

People are so messed up. Did you know that even Jesus’ family, His brothers, didn’t like Him?
Why?

The natural man does not understand Jesus the Messiah.

At the beginning of John’s gospel, we read **John 1:9-11**, and then **John 2:18-25**.

Jesus knows what people are like, but people do not know who Jesus is.

The Jewish leaders are growing increasingly angry at Jesus because of what He is saying. **John 5:15-18**

At the end of chapter 6, many of Jesus’ disciples are leaving Him because they don’t like what He’s saying.

I. “Not even His brothers were trusting in Him.”

John 7:1-9

In the first verse we learn that the opposition to Jesus had now become so vigorous that they sought to kill Him.

Think about it. That is rather drastic. (vss. 1-2)

You may have had disagreements with others, maybe even disagreements about religion.

Have you ever thought, “I think I’d like to kill that person; let me figure out how?”

We will see in the gospels that this is truly how this world responds to Jesus, and why? Keep reading.

Now Jesus’ brothers were now encouraging Him to go to Judea. (vss. 3-5)

It is difficult to know what to think of their encouragement. It could hardly be encouraging.

The plans in Judea among those who wanted to kill Him could hardly have been a secret.

Jesus’ brothers had to know about these things if Jesus and His disciples did.

Are they thinking that Jesus needs to make a political appearance to gain popularity?

In this they are clearly misunderstanding what Jesus is up to and what His purpose is.

Or, more likely, they are thinking to send Him to His death.

This is certainly darker, but we learn in verse 5 that “Not even His brothers were believing in Him.”

This means that if they have been paying attention, they think He’s a nut or a liar.

So they are trying to get Jesus killed, maybe with a bit of a “put up or shut up” attitude.

“Jesus, if you think that You are God and this great Messiah, go take on Your enemies. See what happens.”

This is why Jesus clearly speaks to them as if they represent the evil, God-hating world. (vss. 6-7)

There are many like this today. Sure, they are not Jesus’ brothers, but they think of Jesus in a similar way.

They are not going to kill Jesus, or you. But they wouldn’t mind if someone else did.

Why? Because they do not like Jesus. They do not like what Jesus says. They do not want to hear about Him.

Why? Because Jesus is always telling people in this world that their “deeds are evil.” (vs. 7)

What Jesus is speaking of is the problem of sin and evil that corrupts every person.

The apostle Paul drives this point home in **Romans 3:5-9**.

Then, to prove the point, Paul quotes from the Old Testament, Psalms and Isaiah. **Romans 3:10-18**

One might push back on this by saying that people can do some good things.

I mean, after all we are not that bad, are we?

But I might respond by saying, “Just look at the world. Everything everywhere is corrupted by people.”

One might argue, “Yes, but there are some people who do lots of good things.”

Indeed, but then our point is only this: We are not as bad as we could be.

After all the argument for good in people comes down to this:

Some of us are not as bad as others.

All of us could be worse than we are.

Many of us do lots of good things that bless others. We can be nice.

All of this is undoubtably true. But does this please God? Does this make us righteous before God?

After all, we learn in the Bible that God is perfectly just and demands perfect righteousness.

And, moreover, we know in our hearts that perfect justice is the only right outcome.

So, think about it. Let’s say the King of Kings comes to earth and you get an interview with Him.

He asks you, “Did you obey Me?”

And you answer, “Yes, I did, 95% of the time.” Which honestly might be an exaggeration.

Is that obedience?

If you say to Him, “Yes, I treated others well, except for the 5% who didn’t deserve it.”

Is that loving?

*I have a confession to make this morning,
and it is all the more significant knowing that my parents always watch these sermons online.
Mom, Dad, I have never told anyone this, to my shame. I've not forgotten, nor has God.
When I was 14 or so, my dad had left \$40 on his dresser in his bedroom. I saw it there and took it.
Later that day I heard him wondering about where he had misplaced \$40, which was a lot in those days.
I said nothing. What about that sin? Stealing from my dad who has given me so much.
I should repay him, with interest. He would refuse to take it.
I will call him this afternoon and apologize. He will forgive me.
We will have a great conversation about sin.
However, that sin, as minor as it is, is still a violation of my dad and an offense against God.
If caught, I would be a fool to say, "It's not that bad. It wasn't that much. My dad had more."
If caught, I could not respond, "Yes, but think of all the people I have not stolen from."*

So, though I am not as bad as I could be, all I do is corrupted by self-centeredness and rebellion against God.
All Jesus is doing is telling the truth about us, that we are sinners, rebels against God's law,
and we deserve His wrath, which means death and hell forever.
And we live in a world that really hates this message.
People want to think of themselves as good and going to heaven. Jesus always spoils that party.

So, Jesus tells them to go without Him. He's not going to the feast in Jerusalem. (vss. 8-9)
The "time" that Jesus is speaking of, we will learn later in John's Gospel, is the time of His crucifixion.
And then He goes to Jerusalem.

II. The Jewish people could not figure Him out.

John 7:10-13

It is instructive to note that the conversation revealed in these four verses continues to this day.
Some people say that Jesus is a good man. (vs. 12)
Others are saying that He is a false teacher. (vs. 12)
And they are having these conversations privately...
because no one wanted to get in trouble with the Jewish leaders, The Scribes and the Pharisees.

Some people today will say that Jesus is a good man who was misunderstood.
They would like Jesus' message to be this: Try to be a little nicer.
They do not like all the talk of Jesus being God, the Messiah, and rising from the dead.
But, to believe this, you have to ignore most of what you read in your Bible.
This amounts to a made-up Jesus to fit the imagination of secular people today.
Some people today will say that Jesus taught lies, that He led people astray.
But then you have to believe that Jesus died for a lie. In fact, He died for a lie on purpose.
And then all of His disciples died for that lie.
And now hundreds of thousands of people over 2,000 years have died for that lie.
Some people today will say that it is all a myth, Jesus, the resurrection, the stories in the Bible.
But then you have to explain the manuscript evidence and the historical reliability of the Bible.
There is no collection of writings like it in all the world. Nothing comes close.
What we read in the Bible is what actually happened and what was actually spoken 2,000 years ago +.
Some people will claim that Jesus was a nut, a crazy man, thinking that He was God on earth.
But then you have to explain the amazing miracles that He did.
You have to explain how He could teach such life-changing truth that caused people to be amazed.
You then must explain why people followed Him and died for Him.

Who do you think Jesus is?

Do you know that this is the most important question that you will ever have to answer in this life?
Everything depends on it, heaven or hell. How will you figure out the answer to this question?
I suggest the Bible as the legitimate source for the answer to that question. And it is truly life-changing.

In **Matthew 16:13-17**, Jesus confronts His disciples with this question. Peter gets the answer right.

III. People do not understand that Jesus' teaching is from God.

John 7:14-18

You see, Jesus' was raised as a carpenter in a society of shepherds and fishermen.

This is why they were all so puzzled. (vss. 14-15)

There is no way that Jesus could have gained such theological insight from where He grew up. And He didn't.

He got it from God the Father. (vss. 16-18)

Jesus' teaching is from His Father in heaven.

In all that He teaches He seeks to obey His Father in heaven.

In all that He teaches He seeks to glorify His Father in heaven.

And the people who are able to hear and understand Him are those who are interested in doing the Father's will.

The only people who can really understand the Bible are those who are seeking true righteousness in Jesus.

I did a little experiment with my grandson, Jack, about three months ago.

Nancy and I had a grandparent day and took Jack and Lucy to Midco in Sioux Falls.

Jack had a wonderful time. After about an hour I said to Jack, "It's time to get out of the pool."

There was no response. It was as if I had not said a thing.

I said it again, "Jack, let's take a break and get out of the pool." Nothing.

Then I said, "Jack, would you like a twizzler?"

He perked up instantly. "Yes!"

"So, let's get out of the pool and take a break." And we did.

How is it that a 5-year-old can hear nothing until I said "twizzler?"

We human beings have selective hearing. Did you know that? We are good at hearing what we want to hear.

Sometimes I understand that this happens with husbands too.

We are particularly tuned into hearing things that we want to hear.

Our news media knows this too, and so pitches stories to you that you want to hear and then you listen.

When someone says something that we like or that confirms what we want to believe, we listen.

This is why the prophets in the Old Testament so often rebuked people for hard hearts and deaf ears.

Ezekiel 3:4-11, 12:1-2 Why did they not listen? Why could they not hear God?

It is because they were rebellious. They didn't want to hear God.

If God had said to them, "Do you want a twizzler?" Then maybe they would have perked up.

John tells us this about hearing Jesus in **John 12:37-41**.

Do you want to hear God? Do you really want to understand the words of Jesus?

Well then you have to want to. You have to choose to pay attention.

You have to truly want to hear about the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

You have to truly want to hear the commands of God so that you can obey Him.

You have to truly want to hear what Jesus says to you even if it isn't what you think you want to hear.

Because it is God speaking, and what could be more important than that?

IV. "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." John 7:19-24

They want to kill Him, but they will not admit it.

They then accuse Jesus of having a demon.

They are completely obsessed with their own righteousness and importance.

So Jesus points out a glaring inconsistency in their thinking. He is simply proving that they do not understand.

They circumcise men, usually babies, on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses will not be broken.

Why would they be upset about a man being made well on the Sabbath, which is obviously the will of God?

Jesus then delivers a contrast that is a command in verse 24. It is an essential lesson, a command to us all.

"judge according to appearance" = according to what you see, how it looks to you.

"judge according to righteous judgment" = according to what God says is right, how it looks to God.

To do this, you have to know God, what He says, how He sees, how He thinks... not what you think and see.

And so you must listen to God, which means that you must listen to Jesus. This takes time.

So you have to give God time to speak to you, in the Bible, in prayer, through others who love Jesus.