

## CLOSING CEREMONIES AT THE FEAST

If you're like me, you like holidays – give me an excuse to celebrate and I'm ready. Well, the Jews also liked holidays – and their favorite occurred in the fall of the year. It was called *"The Feast of Tabernacles"*. The Jews referred to it as *"THE feast"*. Josephus, the Jewish historian, labeled it *"the holiest and greatest"*.

The Feast of Tabernacles was a week of celebration.

It came at the end of the fall harvest – a cause for giving thanks to God. It commemorated the liberation of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery. And it looked forward to the New Year of Messiah's reign over the earth. It was the equivalent of our Thanksgiving, Independence Day, and New Year's Day... all rolled into one.

Tickets to the closing ceremonies of the Olympics are always in high demand – and the closing ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles were also a big deal. Donald Gee called the day mentioned in John 7 as *"the day Jesus shouted."*

Each day of the 8 day feast, the priest led

a processional from the temple to the pool of Siloam to draw water. When he returned, he poured the water out on the altar as a reminder of how God brought water from the rock in the wilderness.

On the last day, the priest marched around the altar 7 times. His actions had a twofold symbolism...*It looked backward* to memorialize Joshua's victory at Jericho. *It looked forward* to the day God will pour the water of His Spirit upon His people.

During these closing ceremonies, as the priest poured out the water... Jesus thundered an invitation – verse 37, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

Jesus promises those who trust in Him will experience a spiritual life as refreshing, powerful and energetic as a bubbling, raging river. Verse 39 tells us Jesus was describing the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

### Devotion Box - How To Know God's Word

I also love 717 "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority." In other words, it takes a willing heart, not just an inquisitive mind, to know God's Word.

God opens our eyes to His truth only when we submit our hands and feet.

### JESUS' "I AM" STATEMENTS

The seven "I AM" statements made by Jesus in John... 6:48, "I am the bread of life."

8:12, "I am the light of the world."

10:7, "I am the door of the sheep."

10:14, "I am the Good Shepherd."

11:25, "I am the resurrection and the life."

14:6, "I am the way, the truth, & the life."

15:1, "I am the true vine."

### Devotion Box - God's Timing

Matthew 13:55 tells us that Mary had children other than Jesus. At least four half-brothers and two half-sisters made up Jesus' family. Yet, it wasn't until after Jesus' resurrection that his brothers embraced Him as their Messiah.

Why they didn't believe we're not told... *familiarity and jealousy often hinder faith* – but the fact they didn't believe didn't stop them from giving Jesus advice... If you really are the Savior of the world play to the largest stage possible – go to the feast. The feast would be the perfect opportunity for Jesus to strut His stuff. Jesus declined. He answers in verse 6, "My time has not yet come..."

Did you hear about the insurance agent who got a call from a frantic woman, "Do you sell homeowner's insurance?" The agent answered, "Yes, we do." "Can I buy a policy over the phone?" He replied, "No, ma'am. I'll have to visit your home." She shouted back, "Well, you better hurry up, because my house is on fire."

It's been said, "Timing is everything." His brother's had no sense of the divine timing that governed Jesus' life. He knew that not every opportunity constituted a calling from God. It wasn't *opportunism*, but *obedience* that motivated Jesus.

## IN A ROCKY SITUATION

In John 8, Jesus rescues a woman from a rocky situation. The law said “stone her”, what would Jesus say? The woman had been caught in the act of adultery.

It makes you wonder how she was *caught in the act*. Hey, where was the man? Deuteronomy 22:22 said stone them both... It all smells like a set up to me...

The Pharisees thought they had Jesus trapped. If He lets her go He'll appear soft on sin. If He says stone her He'll betray the mercy and grace He's preached.

Verse 6 says Jesus bends down and doodles in the dirt. The Greek word used by John means “to write against”. Somehow Jesus exposed the accusers' sin...

Perhaps He wrote in the sand the names of the Pharisees' mistresses.

When Jesus speaks He doesn't deny the validity of the woman's sentence - rather He questions the qualifications of the people seeking enforce it. He says in verse 7, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”

Jesus was the only one in that circle who had never sinned and had the right to sling a stone - but Jesus chose to forgive and to give this woman a new start. He assures her in verse 11, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

We all are quick to recall this incident when we're the one who deserves to be stoned. Let's also remember the Lord's attitude when the stones are in our hands.

Remember this incident occurred on the morning after the last day of the feast. During the Feast of Tabernacles giant candelabras adorned the temple.

These huge menorahs lit up Jerusalem at night throughout the feast, but on the morning after, the priests were probably in the process of dismantling them.

That's when Jesus tells us in 8:12, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” The light had shined into at least one woman's darkness that day. *Are you walking in the light of life?*

## Devotion Box - Truth And Freedom

There's a famous line from literature, “Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage...” The real prison cells are faithless hearts and poisoned minds. Sin is the worst warden. Jesus says in verse 34, “whoever commits sin is a slave to sin.”

Guys, only the Son can make you truly free. Remember verse 31-32, “If you abide in His Word... you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

## JESUS IS GOD

In John 10:30 Jesus makes His claim as clear as possible. In essence He says, “read my lips”. Jesus tells them, “I and My Father are one.” The Jews knew He was claiming to be God. In verses 31-33 they try to stone Him for blasphemy.

I'm sure that today Jesus wearies of groups who continue to deny His deity. The cultist and heathen and heretic are guilty of selective reading. They pull passages out of context to support their heresies, and deny the obvious. Read my lips... the Bible can't make it any plainer, *Jesus Christ is God*.

## THE WITNESS OF ABRAHAM

Throughout chapter 8 Jesus talks about His relationship with His Father. Verse 19, “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.” Verse 29, “He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.” Verse 38, “I speak what I have seen with My Father...”

The Jews claimed Abraham as their father, but Abraham wouldn't have denied the truth and plotted to kill Jesus. They had Abraham's DNA, but not his faith.

Notice what the Jews tell Jesus in verse 41, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father-God.” Evidently, they'd done a background check on Jesus, and heard Mary's account of the virgin birth - yet they refused to believe.

Jesus tells them if God were their father they would believe in Him. He stings the Jewish leaders with the truth in verse 44, “You are of your father the devil...”

Jesus really sets them off in verse 52 when He says, “if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.” What about Abraham and the prophets they're dead?

Jesus tells them that in verse 56, “Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it...” Yet how could Abraham living two millenniums earlier have seen Jesus?

And here is where Jesus unloads the bombshell, “Before Abraham was, I AM.” Jesus used the name for God given to Moses at the burning bush, and applied it to Himself. Our Lord claimed nothing less than deity... and the Jews realized it. Look at verse 59, “they too up stones to throw at Him...” But Jesus escaped.

## LOOK WHO'S BLIND NOW?

Every 20 minutes in the United States someone goes blind. It must be a horrible experience, but imagine the person who's never seen at all... not a sunset... not a dogwood blossom... not a baby's smile or a child's giggle.

Such was the case with the man in John 9... His world is darkness... until Jesus turns on the lights. Chapter 9 records *a miracle with a message*.

It's revealing that when Jesus first laid eyes on this blind man He thought of alleviating His suffering, but His disciples' first thought was on affixing blame. Jesus thought, "How can I help?" The disciples... "Who's at fault?"

Just for fun, check your attitude, the next time you run across a need.

Verse 3 makes an important point, "Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him."

Not all sickness is the result of sin. Birth defects, terminal diseases, calamities of nature – are not tragedies you can *pin* on a specific *sin*. We live in a fallen world where its residents are subject to its fall-out. Seemingly innocent people do suffer

Frank Anderson makes this statement, "The Bible explains suffering, not so much in origins as in goals. The purpose of pain is seen, not in its cause, but in its results. The man was born blind so the works of God could be displayed in him."

Like so much of the suffering in our lives – we may never learn the cause, but the purpose is clear – in our healing or in our faith we can glorify God.

Jesus takes dirt and spit and makes miracle mud-packs. He places them on the beggar's eyes and

sends him to the pool of Siloam to wash his face. This is one mudslinging campaign that has a happy ending. *As mud flowed down his face, light flowed through his eyes.* A man born blind suddenly has 20/20 vision!

Needless to say, the temple erupted in excitement and astonishment. But leave it to the Pharisees to look past the wonder of the miracle and zero in on technicalities. It happened on the Sabbath, and according to their traditions, healing was taboo on the Sabbath. They conclude Jesus can't be of God if He pays no attention to their version of the Law. They rush to squelch the joy, and determine to excommunicate anyone daring to call Jesus the Messiah.

It's ironic, but the man born blind now sees this situation clearer than the Jews. They pressure him to deny Jesus' role in the miracle, "We know that this man is a sinner." But he answers in verse 25, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know; that though I was blind, now I see."

It's been said, "a man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument." No one could deny the work Jesus did in this man's life.

The blind man is amazed over the blindness of these Jews. How could they deny such an unprecedented miracle – it had never happened before? Would God bestow such power on a sinner? Jesus had to be from God.

The Jews kick him out of their religious society, but Jesus takes him in. While living under legalism the man was blind - but when Jesus entered his life he could see. Pride and self-righteousness blinds us to our sin. Grace opens our eyes.

### Devotion Box - Is Jesus Your Good Shepherd?

In John 10, Jesus uses the illustration of a shepherd grazing his sheep to describe His relationship with His people. And He does so for two reasons...

First, tending sheep is grueling work. It's a 24 hour a day job. Sheep are totally dependent on their shepherd. Jesus compares Himself to a shepherd in order to communicate how much He loves us and will put into a relationship with us.

The second reason this is a fitting illustration is due to the similarity between sheep and saints. Sheep are stupid... and selfish... and stubborn – just like you and me. They're prone to wander from the fold... and need a shepherd.

As sheep we need to cultivate an intimacy and familiarity with our shepherd. Read His Word, spend time in prayer... learn to recognize the shepherd's voice.

Once a girl stood on the windowsill of a burning building - she was blind and refused to jump... Until her dad came on the

scene and called her name. She knew it was her daddy and jumped to safety. The shepherd calls His sheep by name. *When you hear Him it gives you confidence to take leaps of faith.*

Another reason the sheep need a shepherd is to protect them from thieves. At night Jesus lies down over the door to the sheepfold to protect the helpless sheep.

He says of Satan in verse 10, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." Satan's desire for you is depletion and death. Jesus' goal is abundance and life. He wants your life to be rich and full of what matters.

In verse 11, Jesus calls Himself "the Good Shepherd". He provides His sheep pasture and protection. They're filled with God's fullness and have the fulfillment of being used by Him. They go in to feed and out to serve. *In and out. In and out.*

# Bible Scan - John 7-12

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - [sandyadams@calvarychapel.org](mailto:sandyadams@calvarychapel.org)  
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: [www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm](http://www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm)

Calvary Chapel Announcements - Valentines Banquet, February 15,

- Next Bible Scan - February 10, 2002 - John 13-17

"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." - John 8:31-32

Bible Scan Memory Verse

## THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

The love of Jesus is not a pampering, but a perfecting love. The Lord isn't obligated to give us what we want... when we want it. Divine delays are orchestrated to stretch our faith... Such is the case in John 11...

Lazarus, a friend of Jesus, had gotten sick. Mary and Martha, his sisters, sent to Jesus for help, but the Lord delayed His leaving two days. When He finally arrived Lazarus has been dead for four days. Jesus had even missed the funeral.

When Martha greets Jesus, He promises her that Lazarus will live again. In verse 24, Martha writes it off to a future resurrection. But Jesus tells her, "I am the resurrection and the life." Martha believed in a *doctrine*; Jesus was *the doctor*.

This is the problem with you and me. We believe in sound doctrine, but do we believe in the power and person behind that doctrine? You believe in God's power to one day raise a dead corpse - but can you believe in that power today... to *revive a dead heart*, or *resurrect a dead marriage*, or *renew a dead ministry*?

In verse 35 we're told, "Jesus wept." It was "the day God cried." Chapter 7 was the day Jesus shouted. Chapter 11 is the day Jesus cried.

When Jesus wept at the tomb the people thought it was because of Lazarus, but I believe it was because of the people's unbelief. Even when Jesus orders the stone rolled away, Martha still doesn't grasp what's about to happen. She moans, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

In verse 43, Jesus "cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth!" And notice He specified *Lazarus* - if He hadn't every corpse in the graveyard would've risen.

## Devotion Box - A Picture Of True Worship

John 12 paints a picture of Mary's extravagant love for Jesus. She pours an expensive oil on His feet, and wipes them with her hair.

Mary's act of worship seems like a waste of resources. Judas complains, "Wouldn't a little Epsom salt have done the job? What about the poor? How many people could we have fed with that money?"

Here's what Mary understood that Judas didn't. Worship is never practical, it's always spiritual. It's non-utilitarian. Rather than yield a benefit, its goal is to bless God. Worship is like buying flowers. Practically, a dozen roses is a terrible waste of money. In a few short days they're withered and shriveled - but relationally they're of tremendous value. Worship like flowers is meaningful only to lovers.

And that was the problem... the name "*Judas*" means "*praise*" - yet praise was a something Judas knew nothing about. Mary was a lover of God - Judas wasn't.

Jesus finishes His statement to Judas in verse 8, "For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Here's a lesson for the church... When the needs of people take priority over the worship of Jesus we've lost the proper perspective. Social action should always play second fiddle to worship.

## Devotion Box - Grave Clothes

Jesus calls Lazarus from the dead... and, a body, still bound in grave clothes, comes bounding from the grave. Author Eugene Peterson refers to the miracles in the book of John as "*God-signs*". Each miracle teaches a spiritual lesson.

And the same is true with the resurrection of Lazarus...

Lazarus typifies every new believer. When Jesus calls our name, we're given new life - raised from spiritual death - but we're still bound in the trappings of the past. Sinful habits, bondage, fear, unbiblical attitudes are all grave clothes.

Hey, for you and I to get freed up to enjoy our new life - those attitudes must be undressed - just as the layers of the shroud were unwrapped from Lazarus' body.

And guess who's responsibility it is to help the new believer shed his grave clothes? Jesus said to the people around Lazarus, "Loose him, and let him go."

Jesus gives spiritual life, but it's our job - the Church - to help the new believers who join us get loose from the past, and shed the stuff that keeps them bound.