

COMMUNION SERIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN ESCAPING THE PRISON OF PREJUDICE

John 7:45-52

As we return to our Communion series on the Gospel of John, we recall that Jesus earlier gave a public invitation for people to put their trust in Him: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (John 7:37-38). The outcome however, was anything but simple – the people were divided. A few believed, many were confused, but most either mocked or held back.

In this passage we see three different ways that people can respond when it comes to the invitation of Christ to believe in Him:

1. IF YOU ARE IMPRESSED BUT FEARFUL, YOU MAY ALMOST GET SAVED BUT YOU WON'T (45-46).

[Therefore] the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring Him in?" The guards declared, "No one ever spoke the way this Man does".

- Some people are like the temple guards. Jesus wows them with His life and teachings, but never come to personal faith in Him – they stay impressed and stay dead (Mark 6:17-28). Why? They put the fear of man above faith in Christ. They fear the opinions of men more than the judgment of God.

Conversely, some use as convenient alibis the failure of so-called Christians or the so-called church to reject Christ, because of His failing followers. They sound reasonable to men but their excuses won't hold water on the Day of Judgment.

2. WHILE YOU ARE PREJUDICED AND SPITEFUL, YOU WILL NEVER GET SAVED THOUGH YOU THINK YOU ARE (47-49, 52).

The Pharisees retorted, "You mean He has deceived you also? Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in Him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the Law – there's a curse on them."

- Prejudice is often deadlier to the one who has it, more than to the one who receives it (especially here). In one sense there is no more "unpardonable sin" today (it requires the physical presence of Christ). But in another sense many people keep repeating the unpardonable sin every day!

Do you keep shunning Christ because being His disciple is too far below you? Because it will cramp your style, hinder your running with the crowd you've always run with?

52 They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee."

- The ironic part is, that wherever prejudice is found, in whatever form, and against whomever, it often comes from ignorance and lack of knowledge rather than the abundance of it.

3. WHEN YOU ARE SEEKING BUT TRUTHFUL, YOU MIGHT GET SAVED IN GOD'S TIME AND GOD'S WAY (50-51)

Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, "Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?"

- Nicodemus may not yet be a believer at this point, but you can almost feel the yearning of a soul to bring a spiritual quest to closure. As Jesus said "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether My teaching comes from God or whether I speak on My own" (John 7:17).

Coming to faith begins with being teachable. Are you willing to listen to Christ? Will you take His claims about Himself and accept them as the truth?

Final Thoughts:

As you take Communion today, think of those who are not here with you. What keeps them from coming to a simple, childlike faith in Christ? The kind that abandons trust in good works and other mediators and receives His finished work by faith? Do you have a part to play?

Or do you still struggle with the idea of receiving Christ as Savior so He can change your life and turn it around for good? When you are seeking but truthful, perhaps now is the day of salvation, the time to receive Christ by faith. And if you do so today, we joyfully invite you to this Communion.