

“Only Jesus Can Save My Soul”

John 7:25-44

We’re going to do a little detective work this morning, to chase down the meaning of Jesus’ claim in today’s Bible passage: “You can’t go where I’m going.”

John 7:34-35, You will search for me but not find me. And you cannot go where I am going.”³⁵ The Jewish leaders were puzzled by this statement. “Where is he planning to go?” they asked. “Is he thinking of leaving the country and going to the Jews in other lands? Maybe he will even teach the Greeks!”³⁶ What does he mean when he says, ‘You will search for me but not find me,’ and ‘You cannot go where I am going’?”

A. Where would the Messiah come from?

John 7:25-30, Some of the people who lived in Jerusalem started to ask each other, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill?”²⁶ But here he is, speaking in public, and they say nothing to him. Could our leaders possibly believe that he is the Messiah?²⁷ But how could he be? For we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah comes, he will simply appear; no one will know where he comes from.”²⁸ While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he called out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I come from. But I’m not here on my own. The one who sent me is true, and you don’t know him.”²⁹ But I know him because I come from him, and he sent me to you.”³⁰ Then the leaders tried to arrest him; but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come.

- There is always a tension between what we *expect* in life and how life really is.
- Jesus was telling the people that Messiah was more about WHO you came from than WHERE you came from.
- I belong to Jesus ... so what if I was born in Tallahassee, Florida ?

B. What would the Messiah do?

John 7:31-32, Many among the crowds at the Temple believed in him. “After all,” they said, “would you expect the Messiah to do more miraculous signs than this man has done?”³² When the Pharisees heard that the crowds were whispering such things, they and the leading priests sent Temple guards to arrest Jesus.

- Could we expect anything *more* from the Messiah than what we've seen in Jesus? GREAT QUESTION!
- What more must Jesus do to deserve your full allegiance?

C. Where would the Messiah go?

John 7:33-34, But Jesus told them, "I will be with you only a little longer. Then I will return to the one who sent me. ³⁴ You will search for me but not find me. And you cannot go where I am going."

- The crowd would answer, "to the political throne, and occupy it!"
- Jesus answered, "... to finish my work."
- The Cross was always Jesus' destination, and only He was the qualified sacrifice.
 - John 1:29, The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
 - John 2: 19 ... Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."
 - John 3:17, Jesus said, "God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him."
 - John 4:34, Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work."
 - John 5:30, Jesus said, "... I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will."
 - John 6:62, "Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again?"

Why was Jesus being opaque here? Why not just say it: "I'm going to die as a on a Cross to pay the penalty for your sins, and not yours only, but for the sins of the whole world"? (see 1 John 2:2)

That answer is found in 1 Corinthians 1:18-24:

¹⁸ The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God.

¹⁹ As the Scriptures say, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and discard the intelligence of the intelligent."

²⁰ So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish.

²¹ Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who

believe.

²² It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom.

²³ So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense.

²⁴ But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

D. Why would I care?

Honestly Alan, you might say, that's all very interesting and all, all this teaching about a Messiah, and Heaven, and the Cross ... but, here and now, why would I care? How does that help me pay the mortgage or raise my kids?

Jesus loves you SO much He's just not about your "forever" (which is %99.99999... of your existence) but He also is eager to help your "now."

John 7:37-39, On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! ³⁸ Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" ³⁹ (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

The festival here is called the "festival of booths." It's a huge camp-out. Everyone within 20 miles of Jerusalem was there living in flimsy little tents (booths) that reminded them of Israel's time of wandering in the desert. They carried an orange in their left hand to remind them of the promised blessings of God, and three different kinds of tree branches in their right hand to remind them of the stages of Israel's progress in history. There was a giant parade through town, everyone with their oranges and branches in hand, celebrating the harvest time. During the parade they would then follow the priest to the Pool of Siloam, chanting some of the great Psalms and waving their tree branches in rhythm. The priest would dip his pitcher into the water and the people would recite some beautiful words from Isaiah 12:3: "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." And the crowd would cheer.

And then Jesus says, "A pitcher? One lousy little pitcher, once a year ... hey guys, if you believe in me RIVERS of *living water* will flow out of your hearts!"

Why should I care? Because faith in Jesus unleashes the work of God's Holy Spirit in our lives ... and the fruit of that spirit (WAY better than an orange in your left hand!) is: (Galatians 5:22-23) love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

MAIN POINT: Knowing Jesus means His Spirit enables us to live the kind of life we really want.

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, we know, looking back on history, where Jesus went and why He went there: 'For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever might believe in Him would not perish, but have eternal life.' Thank you for loving me and us that much. Now help us experience the fruit of a growing faith in Christ. In Jesus' name, amen."