



Sunday, June 6, 2021

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Sermon #43 from the Gospel of John

“The Simple Choice God Offers”

John 12:37-50 (King James Version)

Good morning, what a spirit of God among us today! We continue in our study of the Gospel of John. As I’ve read this book and worked on this sermon series and applied theology to the verses, I realize how much I’ve never picked up. I pray that’s your witness and your learning.

As we close Chapter 12, I want to begin this sermon with a warning: This is a regrettable and hard passage of Scripture. It deals with unbelief and a refusal to come to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It deals with shame to proclaim Him as Lord if you believe Him. John’s Gospel frames out so much of Jesus’ life that we get a well-rounded view of the Son of God as He walked on earth. We learn from this Gospel as well as others that Jesus had so many high points in His life and ministry—people who loved and followed Him; people who worshipped Him and came to Him as Lord and Savior; those healed through His ministry. On the other side of the spectrum, we learn He lived a life of pain. There were people who would not believe Him; people who would follow Him but learned what a sacrifice that would be and walked away from Him. Greek language indicates they never came back once they walked away. People rejected Him and said “Crucify Him!” So, Jesus life had many joys but many sorrows. Jesus was the most polarizing personality in all the world of any human being who ever or ever will live. People hated Him; people loved Him.

John 12 portrays Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem—Palm Sunday, a mere five days before the event of the cross. The crowds gathered to welcome Him waved palm branches and shouted “Hosanna, save us now!” It was a day of joy, but Jesus knew these were His last few days on earth before the cross. As the people shouted “Hosanna,” He bore the weight of the cross on His shoulders and realized the agony of it was a few days away. His message in Jerusalem was filled with passion, invitation, pulling people unto Himself as Lord and Savior. “Come to me as the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Lord of Life, Son of God.” Jesus is in Jerusalem during Passover, one of the high holy days of the Jewish faith. Thus, the town was swarming with people from all over. God orchestrated this so that would be the week of the cross. Jesus was highly known; He had just raised Lazarus from the dead. The crowds wanted to see Him, touch Him, talk to Him. The scribes and Pharisees stood on the sidelines criticizing and rejecting Him and devising the plan to murder Him. Jesus makes a very public statement about who He is.

“<sup>35</sup>Then Jesus said unto them, **Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.** <sup>36</sup>**While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.**” He issued the invitation to anyone regardless of color, nationality, religious background, slave or free, rich or poor. He said “I stand with you now as the light, as the Son of God, in this dark sin-filled world. Come to Me, because I am the light of the world. Believe Me and follow Me as the light, then, you will be My children of light.” This is one of the most public invitations Jesus ever gave to the multitudes gathered in Jerusalem that day. The response:

“<sup>37</sup>But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: <sup>38</sup>That the saying of Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? <sup>39</sup>Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, <sup>40</sup>He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. <sup>41</sup>These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. <sup>42</sup>Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: <sup>43</sup>For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

One word is very evident in these verses—believe. This is the Greek word “pisteuo” that both John and Jesus use. It means you are totally persuaded and convinced in what you believe. You put the full weight of your mind, heart, soul, and spirit in what you believe—it’s the centerpiece of life. It’s a verb, an action. When you believe in the Lord Jesus, it will change your life, the way you think, the way you act. It will change how you deal with people in your home and outside in public. It’s the dividing point of life. This is the Bible’s word: Every person in the world has one dividing point—you live and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior or you refuse Him. There’s no gray area, no “maybe I believe; maybe I’ll serve; maybe I’m saved.” Believe in Christ or refuse Him; there’s no middle ground. You live in life or you live facing death. Your eternity depends on that which you believe. A child can understand this. We have to make that stance in our life when we truly believe Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Jesus is speaking words of invitation and performing miracles of power and authority such as raising Lazarus from the dead. He has power over the grave and power over death. All those people can see and know He is God Almighty on earth, yet many will not believe on Him. Jesus shows Himself as Savior and many turn Him away.

Read verse 37 again. This verse in Greek is saying that there’s this large-scale, catastrophic unbelief even in the nation of Israel that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. But so many unbelieved and rejected His invitation. John says in verse 38 seven hundred years before Jesus was born in the manger and walked the earth that Isaiah prophesied this was going to happen (Isaiah 53:1, 3). Read verse 40 again (from Isaiah 6:10). It’s a statement of free will. In Hebrew, Isaiah is saying that God Almighty will allow people to have blind eyes and have a heart that is hard toward the Savior. God, in His magnificence and glory, will allow people to reject His Son. It is not His heart, but He will allow it. In 2 Peter 3:9 we read: “The Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” It is never God’s will to condemn a person to hell. But, He will allow you and I to make a choice about His Son, Jesus, accepting or rejecting Him. It’s totally your decision.

While many religious leaders, the scribes and Pharisees, in Israel rejected Him John tells us there were some of them coming around and believing Jesus, indeed, was the Son of God. However, they continued in opposition and would not confess Him. Why? Read verses 42-43. They were ashamed of Him. They were intimidated by the Pharisees who said “If you confess Jesus, we’re going to fire you from your job. Not only that, we’ll never allow you back in a synagogue, temple, or any worship service for God Almighty

ever again. You will be totally banned.” Rather go public with their faith and be humiliated, they put Jesus in a closet and closed Him away. They would rather have the praise of men than to offer praise to God. Does this still happen today? Oh, yes. If I say I love Jesus and follow His word, some may call me weird or a nut job—that I have to have a Savior and don’t have enough wisdom to live on my own. I need someone to direct my path and show me the steps of life. So, I might hide Jesus because the world will label me crazy. If I say I need Jesus, people will say you just need a crutch because you’re weak. Some people may say “I won’t come to Jesus because my friends will reject me; I wouldn’t get to party with them anymore. They’ll see a difference in me and how I live.” “I’ll be ostracized from this modern-thinking world; I’ll be rejected.” Listen, no matter what anyone in the world might say **never** be ashamed of your Savior! **Never** hide Him in a closet—don’t hide your love for Him. There’s no such thing as a believer living in a closet of shame, humiliation, or fear. We stand up and stand out for the Savior. What happens if we’re ashamed of Jesus? Read Luke 9:26.

We finish this Chapter with verses 44-50. **“<sup>44</sup>Jesus cried and said, **He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.** <sup>45</sup>**And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.** <sup>46</sup>**I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.** <sup>47</sup>**And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.** <sup>48</sup>**He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.** <sup>49</sup>**For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.** <sup>50</sup>**And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.**”** A very public statement to the multitudes.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus cried out to them and He still does to us today: “To believe Me, trust Me, come to Me as Lord and Savior is to come to God Almighty in life.” He said “I am the light overcoming the darkness and sin of the world.” Read again verses 46-47. Jesus didn’t come here to judge the world; He came to save it. He came to offer the invitation of life to every single person. That’s still true today—He’s not the judge today; He’s the Savior today. He has an invitation for every person. His arms are wide open. He wants to give us the choice of coming to Him as Lord and Savior. “Accept Me and be forgiven and saved or reject me and lose your life for eternity. By the word and will of God, it’s your call. I want you to choose Me, come to Me, profess Me and believe Me as your Lord and Savior.”

Jesus is there in Jerusalem with all the nations represented, and He’s showing Himself as Savior not judge. “No matter your sin, I came to save you. I came to make you children of light.” One day to come, the doorway to the Savior’s invitation will be closed. His invitation is not eternal; there’s a time frame. There are over seven thousand promises in the Bible but the fact that any person on earth will side-step death is not a promise. When the moment of death comes for you and me, our decision for Jesus Christ stands forever. There are no U-turns, second chances, or alternative routes. The Bible tells us in finality that one day Jesus will rapture His church, the world will go through seven years of a horrible tribulation, and God will close all of human history. So every person’s choice will be set in stone; heaven will be open and hell will be open—both will have residents. God Almighty will confirm your choice. Remember, it is not His

will that any should perish. God judges, and He will be the judge based on your choice for Jesus His Son—the dividing line of life. Did you come to Him, accept Him, believe Him, know Him or did you refuse and reject Him? Hebrews 9:27 says “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Jesus said I’m not the judge now; I’ve come as Savior. But the day of judgment will come. It’s not now—Jesus’ arms are still wide open. The invitation is still effective for any person who will come to Him as Lord and Savior. Have you chosen to believe on Jesus, and has it changed your life? If your life has not changed, your mind not directed by Him, be careful of how you’ve made your choice. Knowing Jesus in a true relationship of belief will change your life and change the way you live. It’s not like believing in Santa Claus or a fairy tale. It’s saying “Lord Jesus, my life is totally Yours. My trust totally leans on You. I’m not going to sit down in shame or lazy; I’m going to be active in the field of work in the Kingdom of God.”

Believer, can we recommit to a non-compromising life of belief? When you leave here today, don’t say I’m done for the week and hope to be back next Sunday. That’s not the case at all! Now that we have worshipped together, we’re going to go into the world and show the love of Jesus Christ. We have a commission, a mission, a responsibility to take the Gospel into the world because He changed us to be witnesses for Him. Let’s recommit our lives today. Today, if you don’t know Him as your Savior, that makes you a rejector. You’ve refused Him if you haven’t come to Him and surrendered your heart to Him. One day the dividing line will be set for you for all eternity. Now is the day to hear the invitation I get to speak—it’s from Jesus Christ. “My arms are wide open for you. I went to the cross and bled and died for you—to take away your sin and forgive you. I rose from the grave so you would have eternal life. Won’t you come and believe? Won’t you come to Me? I’m waiting. It’s not My Father’s desire that anyone be separated from Him in hell. It is my joy to offer you salvation, forgiveness, grace, and eternity.”

**Let Us Pray:** Father God, thank You for these precious moments in Your house. Lord, this is a challenging sermon yet it’s a message the world needs to hear. I pray every pulpit in America and the world will preach the dividing line of life. It’s so true as revealed in Your Word. I pray for we who have received You as Savior and expressed our belief in You that it takes over our lives and changes us that we’ll be Your witnesses in the world. For that one who needs You today, I pray he or she will know You’re not the judge but the Savior. Help us in our decisions. In Jesus’ name. Amen.