

Woodland Baptist Church
 February 9, 2014 - Morning Worship
 John 7:37-52 - The Feast of Booths, Part 4
 Rivers of Living Water

1) READ JOHN 7:37-52

- a) Remember Jesus went up to the feast after his brothers and began to teach during the middle of the feast of Tabernacles and immediately encountered resistance from the Jewish leaders. Christ taught them the indicators of a true teacher sent from God:
 - i) My teaching is not mine but God the Father's
 - ii) Those that are seeking God's will, will know that I speaking truth.
 - iii) A true teacher seeks to glorify God, not himself.
- b) Jesus then exposes their desire to kill him for healing a man on the Sabbath as compared to their willingness to circumcise on the Sabbath - both breaching Sabbath work traditions, Christ points out his act healed the whole man, while their act simply making a mark in the flesh.
- c) The crowd is shocked that the leaders allow him to continue to speak...the Jewish leaders have heard enough and they issue an arrest warrant for Jesus to the temple police.
- d) Jesus then speaks of going somewhere they cannot come, which aggravates the Jewish leaders even more and then,...the text goes silent...until the **last day of the Feast**.

2) **Verses 37-39** Jesus offers HIMSELF as LIVING water

- i) He has done this before to the Samaritan woman - **John 4:10** - Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you **living water**."
- b) **37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**

- i) **The Feast of Tabernacles consisted of eight days** - 7 were instructed in Scripture and the 8th was added by the Jewish leaders as a day of solemn prayer. It is still debated as to which day the Apostle John write about, but either day would be impactful and have its advantages.
- ii) **Some detail about the rites practiced:**
 - (1) Everyday during Tabernacles, priests marched in solemn procession from the pool of Siloam to the temple and poured out water at the base of the altar. The **seventh** day of the festival, the last day proper (Lev. 23:34, 41-42), was marked by a special water-pouring rite and lights ceremony. This was to be followed by a sacred assembly on the **eighth day**, which was set apart for sacrifices, the joyful dismantling of the booths, and repeated singing of the Hallel (Ps. 113-118). So, just when the events of the feast, and their attendant symbolism, were beginning to sink into people's memories, Jesus' words promised a continuous supply of water and light, perhaps also alluding to the supply of water from the rock in the wilderness.¹
- c) **"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"**
 - i) Christ's teaching here is very similar to what he said at to the Samaritan woman, **John 4:13-14** - 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."
 - ii) There is no question that there is rich OT imagery here; that Christ is showing that he is the fulfillment of the OT prophecy and he was the one that provided during the wilderness wanderings.
 - (1) **Zechariah 14:16-17** - 16 Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the **Feast of Booths**. 17 And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, **there will be no rain on them**.
 - (2) **Isaiah 12:3** - "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation." 3 **With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation**.

¹ Bock, Baker Exegetical, 240.

- (3) **Numbers 20:8 [Exodus 17:6]** - "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. **So you shall bring water out of the rock** for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle."
 - (4) **Nehemiah 9:15** - 15 You gave them **bread from heaven** for their hunger and **brought water for them out of the rock for their thirst**, and you told them to go in to possess the land that you had sworn to give them.
- iii) If anyone thirsts/hungers come to me...whoever believes in me shall first experience eternal life - a fulfilling life spiritually in completeness in being reconciled to the Father - made whole, made complete...then...out of your completeness will flow the love of God in Christ Jesus as it flows out of Him. You will be an eternal light glowing and eternal river flowing for all to see to show the goodness and the riches of knowing God.
- d) **Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**
- i) Notice the future aspect of John's teaching here...Jesus is saying that the Holy Spirit will achieve this in their lives...in the lives of those that believe in Him...after he is crucified, buried and resurrected - through this he is glorified.
 - e) Jesus Offers **HIMSELF** as **LIVING** Water
- 3) **Verses 40-43 Biblical NEGLIGENCE results in CONFUSION and DIVISION**
- a) **40 When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." 41 Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? 42 Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" 43 So there was a division among the people over him. 44 Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.**
 - i) The prophet - **Deuteronomy 18:15-16** - 15 "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— 16 just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.'

- ii) The Christ - name for anointed one - this was the expected Messiah the Scriptures promised - the ruler from Micah 5, the king that would fulfill the Davidic covenant for everlasting.

b) But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? 42 Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"

- i) **"Is the Christ to come from Galilee?"** The expected answer was "no." Galilee was considered an inferior place, like we would speak of those "hicks" that live out in the country - they are ignorant, uneducated and unimportant. Nazareth...in Galilee?? The messiah??
- ii) But then we hear the correct assumption - **Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?**

(1) **YES!!! Micah 5:2** - But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

- iii) Their thoughts are all over the place - they are confused because they have been negligent which has caused them to ignorant...

c) 43 So there was a division among the people over him. 44 Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

- i) The division is over who Jesus is and everyone seems to be confused as to who he is. How can this be? Negligence with the Scriptures which will ultimately lead to ignorance of the Scriptures. This is God's book and it must be taken seriously, but at the same time we need to remember that it is a book, it is not God. Remember what Christ said to the Jewish leaders before:
 - (1) **John 5:39-40** - 39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.
 - (2) So...if the way you study Scripture causes you to believe or live in a way that contradicts Christ...there is a serious problem.

d) That is a scary reality....that we can search the Scriptures and think that we are right and be wrong. That is exactly what is going on here - there is a negligence happening with the Word through the oral traditions and through inter-testamental interpretative confusion that is causing them to disdain their Messiah.

i) **Question for today** - What could we have wrong that we so viciously hold on to out of pride, arrogance, comfort or just sheer hardheadedness? In what ways are we like the Jewish leaders in today's church? Let us not be so arrogant to say, "we are not," as we most certainly are in some ways.

e) Biblical **negligence** results in **division** and **confusion**

4) Verses 45-52 Christ's AUTHORITY threatens human TRADITION

a) 45 The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" 46 The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" 47 The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? 48 Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? 49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." 50 Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, 51 "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" 52 They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."

i) The officers - who are these guys? We have to go back to 7:32, "32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him."

ii) These men were temple guards, selected from with the Levites, so they were intellectually smart, and knew the Scriptures and knew how the Jewish leaders operated...and were supposed to be subservient to them.

b) But when they came back to the Pharisees and chief Priests, they came back empty handed..."**Why did you not bring him?**" Notice what they did not say:

i) They did not say - the crowd was intimidating and we were afraid to take Jesus in fear of a riot.

ii) They did not say - Jesus' disciples would not allow us to arrest him.

iii) What they said was shocking and no doubt deeply bothered them:

(1) "**No one ever spoke like this man!**" - there is something about how this man speaks that is different, powerful, captivating...we were so

overwhelmed by his the way he spoke...we forgot what we were supposed to do.

iv) Their problem lay partly in the fact that they were not brutal thugs, mercenaries trained to perform any barbarous act provided the pay was right. They were themselves drawn from the Levites; they were religiously trained, and could feel themselves torn apart at the deepest level of their being by the same deeds and words of Jesus that were tearing apart the population at large. Evidence for the incomparable wisdom and authority Jesus displayed in his speech is not hard to find.²

c) **47 The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? 48 Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? 49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." 50 Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, 51 "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" 52 They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."**

i) This really deeply offends the Pharisees and they show their elitist arrogance in the statements that follow:

(1) **Have you also been deceived?** Now you have been seduced by this Jesus.

(2) **Have any of the authorities or Pharisees believed in him?** We are the ones that determine who is and who is not of God! None of us have fallen for him...none of us sees any truth in his words...as we have said before..."he has a demon."

(3) **But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed** - the Pharisees and chief priests are being condescending to the temple police - stating that they are like this crowd of cursed people - these dumb uneducated people that don't know the law.

ii) The sneering question of the Pharisees does not mock the guards on the ground that, as police officers, they should have followed orders, but on the ground that, as Levites who should follow the religious authorities, they have compromised their theological integrity and been seduced by a transparent imposter who could never manage to deceive the real thinkers.³

² Carson, Logos

³ Carson, Logos

d) 50 Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, 51 **“Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?”** 52 They replied, **“Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”**

i) Apparently one of the authorities, one of the Pharisees, at least sees the problem in how his own brethren are treating Jesus - he questions them in their fever pitch to detract from Jesus - **“Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?”**

(1) Everyone knew the answer to that question - NO! Certainly not, everyone deserves a fair hearing before they are condemned.

(2) **Deuteronomy 1:16-17** - 16 And I charged your judges at that time, ‘Hear the cases between your brothers, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the alien who is with him. 17 You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.

e) 52 They replied, **“Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”**

i) Typical response in desperation - they had been outmaneuvered by Nicodemus as he reminded them of the fairness doctrine in hearing a case before judging...that is not what they wanted to hear...so they lump Nicodemus in with the so-called deceived, uneducated, cursed camp along with all the other Galileans.

ii) And they through in a dare to Nicodemus - **“search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”** If anything shows their neglect of the Scriptures or their blinded rage, this statement does, as we know that Jonah and Nahum came from Galilee.

5) CLOSE

a) We Christ offer himself as the Living Water

b) We see how negligence in the Scripture causes confusion and division

c) We see how Christ's authority threatens human tradition

i) Do you have river's of living water flowing through you??