

**John 7: 1-18; “The Secrecy and Revealing of Jesus”, Sermon # 45 in the series –  
“That All May Honor the Son”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall,  
on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017, in the Morning Worship Service.**

As we slowly proceed through this book, we are forced to consider, once again, just how few people had really believed in Jesus at this stage in his ministry. It was the year 29 A.D. and Jesus was almost 3 years into His ministry. The Feast of Tabernacles was at hand, John tells us in verse 2. Jesus had had a great number of His disciples recently desert Him, and He was now receiving real opposition from the spiritual leaders in Judea. He knew that the Jews there wanted to kill Him, and so he determined to walk in Galilee; to do ministry there, and to be safe from harm. It was not as though He was afraid to die. He had come into the world to lay down His life for God’s sheep. But He did not want to lay His life down until just the right time, and that would be at the time of the Passover in the following spring.

In these verses, it almost seems as though Jesus is going into hiding. He acts in a very secretive way. He evidently was spending time with His earthly family; His brothers in particular are mentioned here, as interested in promoting Him and His ministry. But what we want to see during our time of studying these verses is that Jesus was not interested in promoting Himself. He was interested only in doing the Father’s will and fulfilling the ministry which He had come down from heaven to do; that of going about doing good, performing miracles of healing, and preaching the truth of the word of God and living in a way that would only would draw attention to Himself if it was the Father’s will that He would draw attention to Himself. I am speaking now about Christ’s greatest desire, which was His doing all things to the glory of God, and not in any way to promote His own glory as a Man in acting independently of His Father’s will. It is in connection with these truths that I would like to speak to you about the secrecy and revealing of Jesus. 1<sup>st</sup> – The secrecy and revealing of Jesus in relation to his brothers. 2<sup>nd</sup> – The secrecy and revealing of Jesus in relation to His going up to the feast. And 3<sup>rd</sup> – The secrecy and revealing of Jesus in relation to His doctrine and His teaching. In explaining these things to you, it is my prayer that each of us will understand, as the Lord Jesus did, the importance of seeking God’s glory in all that we say and do.

**1<sup>st</sup> – The secrecy and revealing of Jesus in relation to his brothers.** (verses 1-5)

“Now the Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.” “His brothers therefore said to Him, ‘Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing.’” “For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly.” “If you do these things, show Yourself to the world.” “For even His brothers did not believe in Him.” It is very interesting how perfect the Lord Jesus was in all of His ways. His was a life lived unto God, first and foremostly. He loved God with all of His heart, and He demonstrated that love by an complete unwillingness to be selfishly ambitious. He was truly humble. He was lowly and humble of heart. He, the Lord of glory, did not have any desire to impress others with who He was, or what He was able to do; in some common and everyday sense, to show off His own glorious ability to do miracles and amaze people with His profound teaching. And his brothers mistook this secrecy for weakness of character in Him, and they attempted to instruct Him about it. They did not think His secrecy was wise. They did not think that this policy tended toward His greatest interests.

His brothers say – Go into Judea; go up to Jerusalem, so that You can prove yourself to the people that You need to win over to Your cause the most. Show yourself to the most prominent Jews there. Win them to Yourself and to Your cause. Show them Your miracles so that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. Go and impress those, who, if you win them to Your cause, will also then support Your cause. They will then help You to build it into a

great movement, and You will be seen as the important person which many people here have recognized You to be. You might even become an earthly leader or king. That is what they were saying. They gave Him a principle of what they believed was a powerful truth, a principle which they believed would convince Him that their counsel was sage advice: “No one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly.” “If you do these things, show Yourself to the world.”

Now, we have to ask ourselves whether this principle is true according to the way that God thinks about us and what we are doing, or whether it is simply a principle of earthly men’s wisdom. They are trying to tell Jesus – You are able to do these great and mighty miracles. Why do them in a corner; in small towns and cities around Galilee, when you could be the center of much greater attention if you went to Judea, and if you were seen in Jerusalem once again. Go there and promote what You are able to do for the good of others. It is not good to do these profound things You are doing, in secret. Don’t hide Yourself away. Go to Judea and show forth Your greatness and Your abilities, so that the whole world can see You. You need a platform for Your abilities; it is not here, it is in Jerusalem. Go up to the Feast, and we will go with You, for we want to be with You when You become great in eyes of men. I think that they spoke this way perhaps, because they thought that they themselves would become great; great because of their relation to Him, because He was so great. But this principle of so-called truth, is really no truth at all for our Savior, and it has no truth at all for ourselves either, if we would follow Christ and be walking in a way which is pleasing to Him.

We need to understand what true greatness is, in the eyes of God, and not to focus our attention solely on what greatness is in the eyes of men. True greatness in the eyes of God is not when God has given you great talents or abilities and you go around to show them off before other men so that they are impressed. True greatness is when you humble yourself in the sight of God, to go about to do things which you know would please God, not in a way which shows you off to people around you, but the words that you speak and the actions that you do will show forth your desire to honor God, in relation to your helping others. This is what God recognizes as greatness. And this is the way that you will glorify Him in the way that you will do your good works. You will do your good works, not to impress other people, or to be praised by them, but because you know that you are living your life in the sight of the great God who made you for a purpose; to glorify Him. Therefore, you will not use your talents to promote yourself. Rather, you understand that even though God has given you all these gifts, He would have you to glorify Him in the way that You do them. You know that He is the only One who can establish those works of yours as being truly good, and this is because you seek to do them for Him first, and in His strength, wisdom and power. All of this glorifies Him, and if they are done in this way, it does not bring any man’s focused attention to rest upon you, but rather it is directed to Him.

In Matthew chapter 6, verse 1, Jesus says – “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them.” “Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.” “Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men.” “Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” “But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.” Jesus who taught these principles, lived these principles. He did not seek glory from men. He was not even seeking to be known openly. He was seeking at every point to do the Father’s will. He was well content to be hidden for that time.

For you to seek to do the Father’s will, will mean that you also will cultivate the secret life of godliness. The Christian life in the final analysis is you and God, and will you cultivate that life of Christ within you? This leads me to ask whether you are free from selfish ambition and the

inclination to promote your own abilities or greatness? If you are, blessed are you, for you will be in the perfect position to be useful to God. Selfish ambition, pride, and a boastful promotion of ourselves are sinful stains upon our soul. They are hindrances to our usefulness to God. “To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.” “They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.” The reason that Jesus’ brothers tried to get Him to promote Himself is found in verse 5 – “For even His brothers did not believe in Him.” This is the explanation given to us by John, and he is saying that if they had known Jesus as the Lord of glory, they would have been interested in the secret life of devotion and interaction with God. They would have sat at Jesus’ feet instead of trying to instruct Him.

It is an interesting thing to think about; these brothers of our Lord Jesus; had they not heard of His virgin birth from their mother? Did they not know that He was the Son of God? Had they not been raised in the same household? Yes, they had. But even though they knew this intellectually, they did not see its implications practically, in terms of their own thoughts. Even though they saw Him up close, yet they still only thought of Him as a man like themselves; someone who supposedly needed to be given lessons in worldly wisdom. O how I hope that each one of us will see the importance of really knowing God in order to our being truly wise and good and useful to God. It is absolutely necessary to have the mind of Christ in you in order to serve and glorify God.

When we think too much of ourselves, we will promote our own glory; our own wisdom and strength and righteousness. We may even do this as Christians, thinking that we have to blow our own horn, or promote our own strength or wisdom or glory, so that people can see us, and then we think that they will think favorably about us and about the gospel that we preach. But Jesus says in Luke 6: 26 – “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” Sometimes, I am saying, this is what we as Christians might fall into. And then we find our goal becomes getting everyone on our personal bandwagon, and we find we want to promote our own personal agenda. But in the process of all this selfish ambition and self-promotion, God’s glory is not seen; in fact, it is completely lost sight of. James 3: 13 – “Who is wise and understanding among you?” “Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.” “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking (selfish ambition) in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.” “This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.”

The apostle Peter didn’t understand that this secrecy of Christ’s was very necessary, and so he went the other way and told Jesus, “Far be it from You to have to go to the cross”, and Jesus had to tell him – “Get behind Me Satan!” “You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” Jesus also knew that there were men who wanted to take His life, before His time, and this is why he sometimes had to act secretly. He knew that it would glorify God if He could hide Himself for a time, pray and think about what it would mean to confront the evil and speak the truth when He did go up to the Feast, and in this good way, and in His Father’s good time, all of His ministry would be fulfilled and established to the glory of God; everything leading up to the cross, and during that awful time, and every glorious, good, and righteous thing, He knew would be established in His resurrection.

I pray that you will see that it will be the same for you, if you will learn to wait the Lord’s time; to go and do the things which will glorify Him the most. It is good to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. If you will hide yourself and have a ministry of secrecy at times; the secrecy of doing good for other people when no one but God sees it, you will set the stage for your being able to do greater things yet, for God. You are not secretive because you are wanting to be independent of, or pull yourself out from under any authority. Just the opposite. You will

be denying yourself and picking up your cross to become obedient to all of God's commandments because you are living to Him first of all. You are consciously seeking to be under His authority and guidance. And thus, in this holy way, will not need to have the approval of men to do the right thing in the right way. If you understand this principle, then God will exalt you at the proper time, and most certainly in the proper way. Let us be believing in this regard and not unbelieving.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – Let's think about the secrecy and revealing of Jesus in relation to His going up to the feast.**

(verses 6-13)

Verse 6 says – “Then Jesus said to them, ‘My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.’ “The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.” “You go up to this feast.” “I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come.” “When He said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.” “But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.” One of the reasons for Jesus’ not going up to the Feast right away was because His time had not yet come. He means by this that His time had not yet come to go up to the Feast because He knew that the world hated Him. He could not just go up openly to the Feast and present Himself without endangering His life. The world that He is speaking of, although we can apply it to all unbelieving men generally, is more specifically in this context, the world of the unbelieving Jews who were up there at the Feast, hoping that Jesus would show up, so that they could find something wrong with what He was saying or doing. They wanted Him to show us so that they could to speak about Him, and speak against Him. They were those who hated Him, or were unsure of Him, and so they were looking for reasons to hate Him, and ways that they might put Him to death.

Jesus, here in these verses, is as much as telling his brothers that because they didn't realize this, they were still natural men; they were men who were not yet converted. They were men who were still very carnal in their thinking. They were still very much a part of the unbelieving congregation of the Jews who thought that they were truly religious and accepted by God because they observed the ceremonies, the feasts, the rituals, and the ordinances which were commanded in the Scriptures. They had the form of religion, but they did not have the power of it through the Holy Spirit, unto salvation. Because Jesus' brethren agreed with this false theology of works-righteousness, and lived only an outward religion, the world of these unbelieving Jews who were up at the Feast would not hate them. They could go up to the Feast at any time because nothing bad would be said against them; they would find no opposition to themselves in the way that they thought, or spoke, or acted. They would be perfectly accepted by everyone there. There would be no problem. But since the Lord Jesus had been the One who had testified of their false system of Biblical interpretation, not just that its theology was wrong, but that its works were evil as it says in verse 7 of our text, He would be hated.

He then says to His brothers – “You go up to this feast.” “I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come.” Let us understand that a false and heretical theology will lead to evil works. And the worst of these evil works is hating, persecuting, and killing Christ and Christians. These very religious Jews who were up at the Feast, did not love Jesus or the mission that He was on, to save sinners from their sins. They did not see themselves as sinners. Jesus had said to the unbelieving Jews in John 5: 38 – “But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom God sent, Him You do not believe.” “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal lie; and these are they which testify of Me.” “But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” “I do not receive honor from men.” “But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.”

It is no doubt true that they would have denied this; that they did not love God. But how is it that we know that they did not love Him? They did not love God because they did not receive Jesus as the Son of God, nor did they believe that they were wicked enough that they needed Him to save them from their sins. Jesus said to them in John 5: 44 – “How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?” This was their great problem; they did not seek God’s honor and His glory in the things that they did and said. And therefore, their deeds were evil because they were not wrought in Christ and God. Listen to John 3: 17 – “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because He has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” You can see here the connection between the rejection of Jesus Christ, their loving the darkness of the error of their sinful unbelief more than they did, the light; the truth that comes from Jesus. This Light which is so pure and perfect, this Light, which when it penetrates your heart, brings with it every good and true and spiritual thing. They loved this darkness of willful ignorance and blindness because their deeds were evil. “The world hates Me,” Jesus says, “because I testify of it, that its works are evil.”

But notice that in verse 9 that “when He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.” “But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were, in secret.” Why? Because He knew that He could not fulfill His mission of saving sinners, if He did not go up. His secret will was to go up to the Feast. Such was His great love for God and man. Sometimes the love of God is hidden for a time for holy reasons. But it will always eventually manifest itself, in accordance with the will of the Father. It was so in this case. He would declare the truth to his brothers, and appear to be hiding His love for them, but later He would go, in secret. Even though He would be opposed and spoken against, and even though it would set the stage for His eventually being put to death, He would still go. There were things which He would say there, and things which He would do there, at this Feast, which would affect the lives of every person present there who would hear Him, and even all the people who would read these words, down through the generations of time. Why was it so essential that He go to this Feast? To begin with, Jesus came to fulfill the law; all of the moral and ceremonial law of God. And in Deuteronomy 16: 16 it says this: “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles.” So Jesus, according to the ceremonial law of God was required to be there, and so He went. Even though He was there secretly at first, this would change over the days that He was there, for this Feast would last for a whole week.

It says in verse 11 of our text – “Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, ‘Where is He?’” “And there was much murmuring among the people concerning Him.” “Some said, ‘He is good; others said, ‘No, on the contrary, He deceives the people.’” “However no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.” Jesus no doubt heard all of these words of murmuring; of the affirmation of His being good, and also the denial that He was good. Some would say that He was deceiving the people. Now I want you to consider that even though the Lord Jesus was perfect in word and deed, yet some people spoke against Him, some spoke for Him, but none spoke openly, for fear of the Jews. This is how great was the opposition to the Lord Jesus, and how secret was the approval of Him. But it is often the purpose of heretical false religion to rule over people in such a tyrannical authoritarian way, that no one can freely speak their mind for fear of being put out. When the wicked arise, men hide themselves.” it says in Proverbs 28: 28. This was certainly the case at this time in Israel. And Jesus went up secretly in order to search

out the state of the people and the leaders of Israel at this time, and to reveal Himself in the way that would bring glory to God.

**And then 3<sup>rd</sup> and finally – I want you to think with me about the secrecy and revealing of Jesus in relation to His doctrine and His teaching.** (verses 14-18)

“Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.” “And the Jews marveled, saying, ‘How does this Man know letters, having never studied?’” “Jesus answered them and said, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.’” “If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.” “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.” The secrecy of Jesus here was how He could teach them at all, not having been taught by any of their Rabbis. They could not understand this because they did not want to believe that truth that He had had been sent from God; that He had come down from heaven to them. They believed that He was just a man like themselves. And so Jesus reveals the secret. He says to them: “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.” In other words, His ability to teach intelligently and powerfully, and the specific truths that He was relating to them, He had from God Himself; from His Father. It did not originate from Him as a Man; it originated from God Himself.

And so we see here that the truth about God, about the Lord Jesus Christ, about salvation in Him, and living godly in Him, is something which is hidden from the natural man, and it is not understood unless and until God and Christ reveal it to a sinner’s mind and heart. O how much we need to believe this truth. Teaching sinners the truth is only made effectual to their hearts and minds by the working of the Holy Spirit. Unless He illumines, there will still be darkness and objections, and misconceptions about Christ and His ministry, and wrong conclusions drawn about every aspect of His teaching.

But, on the other hand, Jesus says in verse 17 – “If anyone wants to do His will (that is – God’s will), he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.” He simply meant that if those listening to Him sincerely wanted to know God’s will in regards to having faith in Christ, if they were willing to be convinced that He was the true Messiah by the evidence that He presented, if they wanted to know whether or not that He was preaching and teaching the truth, let them see that He was not seeking His own glory, but He was seeking the glory of the Father who sent Him. Let them see that He was not speaking from Himself. He was not speaking on His own authority. He did not have His own agenda to push, and He was not trying to simply defeat their objections by human logic and authority. He was revealing to them the truth about God by the way that He lived, and the way that He conveyed to them the truth. Yes, there was mystery and secrecy at points, but there was also a revealing for those who were willing to do God’s will and believe in Him based upon the righteous evidence of His truthfulness. They should cease their opposition and resistance, and believe in what God was doing and saying through Him. Let us see that this is the best way, humanly speaking, to convince other people around us of the truth of the gospel. We are not preaching ourselves but Christ, and we are not seeking our own glory but His. And if anyone wants to know whether our doctrine is true, let them see that we seek the glory of God in what we are saying and doing to promote Christ’s righteousness and to show forth His truth and love.