

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 7 - John 7:1-53
Finding Identity and Purpose
“Who is Jesus”

The Jewish leaders have seen Christ's signs and heard His sermons; now they begin to oppose Him. The Feast of Tabernacles was held on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and lasted for eight days. It was a memorial of the time when Israel lived in booths during their wilderness wanderings. It was also a harvest festival, one of the three feasts that all male Jews were required to attend annually. Jesus' "brethren" here are His half-brothers and half-sisters, the children of Mary by Joseph. Jesus was Mary's "firstborn," indicating that she had other children. Christ's brethren did not believe in Him at this time, although Acts 1:14 would indicate that after His resurrection they did receive Him.

Jesus lived according to God's schedule for His life. Unsaved people can come and go as they wish, but the child of God must let the Lord lead. How sad that Christ's brethren left the Savior behind so that they might attend a religious feast! The feeding of the 5,000 and the healing of the paralyzed man had aroused the interest of the crowd. Because Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath, the Jews said He was not from God. They called Him demon-possessed and even talked of killing Him; but God's time was not ready.

The seventh day of the feast was a great day of celebration. Each morning of the feast, at the time of the sacrifice, the priests would draw water in a golden vessel from the Pool of Siloam and carry it to the temple to be poured out. This represented the supply of water God gave the Jews in the wilderness. It doesn't take much imagination to understand what must have happened when Jesus cried out, "*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink!*" as the priests poured out the water. Christ was the Rock out of which the waters flowed. In the Bible, water for cleansing symbolizes the Word of God; water for drinking represents the Spirit of God. Instead of accepting His gracious invitation to come, the people argued, and there was division among them. Some believed in Him, some rejected. The soldiers could not arrest Him because His word gripped their hearts. Because the Jewish leaders rejected Christ, they shut the door of salvation to others who followed their bad example.

Nicodemus enters the picture again, and this time we see him defending Christ's legal privileges. In John 3, he was experiencing confusion; but here he is experiencing conviction, willing to give Christ a fair chance. Because of this, Nicodemus learned the truth that a willingness to obey the Word is the secret of learning God's truth. Anyone who will read and obey the Word of God will move out of darkness into God's marvelous light.

Read John 7:1-53 and answer the following questions

1. Why did Jesus' brothers want Him to go to Jerusalem?
2. Why did Jesus say the world hates Him? Why do you think the world did not hate his brothers? See 7:7-9
3. What amazed the people about Jesus' teaching? What was Jesus' response to their question? (See 7:14-16)
4. From verses 17-18 how did Jesus state we can distinguish between one who teaches falsely and one who speaks the truth?
5. What work had Jesus done that caused them to marvel? How had this led them to seek to kill Him?

6. Why did some think Jesus could not be the Christ? How did Jesus respond?

7. What did some want to do to Jesus? Why did they fail? (See 7:30)

8. What had convinced many people to believe in Jesus?

9. Where was Jesus going, and why could they not come? (See 7:33-34)

10. What did Jesus say on the last day of the feast?

11. What condition existed among the crowd because of Jesus? What can we learn?

12. Who tried to get Jesus a fair hearing, and what argument did he make?
(See 7:50-51)

Does Anyone Believe You?

Have you ever felt discouraged because family, friends, or coworkers refuse to accept the gospel? Take some comfort from the fact that even Jesus' own brothers did not believe that He was the Christ. Even though they had seen His miracles and listened to His teaching, they still balked at the idea of placing faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

This is important to notice, because it shows that the person who hears the gospel bears responsibility for responding in faith, while the person who shares the gospel bears responsibility for communicating with faithfulness. If we as believers ever start holding ourselves responsible for whether unbelievers accept or reject the message of Christ, we are headed for trouble. That's not to suggest that we can be careless in our witness or ignore our credibility. Notice that Jesus' brothers rejected Him in spite of His works and words. Is that true of us? Or do people dismiss our faith because our lives show little evidence that what we say we believe is true or that it makes any difference to us?

Eventually, at least some of Jesus' brothers did believe in Him. James, probably the oldest, became a leader in the church. He wrote the New Testament letter that bears his name. Likewise, the author of Jude may have been the half-brother of Jesus. Ultimately, both urged Christians to practice and defend their faith.