. So he doesn't say he's self-taught. He doesn't say, "I came across this all by myself. My doctrine is my own. My doctrine comes from me." He doesn't walk into that trap. That would have exacerbated the situation. Instead – you got to love this – verse 16, "Jesus answered them and said, 'My teaching is not Mine.'" Wow. "My teaching is not mine." Not mine. This isn't self knowledge. I didn't make this up. I didn't come to this in isolation. I'm not teaching my own opinion. But his who sent me.

And there he trumps the rabbis. I'm not quoting rabbis. I'm quoting God. I'm quoting God. What a reply. This is not just in defense. This is an indictment of the Jewish leaders and their endless circular quotations of rabbis who quoted rabbis who quoted rabbis. He says, "You're right. You're right. This teaching is different. This is learned teaching. This is divine knowledge. This is truth. And it doesn't come from the rabbis. It comes from God." By the way, that implies that the rabbis' teaching came from the rabbis.

My doctrine is not mine. My teaching is not mine. Just as a footnote, every preacher must say that. Every preacher must say, "My teaching is not mine. It comes from heaven." I can say that, as I teach the Word of God. "I am the ultimate truth teller," Jesus says. "I'm telling you what God said." This is a part of his life and ministry.

Go back to Chapter 5. This was a claim he made over and over and over. I'll just touch a few of the illustrations. Verse 19 of Chapter 5, Jesus says to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. The Father loves the Son, shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel." In other words, everything comes from the Father.

Down in verse 30, he adds, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." In other words, his claim is that everything he does comes from the Father, proceeds from the Father.

Verse 24 sums it up. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life." You hear my word and that means you're believing the one that sent me. They're one and the same. This again is his claim.

In Chapter 8, just a brief look at, say, Verse 26. And there are more. "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world.' They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me,'" constantly making the claim that he was directly, verbatim, quoting God.

Chapter 12, verse 49, "I didn't speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me." Absolute accuracy.

Listen to John 17:8 – Jesus speaking to the Father, "The words which You gave Me I have given to them." "The words which You gave Me I have given to them." The divine source of his teaching is the first reason to believe the claims of Jesus. And again, this is not just a defense. It is, at the same time, an indictment of those who do not speak for God. How vast is his knowledge? He knows the mind of God. He knows the mind of God – not in a general way, not in a broad way, not in some kind of an impression. He knows the mind of God verbally in words. He speaks the words that God gives him to speak. He knows what God thinks. He knows what God says. He knows what God wills, and he says it over and over again. He knows the will of the Father. "I know the will of my Father. I do the will of my Father. I speak the words of my Father." Complete knowledge of the mind of God.

He also has complete knowledge of the mind of man. He knew what was in men. John 2, nobody needed to tell him anything about a man. He knew what was in men. Chapter 5, verse 42, he makes the statement, "I know that the love of God is in you." So he has total knowledge of the mind of God, total knowledge of the mind of man, and complete familiarity with the revelation of God, with all that God has disclosed, all that God knows, and therefore all that God reveals. He says that in Chapter 5, verse 39, "The Scriptures are these that testify about Me." He knew the mind of God. He knew the mind of man. He knew the Scripture, and therefore he knew the true interpretation of the Scripture. There's no rabbi that can match that – none. Nor could a collection of rabbis come close.

This is supernatural knowledge. So that's where you have to start thinking about accepting the claims of Jesus. You start with his supernatural knowledge. This is God talking. So, reason number one: To embrace the claims of Christ is his supernatural teaching, his supernatural knowledge.

Secondly, not only the source, the place from which his knowledge comes, being the mind of God, but his desire to do God's will. This is critical to the sinner. This is the test. Say it another way, his promise that if a person desired to do the will of God, he would know the truth. Look at verse 17.

Even when you say, well, what motivates someone to come to Christ, what are you looking for? What motivates us? I don't know, somebody might say, "Well, you want a better life? You want your sins forgiven? Those are good things. You want some supernatural power. That's a good thing. But here's the test that Jesus gives. Look at verse 17. This is so important. "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself."

Can I make it simple? Coming to Christ is not motivated by your desire to get what you want. It is motivated by your desire to do for God what he commands, okay? It's essentially what he's saying.

The first reason to come to Christ is because of the divine source of his teaching. The second is because you have a desire to do God's will. You have a desire God's will, and if you have a desire to do God's will, you have to come to Christ, because there's no one else to come to.

This is where salvation begins. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin and righteousness is judgment. The sinner is weary of his sin and his fallenness and his wretchedness, of nature of it and the consequence of it; becomes a seeker. And he's not looking for personal fulfillment. He's not looking for personal benefits and blessings. That's what the crowd was looking for that eventually left Jesus in Chapter 6.

What he wants is to do the will of God. This is the step in the direction of confessing Jesus as what? As Lord, coming as a slave to a master; coming out from under the master of sin, the dominance of sin, to the mastery of the lordship of Jesus Christ.

So gospel truth is not apprehended by debate. You can have a bunch of unbelievers in a room. You can have an atheist debating with somebody who knew the gospel, and that debate may prove to fall on the side of the people with the gospel, but only if you're gonna believe the Bible. But if you have an unbeliever sitting there, he's not able to discern the difference. You don't win the day by debate. You don't even win the day by rational defense, even though you can rationally defend the Bible, and even though you can debate successfully.

What draws people to the gospel, what draws people to Christ is a desire to do the will of God. God exists. He is sovereign. He is the judge and the executioner. I'm on the wrong side of God. I'm alienated from God. I'm an enemy of God. I need to submit to God. I'm tired of the power that sin expressed in my life, the devastation of sin. I want deliverance. I want freedom. I want a new master. That's what he's talking about.

Again, I say truth is not decided by a debate. It's not decided by some kind of an apologetic discussion. But rather, you come to know the truth when God reveals the truth to you and he reveals it to you only when you seek to do his will. This is how faith acts. This is how faith acts. What I saving faith? It is the desire to put your trust in Jesus Christ as to do the will of God. It requires believing.

So if you want to know if Christ is who he claims to be, here's the test. Are you crying out for a new master? Are you desirous of the one and only savior? Do you have a genuine desire to carry out the revealed will of God in your life? Do you want to go on the narrow road through the narrow gate and walk the narrow way? That's the issue.

God told Israel through Moses these words. "If you shall seek the Lord your God, you shall find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul." Psalm 119:2, "Blessed are they that seek Him

with the whole heart." What is that talking about? Well, it's talking about all those things we're so familiar with in the ministry of Jesus. "If any man come after Me, let him deny himself." That's the opposite side of seeking with your whole heart. Take up the cross. Follow me. Hate your mother. Hate your father. Hate your own life. Be willing to give up all your possessions. Abandon everything. Sell all to buy the pearl and the treasure.

There's a beautiful analogy to this in Proverbs Chapter 1 where wisdom is personified and is an analogy to Christ. Chapter 1, verse 20, "Wisdom shouts in the street, even as Jesus did; lifts her voice in the square; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings: 'How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing? And fools hate knowledge? Turn from your folly, from your simple mindedness, from your scoffing, and I will pour out my spirit on you and will make my words known to you.'"

Do you see? You turn, and then it becomes known to you. Repentance comes first. God does not grant light on his truth unless a man is anxious to walk according to that light. He doesn't grant an understanding of truth until a man is willing to obey that truth. He has no time for false converts and hypocrites.

Jesus came, taught opening in the temple, taught the crowds, taught about the wisdom and knowledge of God, cried for men to come to him, believe in him, receive life. They stood back, they mocked, they stayed in their simpleminded foolishness. And here he calls out to them again as Hosea did. Hosea 6:3, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." Jeremiah 29:13, "You'll find Me when you seek for Me with your whole heart."

It's costly to believe. Rich, young ruler came; it was too much. Turned around and walked away. I guess I'm not ready to do the will of God. That's the essence of a true faith. You're not asking what can Jesus do for me. Your coming under the weight and the burden of the mastery of sin and saying, "How do I become delivered from this to do the will of God? And that, by the way, when the happens in a life, that's the prompting of the Father. That's the drawing of the Father, as we learned about in John 6.

'Cause that's the test. Jesus said, reason number one, "To come to me is because the divine source of my teaching." Reason number two is because you have a desire to do the will of God. Look, if you're not interested in doing the will of God, we can't do anything about that. All the argument, all the debate, all the discussion, all the exposure's not gonna penetrate. You're gonna laugh, you're gonna scorn, you're gonna turn away, you're gonna walk away. The rest of Proverbs 1 shows that that's what people to whom Proverbs was addressed were doing. And that's what they did with Jesus. He was crying in the streets and in the gates. They turned their backs on him.

There's a third reason to believe the claims of Jesus, and that is his deference to the Father's glory – his deference to the Father's glory, his humility. False teachers, charlatans, frauds, fakes, hypocrites, phony messiahs are all in it for personal gain. The New Testament's clear: They do it for money. They do it for power. They do it for prominence, ego boost, all that package. False teachers are self-centered fleecers of the sheep. Peter makes that very, very clear.

Jesus even makes it clear, when he talks about false shepherds in John Chapter 10. They seek their own glory. Listen to John 5:44. He says to the Jewish leaders, "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?" What was the problem with these Pharisees, these Jewish leaders? They didn't seek the glory of God. They sought glory from one another. To put it another way, they were more interested in the praise of men than the praise of God.

Every false messiah seeks his own glory – everyone – his own gain, his own elevation. But look at verse 18, "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory." Again, he's going back to the fact that he's not speaking from himself, for his own glory sake. He's not coming up with this to draw attention to himself. "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him."

How do you tell a true teacher? Because he seeks only the glory of God. Jesus only sought the glory of God. This is part of this humiliation – laid aside what he was entitled to and he came all the way down, became a slave down lowly enough to the death on the cross.

Who's the true Savior? He's the one who washes the dirty feet of his disciples. He's the one who came not to be ministered to, but to minister, to give his life. He's the one who humbles himself in love. He's the one who bears others' burdens. He's the one who seeks no money, has no home, takes nothing, gives everything. He's the one who renders all glory, defers all glory, all honor to God, not himself.

I challenge you to find another savior like that, another messiah like that, another teacher like that. Jesus had no personal glory in mind. When he went to pray in John 17, coming toward the everything, he said, "Father, restore to me the glory I had with you before the world began." He's looking ahead at what's gonna happen after he's ascended into heaven. But while he was on earth, he was totally humbled and did only that which brought glory to his Father.

False saviors rattle their own banks, glorify themselves. Pharisees were like all other false prophets throughout all of time and all of history. They were calling attention to themselves for their own gain. Listen to what it says in Luke 16:14, "The Pharisees, who were lovers of money." Hmm, that says it all – lovers of money. Peter talks about them being in ministry for filthy luke sake – power, prestige

for themselves.

And by the way, that really hit hard at those Jewish leaders – notorious seekers of their own glory, calling attention to themselves when they prayed, when they gave, when they went around the city with certain kind of clothes, with certain kind of postures, and certain kind of demonstrations, parading their wretched hypocrisy. And Jesus was so utterly unlike that. He who knew no sin was so humble that he became sin for us. He who was without sin in his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree that we, being dead, descend might be made alive to righteousness – so humble, so selfless.

No false savior does this, nor does a false savior hang on the cross and say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," when he's being executed. So it is the divine source of his knowledge. It is the desire to do the will of God. And it is that deference to the glory of God that motivates the heart to embrace the claims of Christ.

There's reason to embrace his claims, and that is his declaration of man's sinfulness. His declaration of man's sinfulness. In verses 19 and 20, he goes right to the heart of the matter. He says, "Didn't Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law?" What a statement. Fully aware of the authority's desire to kill him, their vicious hatred of him mentioned in Chapter 5, Verse 18 and Chapter 7, Verse 1, he uses that as a starting point to pronounce judgment and a sentence on them.

"Didn't Moses give you the Law?" Yes, of course Moses gave us the Law. They sat in the chair of Moses, Matthew 23:2 says. They loved Moses. They thought they honored the Law. "But none of you carries out the Law." That is the most comprehensive, accurate statement of truth regarding human sinfulness.

None of you carries out the Law. None of you. None of you. No one keeps God's Law. That's the clear declaration of man's sinfulness. No one carries out the Law. There's none righteous – no, not one – Romans 3. Galatians 3, if you break one law, you've broken the whole Law and you're cursed. The proud legalists were lawbreakers. The Law of Moses was never intended to save. It was intended to condemn. It was intended to drive sinners to an overwhelming fear of divine judgment that would cause them to repent, cry out for mercy and grace from God. And now, to put their trust in the only savior, Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:4 says, "Jesus Christ is the end of the law for salvation." The law drives you to the end and pronounces final judgment on you because you can't keep it. And there, at the end of the law, when the law has given its verdict, stands Christ to give the salvation not available in the Law.

Or they would have been justifying themselves. They would have been saying, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, what do you mean none of us carries out the Law?" So he gets specific. "Why do you seek to kill me? Why do you seek to kill me?" Their outrageous treatment of Jesus, seeking to murder him, was an

overt violation of the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:13, thou shalt not what? Murder. Kill. They were in fact blasphemous, murderous unworthy disciples of Moses, unworthy descendants of Abraham, whose father was actually the devil, John 8:44.

So he indicts them. The crowd that really aren't all aware – there are pilgrims from all over everywhere for the Feast – they're not aware of this murderous intent. So they say, "You have a demon who seeks to kill you." But Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart of man is deceitful above all things, are desperately wicked. They don't know their own hearts." Six months later when they all show up again for the next feast, which is Passover, according to Mark 15:11-15, they're all screaming for his blood.

They all became murderers because they were the children of Satan, who's a murderer from the beginning. But they react by saying, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, you have a demon to say something like that." They're affirming what's been floating around, that he has a demon, that he leads people astray, as talked about back in Verse 12. This catches fire. It gets repeated. You'll see it in Chapter 8. You'll see it in Chapter 10, this accusation of him being demonic.

Who seeks to kill you? Well, the truth is, they were just one step away from that – just a few months from screaming for his execution. And they thought themselves to be righteous by keeping the Law.

According to Mark 15:14, Pilate says, "What evil has he done?" They screamed, "Crucify him." Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and having Jesus scourged, handed Him over to be crucified." Proof of their wretchedness. They were lawkeepers. They were lawbreakers with murder on their minds.

The claims of Christ that I read to you at the very beginning that I recited for you are validated by the divine source of His knowledge, by the tests that He gives, the proof that if you put your trust in Him, you will know the truth by His humility and by His righteous sentence on humanity as sinful.

One final one. Another affirmation of his claim, his deeds of righteousness. Just look what he did. And he picks out one thing. Verse 21, "I did one deed, and you all marvel." And he's going back to 5 – back to Chapter 5, which he did when he was Jerusalem earlier at another feast. "I did that deed. Do you what it was, at the beginning of Chapter 5? We went to the pool of Bethesda to heal the man that was there for all those many years? And basically the Jews went crazy because he did it on the Sabbath and they condemned it. And it says they sought to kill him because he violated the Sabbath and said that God was his father.

So he goes back to that event as symbolic of his deeds. "I did one deed and you all marvel." Nobody denied any of his miracles, certainly not that one. Everybody saw it. The leaders never denied it. To show you how warped you are, how you reject a marvelous, miraculous thing, and the display of the goodness of God on the Sabbath. He takes it a little further in Verse 22. Let me help you understand

the Sabbath in a way that you don't understand it.

"For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not because it's from Moses, but from the fathers)." Circumcision is in the Mosaic Law, that all male children will be circumcised on the eighth day. That was the prescription of the Mosaic Law, but actually it came from the fathers. It goes all the way back to the 17th chapter of the book of Genesis, back to Abraham.

So Jesus says you have circumcision, right? It's all the way back to Abraham. It's reiterated in Moses. However, on the Sabbath, you circumcise a man. Why do they do it on the Sabbath? Because it had to be done on the eighth day. And so when the eighth day happened to be a Sabbath, they did it on the eighth day. So in a sense, they violated their tradition about work on the Sabbath, because they had a prescription that they needed to follow. So if necessary, the Sabbath could be set aside for something more important, something better, another level of obedience.

Then Jesus says this: "You do that. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath?" How warped are you? That's arguing from the lesser to the greater?

I did one miracle and the murder plot is hatched. One miracle and you want to kill me. One miracle that was done on the Sabbath, which was a greater expression of goodness and divine mercy and divine power than any prescription for behavior on that Sabbath, and you want to kill me for that when you yourselves violate your own ordinance because you think circumcision is more important.

Powerful rebuke. Circumcision takes precedence over the restriction of Sabbath rest. And so does doing good, showing mercy, kindness. Stop looking at hypocrisy of these leaders. Look at the power that I've displayed. Look at the grace. Look at the goodness, miraculous works. Look at his life and his powerful works. John says these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ.

All of these things are reasons to believe the claims of Jesus, so in conclusion, Verse 24, "Stop judging according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." Just rightly. Plant the evidence. Make the right verdict concerning the claims I've made.

They had spent their whole life judging on appearance. It's what hypocrites do. That's what they sell. That's what they produce. That's the nature of hypocrisy. Stop, Jesus said, doing that. Judge righteously.

That's a message to every person – every person. There's no middle ground. You either embrace Jesus as Savior your Lord, or you don't. One promises heaven, the other promises hell. No middle ground. There's plenty of reason to believe, but that's where it has to start. There must be in your heart a desire to do the will of God. Stop doing your own will. Stop doing Satan's will. Stop doing the

will of the world around you and the hunger that says, "I want, more than anything, to do the will of God. I want God as my master. I want Jesus Christ as my Lord. I want to exchange the evil master of sin and the wretchedness of my own heart for a gracious, good master – a loving master who will lead me to blessing and eternal life. When you want to do the will of God, you will know the truth.

Father, we thank you again this morning for the privilege of opening your Word. There always seem to be undiscovered glories in it, and yet we find the familiar. We feel like we're hearing again the glory of the gospel and the offer of salvation, but in a fresh way. This is as it should be, lest we forget. Bind these things to our minds and hearts.

So Father, we ask that you will continue to take this truth and let it work in every heart, and help us who know it already to be faithful to proclaim it. Give us an opportunity to do that. Use us to that end and may we worship you, not only here, but by the way we live and the way we uphold the gospel. These things we ask in Christ's blessed name.

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