

The Elusive Jesus

In last week's study we saw that our Authoritative Teacher teaches us that we are lawbreakers and hypocrites in desperate need of salvation. Without believing these things, we cannot be saved from our sins. In today's text, we see what we must believe concerning Jesus Christ in order to be saved.

John 7:25-36

25 Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill?" **26** And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? **27** But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from." **28** So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. **29** I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me." **30** So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. **31** Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?"

Officers Sent to Arrest Jesus

32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. **33** Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. **34** You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come." **35** The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? **36** What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come'?"

The key verses in this text are verses 33 and 34: "you will seek me and you will not find me..." Jesus places much urgency upon this moment when they, in His presence, were hearing about the kingdom of God. It is indeed possible to hear Jesus and yet miss the Kingdom. Jesus, in this text, gives us three things we must know and believe about Him to be saved.

I. **To know Jesus savingly, we must believe His divine origin (vv. 25-29)**

The local people are obviously confused. On the one hand it sounds like the authorities may suspect Jesus is the Messiah, and on the other hand, the rabbinic tradition that Jesus would come from some unknown place is controverted by the fact that they know He is from Nazareth. Jesus answers their questions with a very important statement, namely, that they do not know the God who has sent Him. This, to Jewish ears, was outrageous, but Jesus is making it clear that if we really know God is our Father, we will also recognize Jesus as His son. If we try to explain the existence of Jesus through merely human terms, we will never have saving faith.

II. **To know Jesus savingly, we must believe His divine mission (vv. 30-31)**

The authorities are now agitated and want to arrest Him, but we read that no one could lay a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. This hour is the moment of His great Sacrifice on Calvary's cross six months later during the Passover feasts. Nothing will thwart God's redemptive purposes in bringing Jesus to that salvific moment. Likewise, nothing will thwart God's redemptive purposes in your life and mine. In order to understand and receive Jesus as Savior, we must understand the meaning of this "hour," in which He lays down His life for us.

III. **To know Jesus savingly, we must believe in His divine destiny (vv. 32-36)**

The Pharisees and chief priests unite for the purpose of arresting Jesus. They rarely united about anything! Jesus takes the opportunity to explain to them that there will come a time when

they may seek Him and not be able to find Him. He speaks of His Ascension but they do not understand the meaning of His words (see verses 35 and 36). Jesus will ascend beyond their sight and beyond their ability to place their wicked hands upon His vulnerable body. From His ascended throne, He will rule and govern all things, intercede for His brothers and sisters, and prepare a place for us. From this exalted throne, He will one day come back to glorify His own. The urgency between His ascension and His second coming is the same urgency which he communicates to those who hear Him in His own day. Doctor Dale Bruner puts it this way, "Jesus did not come to give the world another interesting option for consideration. He came claiming ultimacy. His purpose is to move all who hear Him to decide to place their trust in Him, to be baptized, and to join His Church of Word, Fellowship, Eucharist, and Prayer..."

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it essential to our salvation that we believe in the divine origin of Jesus Christ? What are some of the alternative theories about Jesus' origin that we hear today?
2. What does Jesus mean in verse 30 when He says, "his hour had not yet come"? What comforts do you derive from this verse?
3. In verse 32, two historic enemies unite to arrest Jesus. What lessons can we learn from this?
4. Explain what Jesus meant in His words to them in verses 33-34. What warning should we take from His teaching?

Going Deeper

1. Do you have doubts or reservations about Jesus' divine origin, divine mission, or His divine destiny? What steps can you take now to strengthen your faith in these essential realities?
2. Is there some spiritual decision you've been postponing? Are you willing to make that decision today?