



“The Opportunity of a Lifetime”

John 7:33-36

Theme: The opportunity to accept the grace of God is an immediate opportunity, not a permanent one.

Introduction: There are moments in life that come only once and never return. Miss them, and they are gone forever. People recognize this in business, education, relationships, and investments—but when it comes to the things of God, they act as if His grace will always be available. Jesus shatters that illusion in John 7:33–36 **[Read Text]**.

Standing in the temple during the Feast of Booths, surrounded by men who had already plotted His death (John 7:1), Jesus delivers a sobering message: *“For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me”* (v. 33). In other words, **the window of grace was open—but only briefly**. The Incarnate Son was among them, offering life, truth, salvation, and reconciliation to God. But they treated the moment with arrogance and indifference, thinking they could respond when it suited them. They could not.

This passage challenges the deadly lie that opportunity with God is permanent. It is not. **Grace is offered freely, fully, and sincerely—but never indefinitely**. In verse 34, Jesus declares, *“You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.”* That is not the language of invitation—it is the language of judgment. Reject the Savior long enough, and the opportunity you ignore becomes the condemnation you inherit.

The Jews in the crowd respond with confused mockery, demonstrating how blind unbelief really is. They ask, *“Where does this man intend to go...?”* (v. 35). They stood inches from the Redeemer, yet *miles* from redemption.

This is the opportunity of a lifetime—one that must be embraced now, not delayed. In these verses we will see:

1. **The Opportunity to Provide Redemption** (v. 33) — Christ’s presence was a divine gift, a limited-time offer of saving grace.
2. **The Ominous Prospect of Reprobation** (v. 34) — Persistent refusal leads to irreversible divine withdrawal.
3. **The Obstacle to Receiving Redemption** (vv. 35–36) — The hardened heart mocks what it should fear and misunderstands what it desperately needs.

May God use this passage to awaken anyone tempted to presume upon His patience, and to remind His people that today—not tomorrow—is the day of salvation. The opportunity to accept the grace of God is an immediate opportunity, not a permanent one

I. The Opportunity to Provide Redemption – 7:33

A. The Anticipation of the Event of Atonement

1. Jesus continues to respond to the hearts of those who are debating concerning His identity.
2. Here, Jesus speaks a word of anticipation of the accomplishment directly to the Pharisees and their officers sent to arrest Him – *“There Jesus said, ‘For a little while longer I am with you ...’*
3. In essence, He is showing that the very people Christ Jesus came to deliver from their sins couldn’t wait to be rid of Him – He indicates that they don’t have to wait that much longer – that He would be gone.
4. However, before He departs, He will continue with them to accomplish the reason He came – cp. Luke 19:10.
5. There was nothing that could prevent Christ from accomplishing the offering of Himself for the sins of men, but He had to wait for the perfect timing of His Father – “His hour had not yet come.” – cp. v. 30.
6. Here we see a hint of sorrow in the heart of the One who would do anything for His people – yet faced constant rejection – cf. John 1:11; Matthew 23:37.

B. The Assurance of the Efficiency of the Atonement

1. However, remember that Jesus set His face toward the cross on which He died because of the impact of the atonement – *“... then I go to Him who sent Me.”*
2. This is a reference to the glorious ascension of the Lord Jesus when He enters glory as a conquering & victorious Savior – glorified and life-giving.
3. He will have fully satisfied God’s wrath for our sins through His own blood – cp. Romans 5:1.
4. He will be restored to the glory He had from before the world – cp. John 17:4-5.
5. He will be returning to the Father for the purpose of sending the Holy Spirit, who will bring conviction of sin – cp. vv. 37-38.
6. This is essentially a reference to the joys and glories of the resurrection, an inherent part of the true Gospel, and it initiates the Triumph, that great procession of the redeemed that continues even to this day – 2 Corinthians 2:14.

II. The Ominous Prospect of Reprobation – 7:34

An Exposition of the
GOSPEL OF JOHN

A. The Tardy Desire for Mercy

1. After envisioning the successful work of redemption in the previous verse, Jesus indicates that they will not have Him around much longer as a “thorn” in their sides.
2. However, He indicates that there will come a day when they desperately seek Him, but to no avail – *“You will seek Me, and you will not find Me ...”*
3. The Jewish nation generally, and sinful men particularly, will be brought to such despair that they will look to Christ for deliverance, but it will be too late.
4. There will come a time when – in the despair of being brought low – they will earnestly seek the face of the Lord, only to find that it has been hidden from them – cp. *Deuteronomy 1:45; Amos 8:11-12; Proverbs 1:27-29.*
5. Men often think that coming before the face of the Lord in repentance is something that can always be done later ... but not so – cp. *2 Corinthians 6:2; Genesis 6:3.*

B. The Total Denial of Mercy

1. When such a time as the Lord swings the door shut, there is no more opportunity – *“you cannot come.”* – cp. *Revelation 3:7; Genesis 7:16.*
2. I take this specific reference to indicate that there was no possibility of entrance into glory for such ones who have rejected the Lord when the opportunity was afforded them – cp. *Luke 13:24-25.*
3. There are those who teach that those who die in their sin will receive a second chance to trust Christ, after they die – but not so – the judgment of God is swift – *Hebrews 9:27.*
4. Essentially, those who die in their sin are condemned – cp. *John 8:21.*
5. Many people who thought they could delay it or who simply didn’t find the Gospel appealing have died suddenly, with no choice but to bow the knee to a Savior whose mercy is no longer accessible – cp. *Philippians 2:9-11.*
6. Jesus clearly states that *“where I am, you cannot come”* because there is no space in the presence of the Father for those who refuse to accept the Son – cp. *John 3:5.*

III. The Obstacle to Receiving Redemption – 7:35-36

A. The Disorientation of a Wicked Heart – v. 35

1. Devoid of any spiritual understanding, *“the Jews ... said to one another, ‘Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him?’”*
2. They entirely overlooked Christ's warning, and they cannot ascend beyond a worldly, fleshly reference point.
3. They begin to slander Christ by showing their prejudice—saying that the only place this man could go where they could not (or would not) is to the Gentiles—*“He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks is He?”*
4. They actually stumble onto God's true plan — to reach the Gentiles with the Gospel of grace — but have no idea what they're saying.
5. To them, they are merely mocking Him—belittling Him without any regard for His warning to them.

B. The Dismissal of the Warning – v. 36

1. They ultimately dismiss His warning altogether by saying: *“What is this statement that He said, ‘You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come’.”*
 - a) They dismiss it because of **Hardened Hearts** – **Hebrews 3:12-13**.
 - b) They dismiss it because of **Haughty Hearts** – **Romans 10:3**.
 - c) They dismiss it because of **Hindered Hearts** – **John 12:37-40**.
2. Because of their unbelief, God ultimately & sovereignly rejects them – cp. **Proverbs 1:24-31**.
3. How different this is from what Jesus says to those who believe in Him – cp. **John 14:3**.
4. Instead of dismissing Christ's warning as silly or ridiculous, we must take it seriously – not refuse to seek the mercy and grace of God before the door of opportunity slams shut – cp. **Isaiah 55:6-7**.

So What?

1. What patterns of delay, complacency, or indifference toward spiritual priorities reveal that I assume God's grace will always be available to me?
2. How does the danger of reprobation (God giving a person over to their rebellion) compel me to evaluate whether I am responding to truth with submission or with subtle excuses?
3. Do any of the dismissive characteristics of the heart (hardened, haughty, or hindered) describe my own responses to the authority of Christ in my life?

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