
JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

TRUE LOVE IN A HATEFUL WORLD

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on July 23, 2017

INTRODUCTION

When the average non-Christian person hears the Gospel of Jesus Christ, hatred is probably not going to be the word that best describes their reaction. Apathy, confusion, curiosity, excitement, or a host of other words might more readily be applicable to what is likely to be perceived. However, Jesus dropped a bombshell (as He commonly does) when He said, “the world hates me” (Jn. 7:7). In this message, we shall consider the meaning of this statement and Jesus’ truly loving commitment to sinners among a hateful world. Furthermore, we shall attempt to embrace the love Jesus offers and the example He has put forth.

JOHN 7:1-13 (ESV)

1 After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. 2 Now the Jews’ Feast of Booths was at hand.

3 So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. 4 For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.”

5 For not even his brothers believed in him.

6 Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. 8 You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.”

9 After saying this, he remained in Galilee. 10 But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private.

11 The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, “Where is he?” 12 And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, “He is a good man,” others said, “No, he is leading the people astray.” 13 Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.

THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY:

The world hates the real Jesus, and genuine love overwhelms sinful hatred.

MESSAGE OUTLINE:

- (1) THE PIVOT OF JOHN 7**
- (2) THE HATEFUL WORLD**
- (3) THE TRUE LOVE OF CHRIST**
- (4) APPLICATION: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS?**

MESSAGE

(1) THE PIVOT OF JOHN 7

*“After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because **the Jews were seeking to kill him**. Now the Jews’ **Feast of Booths** was at hand” (v1-2).*

- **Feast of Booths**¹
 - Also known as:
 - Feast of **Tabernacles** (2 Chron. 8:13; Ezra 3:4; Zech. 14:16)
 - Feast of **Ingathering** (Exod. 23:16; 34:22)
 - Feast to the **Lord** (Lev. 23:39; Judg. 21:19)
 - Sometimes it was simply called “**the feast**” (1 Kings 8:2; 2 Chron. 5:3; 7:8; Neh. 8:14; Isa. 30:29; Ezek. 45:23, 25) because it was so well-known.
 - The feast began in the **7th month** (our October), and lasted **7 days**

¹ For more info, see: Brand, C., Draper, C., England, A., Bond, S., Clendenen, E. R., & Butler, T. C. (Eds.). (2003). Festivals. In Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary (p. 569). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

- A celebration of the harvest (much like Thanksgiving) and a remembrance of God’s provision in the wilderness (see “water” and “light” below).
 - “*After this...*” This feast came about 6 months after Jesus fed the crowds in John 6, which was during the time of the Passover.
 - On the ***first day of the feast***, everyone would arrive in Jerusalem and construct ***temporary dwellings***, made out of ***branches and sticks***.
 - These would be a reminder of the way their fathers had lived for a time after their escape from Egypt.
 - Ceremonies during the feast included the ***pouring of water*** and the ***lighting of huge menorahs***.
 - Water – remembering God’s provision of water in the wilderness (Ex. 15:24-25, 17:1-7)
 - Light – remembering how God led and preserved His people by a pillar of fire/light (Ex. 13:21-22)
 - These are no doubt the occasions for Jesus’ statements:
 - “*If anyone **thirsts**, let him come to me and **drink**. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will **flow rivers of living water**’* (John 7:37-38).
 - “***I am the light of the world**. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the **light of life**”* (John 8:12).
- **Jesus moving toward Judea (*His hour*)**
 - ***John 7-8*** provide a ***lengthy narrative*** and ***set of exchanges*** between Jesus and the Jewish leadership of the day.
 - Jesus did end up going to the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles and teaching openly there (Jn. 7:14, 37-38, 8:12-59)
 - From here on, Jesus ***openly*** and ***publically clashes*** with ***Jerusalem***.
 - Jesus taught openly in the temple in Jerusalem, in the colonnade of Solomon (Jn. 10:22-23).

- Jesus made plans and came into Judea “*six days before the Passover*” (Jn. 12:1), making His final approach towards the cross.
 - The triumphal entry presents Jesus as the “*King of Israel*” (Jn. 12:13), but Jesus knows that His hour has come, and He says, “*My soul is troubled... but for this purpose I have come to this hour... [to be] lifted up from the earth*” (Jn. 12:27, 32).
 - Except for a brief escape across the Jordan (Jn. 10:39-40) and a short time of laying low in Ephraim – near the wilderness (Jn. 11:54), Jesus transitions from “*not going about in Judea*” to setting up shop there.
- **Jewish Leaders openly seeking to kill Jesus**
 - John says plainly, “*the Jews were seeking to kill [Jesus]*” (Jn. 7:1).
 - Even the rabble knows that the Jewish leaders are after Jesus.
 - They said, “*Is not this the man whom they seek to kill?*” (Jn. 7:25).
 - The chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest Jesus (Jn. 7:32), but the officers were so amazed at His teaching that they could not bring themselves to do it (Jn. 7:43-46).
 - At the climax of a couple of their exchanges, the Jewish leaders picked up stones to throw at Jesus, intending to kill Him as a blasphemer, but Jesus miraculously escaped (Jn. 8:58-59, 10:29-39).
 - After these narrow escapes, the chief priests and Pharisees gave orders that anyone knowing Jesus’ whereabouts should report it, so that they might arrest Him (Jn. 11:57).
 - The hatred for Jesus was so great that the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus (the man Jesus raised from the dead), since many people were believing Jesus on account of this miracle (Jn. 12:10-11).

Summary: Jesus was a miracle worker and a teacher, and many expected worldly acclaim... “*show yourself to the world*” (v4)

(Segue) But, the world hates Jesus because of His light.

(2) THE HATEFUL WORLD

“The world... hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil” (v7).

- **The World is Not Neutral – It Hates Jesus**

- *“The world... hates me”*

- Such a statement should hang for a bit...

- **The world** (*kosmos*)

- “the universe” (all of creation): *“God made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth”* (Acts 17:24).
- “the human realm” (all humanity generally): *“light has come into the world, but people loved the darkness”* (Jn. 3:19).
- “the corrupt world order” (immoral people and structures and systems): *“The world... hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil”* (Jn. 7:7).

- This use of “world” includes every fallen or sinful or unregenerate or non-Christian person.

- The world **Hates Me [Jesus]** (*misei eme*)

- John uses this word more than all other NT writers.
- **Hatred vs. Love** is a common theme in John’s Gospel
 - God **loves** sinners of the world (Jn. 3:16).
 - People **love** the darkness (Jn. 3:19).
 - God the Father **loves** God the Son (Jn. 3:35, 5:20, 10:17)
 - Unbelievers do not have the **love** of God (Jn. 5:42).
 - Those people who are not children of God (*i.e. not spiritually alive [3:3], not worshiping God [4:24], not hearing and believing Jesus [5:24]*) do not **love** Jesus (Jn. 8:42).

- Everyone who does wicked things **hates** the light (Jn. 3:20).
 - Worldly people **hate** Jesus (Jn. 7:7).
 - Worldly people **hate** Jesus and those who follow Him (Jn. 15:18).
 - Worldly people **love** other worldly people, but **hate** Christ-like people (Jn. 15:19, 17:14).
 - People who **hate** Jesus are demonstrating **hatred** for God the Father as well (Jn. 15:23-24).
- Simply put:
 - Every person who does not now love Christ hates Him.
 - All children of Adam... Every human who has ever lived in this fallen world... All your friends who do not now cherish Christ... All your family members who are not living with deep gratitude for God's grace...
 - There is no neutral default position
- **Hate comes from Love**

“because I testify about it that its works are evil”

 - People love darkness because light exposes them
 - ***“this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed”*** (John 3:19–20).
 - Hatred for the true Jesus is stimulated by moral exposure
 - As long as Jesus (or His followers) only talk about the accepting and comforting side of love, then they are no danger.
 - The one who seeks to live a truly moral life or calls others to do the same is a massive danger to every comfortable sinner.

- True Goodness (virtue, holiness, righteousness) is not merely interested in social norms/taboo, public perception, or outward behavior.
 - The one who seeks to eradicate personal sin at its root will be a scary person among a superficial crowd.
- Loving Engagement (authentic relationship, open honesty) is not merely interested in emotional confessions, self-esteem, or company in misery.
 - The one who seeks to bear another's burdens and honestly engage his/her fellow Christians will be a painful friend to the uncommitted Christian.
- **Hatred Expressed in 3 Ways in this passage**
 - **Insincere (or hypocritical) Praise**
 - *"No one works in secret if he **seeks to be known openly**. If you do these things, **show yourself to the world**" (v4).*
 - These brothers are unbelievers (v5), so their support is false (at best) or malicious (worst).
 - **Lazy Confusion**
 - *"there was **much muttering about him [Jesus] among the people**. While some said, '**He is a good man**,' others said, '**No, he is leading the people astray**'" (v12).*
 - Good Man – Only those who had not heard or did not care about what Jesus actually said could claim that He was merely a "good man."
 - Leading People Astray – Jesus was on a mission to upend the entire system of the day. His teaching was not merely an alternative approach to God; therefore, this too is ridiculous when compared with His actual statements/claims.
 - **Murderous Opposition**
 - *"the Jews were **seeking to kill Him**" (v1).*
 - Those in power will stop at nothing to crush the threat

Summary: The World hates Jesus and His light because the world is evil, expressing hatred in various ways...

(Segue) *But, Jesus shows true love for the hateful world.*

(3) THE TRUE LOVE OF CHRIST

“after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he [Jesus] also went up, not publicly but in private” (v10).

- **Pattern of Selfless Humility**

- Jesus’ private approach here is reminiscent of His humble incarnation.
 - Jesus – *“though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6–8).*

- **Commitment to Selfless Service**

- Jesus knows what is in store for Him... but He goes anyway.
 - *“He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him” (v1).*
 - *“When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he” (Jn. 8:28).*

- **True Love is Honest about Evil**

- Jesus’ testimony to the world – “Your works are evil”
 - “Therefore, I [Jesus] have come to rescue you from yourself and from God’s rightful wrath upon you.”
- This is the testimony of the cross – “Your works are so evil, they must be punished like this!”

(4) APPLICATION: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS?

- **Will you admit that hatred is your default setting?**
 - Non-Christian, will you confess that love for sin and hatred for light has imprisoned you?
 - Christian, will you humbly praise God for giving you love for Him where once there was hatred?

- **Will you marvel at and rest in Jesus' love?**
 - He humbled Himself beyond imagination.
 - He selflessly served those who hate Him.
 - He lovingly tells the truth about our sinful predicament.

- **Will you seek true love?**
 - Will you pursue loving holiness in your own personal life?
 - Will you bear one another's burdens as we all pursue this together?
 - Will you lovingly open yourself up to honest relationships among your church family?

Major Point: The world hates the real Jesus, and genuine love overwhelms sinful hatred.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

The Common Root of Unbelief by John Piper

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-common-root-of-unbelief-in-the-brothers-of-jesus-and-the-jewish-crowds>

The World Hates Me by J.C. Ryle

<https://www.monergism.com/world-hates-me-because-i-am-testifying-about-it-its-deeds-are-evil-john-71-13>

The Church Versus the World by John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A267/the-church-versus-the-world>

Keeping the Divine Timetable by John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-40/keeping-the-divine-timetable>