

Sermon Series: *Conspiracies, Adversaries, & Unbelief*

LOOKING BACK

Do you enjoy camping? Why or why not?

This question is aimed at getting your group members “into the sandals” of the people in our study this week as it takes place during the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast made it mandatory that all Jewish males were required to come to Jerusalem and camp in tents for one week while they remembered their ancestor’s journey to the Promised Land as well as celebrate the ingathering of the harvest of the land.

LEARN FROM GOD’S WORD

The events in our study this week takes place during the Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Ingathering. How does Leviticus 23:40-43 shed light on how this feast connects to Israel’s past? This feast was a yearly reminder that the children of Israel lived in tents or temporary shelters when He brought them out of Egypt and on their way to the Promised Land.

In Colossians 2:17 we read that all of the Old Testament feasts and festivals were “shadows” of a greater reality found in Jesus Himself. With that in mind, how does Jesus fulfill the Feast of Tabernacles in Himself (John 1:14)? According to Revelation 21:3, when will there be an ultimate fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles? Just as the children of Israel were to pitch their tents and dwell in them, so too, Jesus pitched His tent by coming in the flesh and dwelt among us. Thus, He fulfills this feast by dwelling among us in the flesh. Revelation 21:3 tells us one day that God will come and permanently dwell (tabernacle, tent) among His people and us with Him, thus bringing an ultimate fulfillment of this feast.

How does Mark 3:21 describe Jesus’ family and what they thought of Him prior to the resurrection? Did they remain unconvinced of who Jesus is? Jesus’ family thought He was crazy and out of His mind and sought to take Him away. Praise the Lord, they did not remain unconvinced of who Jesus is. We know at least two of His brothers became followers-James and Jude (Acts 15, The Book of James, and Jude).

The accusation that Jesus was demon-possessed and doing miracles by the power of Satan was pretty serious stuff. What does Jesus say about such an accusation in Mark 2:29-30? Jesus says any and all sins can be forgiven but the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit cannot be. There are differences of opinion what Jesus meant by blasphemy of the Holy Spirit and whether it can be committed today like it was in Jesus’ day, but one thing we know and can agree upon is that to deny the Holy Spirit’s power and witness of Jesus carries eternal consequences.

Like Jesus, Paul was no stranger to having people incorrectly and unfairly judge and question his motives. What instruction does he give to the church regarding this attitude and posture of unfairly judging and questioning others' motives (1 Corinthians 4:4-6)?

Throughout their ministry, both Jesus and Paul were unfairly judged and had their motives questioned. Paul addresses this destructive attitude in 1 Corinthians 4:4-6 by reminding the church to not judge people's motives before the coming of Christ and that Jesus will be the one who ultimately brings the hidden motives to light.

How is the statement by the religious leaders in John 7:15-16 similar to the statement of Jesus' followers' apostles in Acts 4:13? Both of these passages speak of how the Jewish leaders marveled at Jesus and the Apostles teaching, even though they weren't taught or trained formally by a rabbi or in a rabbinical school. They were "untaught" and "untrained."

What does James 1:22 say about our intake of the word of God and obedience?

James warns us to not just merely listen to the word of God but do what it says. We want to have a healthy balance of intake and outtake when it comes to the word of God.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

How is the confusion over Jesus in His day similar to or different than the confusion in ours? How, if at all, have you sought to bring clarity to those who are confused about who Jesus truly is? The people in Jesus' day were divided and confused on who He was and sadly, many are confused today as well. Take time to share what you've heard and experienced from those who are confused by Jesus and how you've sought to share the truth with those who are confused.

Do you struggle having conversations about Jesus more with family members, people in your relational world, or strangers? Often times when it comes to sharing the gospel with people, there are people we feel more comfortable talking too rather than others. Take a moment to share who you struggle talking about Jesus to.

What makes it particularly difficult to have conversations about Jesus with unconvinced family members? For those of you with unbelieving family members, how do you seek to have conversations about Jesus; what tips and lessons have you learned? When it comes to talking about Jesus to unbelieving family members, it can create all kinds of issues, tension, frustration, and even hurt. Many of us were either that family member who didn't believe for a time or have family that is/was still unconvinced. My hope in this question is that you will be able to learn from one another how to share more effectively towards unbelieving family members.

What fears have you had or do you currently have in speaking out about your faith in Jesus? If you don't struggle with this, what has helped you to have boldness and confidence to share Jesus with others? **The goal of this question isn't to embarrass or shame anyone who is fearful and timid in sharing Jesus with others, but to share what has helped those who are bold, to be so, and learn from one another how to go about sharing Jesus with the people in our relational world.**

Have you ever had someone question your motives or judge you by appearance only? How did it affect you? How can judging by mere appearance only hurt others, especially the church family? **We've all been there at some point in our lives, where our motives have been questioned or we were judged by appearances only. And let's be honest, when this happens, it hurts and it can create unhealthy hearts and damage relationships. It's not only hurtful when it happens to us as individuals but it's particularly detrimental and hurtful when it takes place in a church context. How have you personally been affected by being the one judged or questioned and how does this damage the church when occurring?**

Have you ever felt inadequate to be used by the Lord? What makes you feel that way and how does Acts 4:13 serve as a word of encouragement if you do feel inadequate? **Throughout Scripture we see the Lord call and use men and women who feel completely inadequate. Personally, I have been there on more than one occasion but the beautiful truth about the Lord is He loves to use people that realize they can't do it apart from Him and His resources. I hope Acts 4:13 is an encouragement especially to those in your group that feel this way about themselves and gives them encouragement moving forward.**

Do you lean more towards acquiring of Biblical knowledge or application of God's word? Why is it important to have a healthy balance? **In John 7:14-15 we see the Jewish leaders amazed by Jesus' teaching but they didn't receive this teaching on a heart level allow it to change their live and eternity. Throughout my Christian walk I have found myself guilty and leaning towards more towards knowledge than application and vice-versa. Our aim is to have a healthy balance between our intake of Scripture and outtake through application of Scripture.**

PRAY FOR:

- Our Conflict Resolution Gathering on 6.12 to be marked by humility, love, and peace. Pray this meeting serves as a catalyst for forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation.
- Trinity Kid's Camp
- The Colorado Missions team that will be serving and supporting Thrive Ministries female global workers conference