

Shut Out of Heaven Forever

Scripture: John 7:25-36

Code: 43-42

Open your Bible now to the seventh chapter of John. As we come back to the seventh chapter, we come back to a day in the life of our Lord. It's interesting, isn't it, that the story of the Gospel of John goes from eternity past to the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. It covers a vast amount of time and even throws in some of eternity.

And yet there are huge chunks of the Gospel of John that focus on one day or one week. This is one of those. It's mid-week. We don't know what day, but it's in the middle of a week. It's in the autumn as we come into chapter 7. Harvest is past, the work of harvest is pretty well done. And gold has begun to streak the leaves around the city of Jerusalem and the rest of the Mediterranean world. It is now six months until the spring Passover when Jesus will be crucified, so as we come to chapter 7, we're really coming into the last leg of his journey on earth, his ministry leading up to the cross.

And there were three great feasts in the Jewish calendar that were the monumental feasts that were celebrated by everyone. This is one of them called the feast of tabernacles in which they remembered their wilderness wandering and staying in tents for 40 years before they entered the land of promise, having been delivered from Egypt. And at this feast, like all the other major feasts, the city of Jerusalem was teeming with tens of thousands of people, if not hundreds of thousands. There was the population of Jerusalem itself, and then there were all the other folks from all around the land of Israel. People had come from Galilee, and they had come from Perea, as well as all parts of Judea to mingle in the streets of Jerusalem.

And then you had to add all of the Jews who came from the rest of the world who came back for the feast from being dispersed throughout the gentile realm. All of them were pretty much gathered under the massive shadow of the Herodian temple which stood made of cedar and marble and gold, shining brilliantly on the mount on the eastern side of Jerusalem. The temple yard is massively packed, just bodies crushed together, as all the activities of that celebratory event were going on.

In the midweek of that week, Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, waiting until then because He wanted to delay His coming to avoid the hatred and the vicious intention of the leaders who sought to kill Him. So we waited until everything was settled down, and then He showed up. And upon arrival there, He went immediately to the temple and began teaching. That's where we find Him when we come to our text, which is chapter 7 of John's gospel and verses 25 to verse 36. What we're going to see in this passage is a trend continuing to escalate.

It is the trend of rejection. Progressive rejection marks His whole ministry. You can go back early in the gospel into the first chapter and be reminded of verses 10 and 11. "He was in the world. The world was made by Him. The world knew him not. He came unto His own people. His own people received Him not." That's the story of Jesus. He came. He was rejected. He was crucified.

We're seeing the progression of that rejection. There were a number of different groups of people

who rejected Him back in chapter 6 in verse 66. We read that many of His disciples rejected Him. They'd been following Him for some time, but they had decided as He talked about His life and more particularly about His death to come, His bloodshed. They turned to walk away. So He was rejected by His disciples. In chapter 7 in verse 5, we read that He was rejected by His family.

In chapter 7 verse 1 and verse 19, He was rejected by the leaders of Israel, and in chapter 7 verses 7 and 20, He was rejected by the population, the people. So everyone rejected Him. He had only a meager number of followers. In fact, when it was all over with, there were only 120 in the room on the day of Pentecost, so it's a story of progressive rejection of the most wonderful person that ever walked this earth, which speaks profoundly of the sinfulness of sin and the wretchedness of the human heart.

From here on, having been rejected by many if not most of His followers, having been rejected by His family, having been rejected by the population of the city and the nation, both those who were from Judea and Galilee and those who were the pilgrims from the Gentile world, and mostly rejected by the leaders, He spends the last six months of His ministry walking in the looming shadow of the cross.

All of them will converge at the end and cry for His blood and His execution by crucifixion with the exception of his brothers who don't appear there but do come to believe in Him after His resurrection. Now as we look at verses 25 down to verse 36, it's really part of that day in the middle of the week and the feast of tabernacles in the temple, but it speaks far beyond that. Let me read it to you.

"So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, 'This is not the man whom they're seeking to kill? Look, He's speaking publicly, and they're saying nothing to him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ or the Messiah, do they? However, we know where this man is from. But whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.' And Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, 'You both know me and know where I am from, and I have not come of myself, but He who sent me is true whom you do not know. I know Him because I am from Him, and he sent me.' So they were seeking to seize Him. And no man laid his hand on Him because His hour had not yet come. But many of the crowd believed in Him, and they were saying, 'When the Christ comes, he will not perform more signs than those which this man has. Will He?' The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priest in the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. Therefore, Jesus said, 'For a little while longer, I'm with you. Then I go to Him who sent me. You will seek me and will not find me, and where I am, you cannot come.'"

"The Jews then said to one another, 'Where does this man intent to go that we will not find Him? He's not intending to go to the dispersion among the gentiles and teach the gentiles, is He? What is this statement that He said? You will seek me and will not find me, and where I am, you cannot come.'" Left ringing in your ears, verse 34, repeated in verse 36. In verse 34, Jesus says, "You will seek me and will not find me, and where I am, you cannot come," and that statement comes out of all of the other parts of conversation to stick in their minds so that they repeat it in verse 36.

"You will seek me and will not find me, and where I am, you cannot come." What does this statement mean? What does it mean? It means that there will come a time in your life when you will see me, and I won't be there. That's not a new idea in Scripture. Genesis 6. "My spirit will not always strive with man. It is possible to seek too late, to seek at a time when the Lord will not hear."

That's why the prophet Isaiah says, "Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He's near." There are replete warnings all through the Old Testament and the New about waiting too long.

Hell is, after all, itself truth discovered too late. Jesus makes a penetrating and powerful statement. Two sides to it. You will seek me and not find me, which says that sinners will seek Him and not be able to find Him. Part of what hell is is suffering for sin. Hell is also resentment. Hell is also unrelieved bitterness under the destructive hand of God. But hell is also eternal regret without remedy. Everlasting remorse without hope. That's why there's weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the tormenting darkness. You will seek me. What a horrible reality. You will not find me. Hell is not where Christ is forgotten. It is where He is unavailable.

Where I am, you cannot come. Shut out of heaven. Shut out of heaven forever. Common conception is God is basically good, and everybody who is good is going to go to heaven. We're all going to go to heaven. Right? We're all going to go to heaven. Anybody who is good is certainly going to go to heaven, and I'm good. I'm one of the good people, so I'm going to go to heaven. That's how people think. It's hard to imagine a more clear and devastating statement than this. You will seek me and you will not find me, and where I am, you cannot come. Heaven is not for everybody.

Heaven is clearly not for everyone. So this is a warning passage, and I want you to just mark in your mind that the statement is made to two groups. It's made to the people in general, and it's made to the leaders. They're different characteristically. The people face Jesus with one perspective. The leader is faced with a different perspective, but both are given the same sentence. The common people and the rulers. Doesn't matter. There is no class separating the condemned.

There's no hierarchy of condemned people. The flames of judgment will fall on the people, and we'll say it this way, who are just confused about Jesus. And the same hell will be the eternal abode of the people who hate Jesus, whether you're a rejecter or whether you're a person who is sort of undecided. The same warning is given. So let's break this passage into those component parts and look first of all at the peoples' confusion, and then at the ruler's rejection, and then at the Savior's exclusion. Now there's no mistaking the attitude of the people here. They're confused. Verse 25 introduces us to their confusion. Some of the people of Jerusalem, and it's really important that you note this, some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is this not the man who they're seeking to kill?"

When you compare that with just a few verses earlier, verse 19, did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you carries out the law, Jesus says, "Why do you seek to kill me," and the crowd answered, "You have a demon who seeks to kill you. What are you talking about?" Well how can they say, "Who seeks to kill you," in verse 19, and in verse 25 say, "Is this not the man whom they're seeking to kill?" The distinguishing mark is this is the people of Jerusalem who are well acquainted with their leaders. They live in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a small, confined place. They know the attitude of the leaders. They know they want to kill Jesus.

Go back to chapter 5, verses 16 to 18. Back to chapter 7 verse 1. It was well known to them, but the crowd of people from Perea and Galilee and all the gentile areas that had collected for this, they didn't have that knowledge. So John is very careful to say some of the people of Jerusalem understood that the leaders wanted Jesus dead, and so they say, "Is this not the man whom they are

seeking to kill?" They're confused. Why? Because He's in the temple. They know they want Him dead, chapter 7, verse 1. "They were seeking to kill Him. And they're letting Him teach, and nobody is stopping Him. They know how the rulers feel, and they're confused as to why they don't stop His teaching, why they don't seize Him and execute Him if that's what they want. It's their space. It's their temple. It's their territory. They're in charge." Now the rules don't say anything, but they know this is the man they're seeking to kill.

"Look." Verse 26. "He's speaking publicly, boldly, and they're saying nothing to Him. They're just letting Him speak." "He is," like Proverbs 28:1 says, "Is bold as a lion. He's teaching about salvation, and He's teaching therefore about the law and sin and judgment and righteousness and forgiveness and mercy and grace and the kingdom, and He's claiming again to be the son of God come down from heaven. Everything he said about Himself throughout His whole ministry and even what He had been saying as John recorded it in previous chapters. And they're not stopping Him. They're just letting Him go on, and He's making these strong claims about His identity. In the minds of the rulers, blasphemous claims. Why don't they stop Him? They want Him dead."

Then in verse 26, they begin to mull over that notion. "The rulers do not really know that this is the Messiah, do they?" This is a thought that comes into their mind. "No, it can't be." They haven't decided he's the Messiah, have they? Well, you say, "Why would they ever think that?" Well down in verse 31, "No one had ever or would ever or could ever perform more signs than He did. The rulers haven't decided this is the Messiah, have they?" It requires the construction of the Greek, requires a negative answer, but the question has been raised. It's a kind of question that carries with it its own denial.

If they want Him dead, why aren't they stopping Him? Have the faint remote thought enters their minds, have they decided He's actually the Messiah? They're not doing anything. "However," verse 27, "the thought goes away really fast. However, on the other hand, we know where this man is from. We know this can't be the Messiah. We know His history. We know where He's from. Yeah, this is the son of a carpenter, a man named Joseph and a girl named Mary. And of all places, they're from a town called Nazareth, and as you know the testimony of Scripture, can anything good come out of Nazareth, backwater crossroad town on the slopes of Galilee, out of the main pattern of life, religious life for sure?" No, this can't be the Messiah. We know Him. We know where He came from. We know His family. We know His town.

You know, this is constantly where they found their safe zone in rejecting Jesus. They didn't want to accept Jesus. Even the people didn't because no matter what he offered, in order to receive the offer, you had to accept the indictment, and they hated the indictment. In fact, in His own town, when He told them they were essentially going to have to be recognizing themselves as poor prisoners blind and oppressed and headed for judgment, and if they didn't do that, they'd never be saved, they tried to kill Him. This is the people.

This is typical at Nazareth. He goes to Nazareth in His hometown. He begins teaching in the synagogue. This is Matthew 13. And they're all saying, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" Then they say this. This is the default position. "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? We know His family. And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offense at Him, and Jesus then gave that maxim, that proverb, "Oh, profit is not without honor, except in his own country, his own town."

They always fell back to the fact that He can't be the Messiah because we know where He came from. We know about Him. Back in chapter 6, verse 42. The Jews are grumbling, mumbling about Him, and saying this. "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven?' We know Him. We know about Him. We know his family." Go down to verse 41 of chapter 7. Some were saying, "This is the Messiah." Still others were saying, "Well, the Messiah is not going to come from Galilee, is He?" Then there were some who recognized that the Scripture said the Messiah would come as a descendent from David and from Bethlehem, the village where David was. So a division occurred, verse 43 says.

This is their confusion. Some thought it had to be Bethlehem, and they were right. Micah 5:2 said that He would come from Bethlehem, but not Nazareth. Oh, they could have checked the records at the temple that He had actually been born in Bethlehem. And He would have had to have been, as far as some knew, a child of the Davidic and they could have checked His genealogy that his mother's line was Davidic, in both families, He was the son of David.

They could have checked that, but they didn't check that. They didn't check that. All they were looking for was justification for their rejection because He didn't fit their pattern. And by the way, some traditions had developed that led them to say this. This is kind of an interesting statement. The end of verse 27. "We know where this man is from, but whenever the Messiah may come, no one knows where He's from." Well wait a minute, what about Bethlehem? But this popular notion had developed that the Messiah would have some kind of a grand entrance. They drew it out of a couple passages. One would be Malachi 3:1, "That He would suddenly come to his temple. That there would be something like a bolt out of heaven. They would come to the temple, and it would be the Messiah." Or Isaiah 53, "Who shall declare His generation?" In other words, who would know anything about His family?

They misinterpreted both of those passages, came up with this popular kind of notion that the Messiah would have some kind of supernatural arrival at the temple, and not in the normal way, and they wouldn't know anything about His family. That's what they decided. This can't be the Messiah. We know about His family, and we know He came from Nazareth, didn't come suddenly from heaven to the temple. This can't be the anointed one. This can't be the Messiah.

The rulers could have helped them because back in Matthew 2, Herod gathered the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and he said to them, "Where is the Messiah to be born," and they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus has been written by the prophet, and you Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, for out of you will come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people, Israel."

All the leaders knew Messiah comes from Bethlehem. The records show Jesus had come from Bethlehem. All the leaders knew He would come in the Davidic line. The record of the temple showed that Jesus was born to two Davidic families. They conveniently didn't want to help the people with their dilemma. People never seem to lack support for their desired beliefs, do they? They can always justify their rejections. So there they are in this confusion. The leaders aren't about to help them. The leaders aren't going to tell the people what the leaders told Herod, that He would come from Bethlehem.

They're not going to say, "And this man, Jesus, was born in Bethlehem, and we checked His genealogy, and it's Davidic." They're not going to say that. They're just going to leave these people in confusion about whether or not He is the Messiah, and if so, why hasn't He done what Messiah – they expected to do? And if He's not the Messiah, why haven't they arrested Him? At this point, verse 28, it's dramatic.

"Jesus yells. Jesus cried out in the temple." Four times in the New Testament, it says that Jesus did this at *ekrazen*. Four times in the New Testament. It's yelling at the top of His voice. There's a stronger word. This is a very strong word for yelling, but there's a stronger word. The stronger word is *anaboa*. It's only used one time of Jesus. A stronger cry, and it was on the cross. On the cross. He had enough energy on the cross to cry even louder than He did in the temple to the crowd because no one took his life from Him. He gave it up by Himself.

So Jesus yells so everyone can hear, top of His voice, teaching and saying, "You both know me and know where I'm from, and I have not come of myself, but He who sent me is true whom you do not know." How are you to interpret that? I would interpret it ironically. So you know me and you know where I'm from. That's what you think. You don't know me. This is irony. This is Jesus saying, "The very idea that in your unbelief and confusion, you know me is ridiculous. You don't know me. You don't know where I am came from, and you don't know who sent me."

In John 8:19, He says to them, "You neither know me nor my Father. You don't know me. You don't know anything about me. Oh, yes, you know the family in Nazareth, the town of Nazareth, but you don't know me. You know nothing. I have not come of myself. I haven't risen on my own ambition. I'm not the product of the family or the town of Nazareth. I didn't reach this position by my own desire, crafting my own way in life. You may know that I'm from Galilee. You may know that I lived in the town of Nazareth. You may know my public deeds. You may have heard my words, but you have no idea who I am. You have no idea where I came from. You have no idea who sent me, and you have no knowledge of the one that you claim to know. You haven't begun to know anything."

The problem, of course, is delineated in chapter 8, verse 43. "Why do you not understand what I'm saying? It's because you can't hear my word. You can't understand you are of your father, the devil. You want to do the desires of your father." That's the whole point. You want to serve the devil who is your father. Consequently, you can't hear the truth. He's a murderer from the beginning, doesn't stand in the truth. There's no truth in him. He speaks lies. He speaks from his own nature. He's a liar and a father of lies. So because I speak the truth, you don't believe me. Why? You're caught up in a kingdom of lies. You can't know the truth. You can't believe the truth. You can't comprehend the truth. You're in a kingdom of lies."

So they're saying proudly, "We know him. He can't be the Messiah. We know him. We know where he came from." Jesus says, "You don't know anything." Let me tell you, knowing a few minor details about Jesus, external things about Jesus is to know nothing about Him. To know a little bit about His history, to know a little bit about the Christian stories that you may have heard is to know nothing about Him. Nothing. He says, "You don't know anything." What an indictment of Israel. People destroyed for lack of knowledge. We see it today in a culture where Jesus is a household word. People use His name in vain all the time. Use His name as a swear word.

People could tell you little stories about Jesus. They would even talk about Jesus in some understanding of biblical history. Bibles all over the land, the name of Jesus everywhere. Churches

everywhere. People don't know Jesus. He says, "You don't know me, and you don't know the one who sent me." Verse 29. "But I know Him because I'm from Him, and He sent me." This is the supreme indictment of Israel. They prided themselves on being the people of God who knew God, and He says, "You don't know God."

Back in chapter 5, verse 23, He said, "If you don't honor me, you don't honor the Father. You don't know me. You don't know God." That is the indictment of the people who are confused. You know, I would say maybe in our country, maybe in the western world, this is probably the dominating reality. People just – they don't know. They say they know Jesus. They know the name Jesus. They know some things about Jesus. They don't know Him, and they don't know God, who sent Him, and that's a horrible position to be in because there will come a time when you'll seek to know Him, and He will not be available.

There will come a time when He will be shutting you out of heaven forever. Confusion is not the place to be. The confused crowd, vacillating, trying to figure it out, is in the same situation exactly as the hateful vicious rejecting rulers. Let's turn to them for a minute. From the peoples' confusion to the rulers' rejection, verse 30. Again, they see this as blasphemy. The rulers now know the people are expecting them to act, not let Him keep doing this.

There are many in the crowd who have already said, "You have a demon." They want the rulers to act, and the rulers need to act before Jesus has a positive effect, so they're seeking to seize Him. Seeking to seize Him. They tried to do that back in chapter 5, verse 18. They wanted to do that in chapter 7, verse 1. There are many of these citizens who are irritated in their confusion. They want the rulers to do something. They're now excited. Their confusion has turned into a kind of openness and a – they expect their leaders to do something so they know how to resolve this thing. They needed somebody to lead them. The leaders just can't let it go on. So they finally step in, and they want to seize Him. But no man lays hands on Him. Nobody touches Him. Why would that be the case? Well I don't know. From a human viewpoint, I mean just looking at the human side of it, they may have said, "He's very powerful." They would have been right because He attacked the temple and vacated the place at the beginning of His ministry.

He had supernatural power over demons, which means He would have supernatural power over them. He had supernatural power over disease and deformity and all of that. There was also, I think, a measure of fear, but a measure of respect. He commanded, demanded respect. So from a human viewpoint, they're paralyzed, and the crowd is mixed, and there are people who are very open and being persuaded by the power of His words. They don't want to start a riot in the middle of the feast.

That might be the human explanation, but the divine explanation is the only one the Bible gives us. The reason no man laid hands on Him to arrest Him was because His hour hadn't come. They were restrained by the invisible hand of God. I don't even know if they thought through the process. They couldn't act because they were under divine control. I wish I had time to develop that concept, that powerful, overwhelming reality of the invisible hand of God which controls everything that happens in the universe. Redemptive history is planned by God and executed by God sovereignly, and everything happens according to His purpose and plan and timing.

They thirsted for His blood. They were determined to kill Him. Yet, by invisible restraint from above, they were powerless to do anything. Not a hair of His head could be touched without divine permission because God is in control of absolutely everything. Not only in His life, but in ours. So

they're paralyzed. Verse 31. "The stakes begin to get a little higher. Many of the crowd believed in Him. They were saying, 'When the Christ comes or the Messiah comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?' The crowd is starting to maybe lean in a certain direction. In the midst of their confusion, maybe He is the Messiah. After all, nobody will ever do more miracles than He has done. In fact, they've never known anybody that did any."

There can't be more than what we've seen from Him, and they're believing. What kind of belief is this? Probably like chapter 2. "Many believed in Him because of the miracles that He did, but He didn't commit himself to them because he knew their hearts." Maybe the kind of believing of the disciples in six who followed Him and followed Him and followed Him, and then eventually abandon Him, a kind of temporary faith. Nothing here to indicate that this was some permanent, genuine, saving faith, although in some cases, that's possible. But the leaders see this, and they are really concerned now because the crowd is starting to buy into the fact that He might actually be the Messiah based upon this record of years of doing these amazing miracles.

So verse 32, "The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him." The confused crowd is muttering, and if you want to use a contemporary word, the thing is trending, and it's trending toward, "Hey, we're going to lose out here if this crowd begins to embrace Him." So finally, the chief priest and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. Temple police are dispatched to go and arrest Him.

So they go. That's the last we see of them in our passage, but if you want to pick up the story, verse 45, those officers, those temple police came back to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him? We sent you to arrest Him. Why didn't you bring Him?"

The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." The Pharisees then answered him, "You have not also been led astray, have you?" So they see the crowd moving in the direction of believing in Jesus, and their solution is, verse 48, "No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him. Has he? The crowd, what do they know? This crowd which doesn't know the law is accursed. Don't follow the people. Follow us." Soldiers come back empty handed. So there the rulers are, locked into rejecting Him.

And then in verse 33, Jesus speaks. This may have been to everyone. This may have been to the officers who came to arrest Him. This may have been to the leaders. We don't know. But it's, again, I think it's just generally to the people with a particular emphasis on the officers who came to arrest Him because of what He says. "For a little while longer, I'm with you. Then I go to Him who sent me."

This is sad, really heart wrenching. This is Jesus saying, "It's not going to be long. It's going to be over. I'm going to be out of your hair. I'm going to be out of your life. You're not going to have to deal with me at all." This takes us to the final point going from the people's confusion to the leader's rejection to the Savior's exclusion. Not going to be here long. This is with serenity and majesty, calm, sadness. You won't have to put up with me for very long.

There's a loneliness here. There's a sorrow here. Six months, that's all. Such pathos. God's son, loving a world that hated Him. Loving a nation that hated Him now starts to count the days, the weeks before He is leaving. This is an infinite agony for Him. His story was so full of sorry. I'm

going back to the one who sent me. You don't have to deal with me much longer. "Sad thing is you will seek me," – verse 34 – "and will not find me, and where I am, you cannot come."

Forty years later, Romans came and sacked the city. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were massacred. I wonder if the ones who were still alive remembered that He said that that day, and sought Him and couldn't find Him. Certainly, that would be true for people facing death who would think about that. But it's certainly true after death. As I said, that's part of hell, seeking what you will never find forever.

And then He says, "Where I am, you can't come." Where are you? What does He mean where I am? "I'm going to my Father. I came down from heaven. I'm going back to heaven. You will never go to heaven. You will never go to heaven. Heaven is not for everybody. Heaven is for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and no one else who believe in the true Christ and the true gospel and no one else." The Jews in their rejection mock His statement.

They said to one another, "This is just scorn. Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He's not intending to go to the dispersion among the gentiles and teach the gentiles, is He?" This is a joke. "He's not going to leave the land and go out and talk to the Jews dispersed in the gentile world and maybe even talk to the gentiles," which would have been a horror to them. They didn't want their religion even handed over to the low-life Jewish people, let alone gentiles.

They are sick and faithless fools who mock the son of God with blasphemous words. It's all sarcasm based on stupid ignorance and rejection, willful rejection. But then that statement haunts them. What is this statement that He said, "You will seek me and not find me. Where I am, you cannot come." That statement applies both to the confused and the rejecting. There's no difference. It's the same end, whether you rejected Christ out of confusion or out of hatred. The end is the same. The end is the same.

Look at chapter 8, and we'll close with this passage, verse 21. "Then he said again to them, I go away, and you will seek me and will die in your sin. Where I'm going, you cannot come." It's the same statement. "You will die in your sin. You will seek me. You will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come. Shut out of heaven forever." The Jews said, "Surely, He will not kill himself, will He?" They thought suicide was a sin that sent people to hell, so maybe He's going to kill Himself, and that'll send Him to hell, and He'll go to hell, and we'll never go there. But that's not what He meant at all.

Surely, He will not kill Himself. They mock, and He says, "Where I am going," – again, obviously, "to heaven, back to the Father, you cannot come." Then verse 24, the reason. "I said to you you will die in your sin, for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." So they said, "Well who are you?" And Jesus said to them, "What I have been saying to you from the beginning."

You die in your sins, you go to hell, shut out of heaven forever because you believe not my claims. Unless you believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will die in your sins. These people are religious, by the way. This is all illustrated graphically in Matthew 25 in the parable of the virgins. Remember that? All depicted as religious people, there for the great event of the coming of the bridegroom and the great wedding. There were some of the virgins didn't have the oil. They had all the religious accoutrements. They had all the moral values. But they didn't have life from God.

They weren't his. They weren't true believers. And when the bride groom came, the door was shut, and they were shut out forever. That's illustrated in that parable, Matthew 25. So the warning of our Lord here is a stark warning. You're going to come to a point in your life when you're going to seek me, and you're never going to find me. You're going to be shut out of heaven forever. Where I am, you will never be.

There is no greater warning. There is no stronger warning. There is no more unmistakable warning than that. You will die in your sins unless you believe in me. Seek the Lord while He may be found. Let's pray together. It is with heavy hearts, Lord, that we experience the situation with our Lord that day, and the heaviness in His own heart, sadness, the sense of alienation from the people that He had loved.

But at the same time, there is sadness there for Him. We can't simply stop at that point. We know He's a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as the prophet said, that sorrow was connected to how He was treated by His people. But He will in the end triumph, and He will be and is already all glorious, and so we lift up the Lord Jesus Christ. Not as some kind of tragic, pathetic, unfulfilled person, but as someone who really loved and really sorrowed and genuinely cared and was grieved truly, over those who remained in a state of willful confusion or adamant rejection, and warns that the end for both is the same.

Lord, I pray for those who are here today who in the hearing of this message might find themselves being exposed as those who have remained somehow indifferent towards the son of God, not being able to decide. Lord, save them from the eternal consequence of that indecision. Graciously reveal the truth of the gospel and the person of Christ to every mind and heart, and maybe, there are hard-hearted rejecters.

Surely, somewhere along the line, these words will be heard by such. While there is some time, would you be gracious even to them to see the glory of Christ and embrace him?

Father, again, it's an overwhelming thing to think about eternity. It's beyond our grasp to imagine heaven and hell. All we can do is take what you have said, understanding that it's the truth, and help us to live in the light of eternity, in the light of heavenly joys and the judgment on the other hand and its sorrows. Give us that perspective, and don't let us trivialize our lives. Be honored in the way we hear and apply what you've told us today through your Word, we pray in the Savior's name.

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