

# **Making Sense of Public Opinion on Jesus**

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**John 7:10-18**

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So, Halloween is now over, Thanksgiving is right around the corner, and as is the custom every year, stores now are already putting out Christmas decorations, right? Most wonderful time of year is fast approaching, and along with all the candy and lights and decorations comes the yearly custom of attacks on the real Jesus. Channels like History and Discovery soon will trot out the same bunch of anti-Christian scholars to tell you the Bible isn't true, and the Jesus that you learned about isn't the real Jesus.

Did Jesus really exist? Was He really born in Bethlehem? Was He really the Son of God? What really happened? What's the true story? And wouldn't you know it, the true story can't be found where? In the Bible. "The biblical authors were more concerned with dogma than data, so getting history from the Bible is problematic," they say. "Did they record actual events, or just make it up because they just like Jesus so much?" On and on and on, every Christmas and every Easter, Jesus is attacked, and that attack becomes public opinion, which is the society-wide expression of rebellion and rejection of Jesus. What is true today from public opinion is true in Jesus's day. Public opinion could not have been more extremely divided, as we're going to see in our text. Which, again, is no different than today.

So, with that reality in mind, our text today is going to help us make sense of public opinion. Public opinion is going to become more clear as a result of our time in God's Word. What do you need to know about public opinion? How do you combat against it in your life and in the lives of those that you love? This text gives the discernment that you and I need. Public opinion has a powerful effect on us, doesn't it? If the public believes something, if the public is doing something, there's pressure on us to what? To conform, to get in line, to follow along in lockstep. Public opinion can even be weaponized to get people to think and act in ways that are approved by the powers that be. And when it comes to the weaponization of public opinion, nowhere is it more weaponized in our day, and throughout history, than it is against the truth, against the God of the Bible, against the Bible itself, and against Christ. This is what we see in our text, the powers that will weaponize public opinion against Christ.

So, what we need, as we interact with public opinion online and in the media, what our kids need and our grandkids need as they interact with public opinion, is we need to be able to make sense of it. We need to discern, to decipher what's really going on with public opinion, to protect ourselves and to protect those we love from its influence, from the conforming effects of public opinion that seek to squeeze us into its mold, to make us look like the results of public opinion, to disciple us into its image, rather than being disciplined from God's Word into what? Into Christ's image.

Now, as we get into our text, let's look back at the beginning of the chapters. Jesus is a hated and wanted man, look at verse one. After this, the events of chapter six, Jesus went about in Galilee. That's up in the north of Israel. He would not go about in Judea, that's the south, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. Hatred for Jesus is reaching a fever pitch in Jerusalem and the surrounding regions, which is where everybody is headed at this time, because, as verse three says, they're going down there for the Feast of Booths, which is a fall holiday that remembers and rejoices in God's provision. Every Jewish male, 20 and over, is required to attend.

And at that, at that statement, verse 3, verse 4, we are then introduced to Jesus's brothers. Jesus had brothers, He also had sisters. They want Jesus to go to the feast, because maybe he's lost a bunch of followers after not continuing to feed them miraculously. And so they leave, and they don't like what he's saying. So the brothers come along and say, "hey, you need more followers, you need more attention. Why don't you go to the feast? Verse 4. They're thinking like a modern marketing firm, and they think that Jesus should be thinking the same way.

But verse 5 tells us their ideas come from hearts of unbelief. Verse 5 says, "For," "for" meaning based on the reason they said verse four, is "not even his brothers believed in him." In case you're wondering, they don't stay that way. His family eventually does believe. But in this moment, where they don't believe, verse 6, Jesus tells them, "You go ahead and go to the feast without me." His life is on a divine timetable. So verse 8, the Father hasn't told him it's time to go. "My time has not yet fully come, so I'm sticking around here."

As we enter verse 10, Jesus's time does fully come. And so he does go to the feast, verse 10. "But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly, but in private." This phrase at the end is given to show that Jesus didn't contradict himself when he told his brothers he wasn't going up to the feast. It wasn't time for him to go when his brothers asked, verse eight, and he wasn't going to go how they wanted him to go. Remember verse 4, like I just said, his brothers wanted him to go to Jerusalem openly and publicly. They want him to make a name for himself, to promote himself, to get more followers, but he refused that, he refused that. And as a result, he arrived secretly, incognito. Why do you do that? The only reason you do that is you want to arrive somewhere without fanfare, without being the center of attention, without being noticed. That's what the Father wanted, and so that's what he did.

And we also read this like his brothers asked and Jesus said no, but a couple minutes later he's like, oh, maybe I will go now. No, it could have been days, or weeks even, between them talking and Jesus leaving. It says in verse 9 that he remained in Galilee. That's not a couple minutes, that's an extended period of time. But then he goes up, verse 8, when his "time had fully come". And after all, at this time, what you would do, if you lived in Galilee, a hundred miles north of Jerusalem, what you would do is you wouldn't go by yourself, you would go with all your friends who were also 20 and over, and you're all going down to Jerusalem at that time.

And so, caravans of people would be coming from all the corners of Israel, and descending and meeting in Jerusalem like is going to happen six months from now, right? When Jesus arrives in Jerusalem for the Passover feast. And at that time what happens? Hundreds and thousands are

doing what? They're coming with Him and they're proclaiming what? "This is the Messiah. This is the king." It's called the triumphal entry. God doesn't want that yet. And so Jesus goes quietly, secretly. And we know why, from verse one, he doesn't want the attention yet, from who? The people that want to kill him. Death is a real threat for Jesus at this time.

And the same group of people in verse 7, the Jews, ones who're seeking to kill in verse 1, those Jews are back. Verse 11, "The Jews," these religious leaders, Jesus's enemies, "were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?"" These are the religious authorities, these Jews. It's not the Jewish people, it's the Jews, the religious leaders, Sadducees, Pharisees, Jesus's enemies, two groups that were rivals against each other, until they were united in their hatred of Jesus. Because he arrives secretly, they're going from place to place. They're looking for him. Same word as 7:1, they're seeking him, and they're asking around, "Where is he?" They expect him to be there. Every Jewish male, 20 and over, is supposed to be there. So that's why they're expecting it.

But what's interesting in this text is the contempt they have for Jesus. Verse 11, it says, "Where is he?" That sounds neutral, but there's contempt in these words because the text says, "Where is this guy?" Where is this guy? They don't even use his name. You see the contempt, the hatred, of 7:1 is still alive and well in the hearts of very pious, religious people who are in Jerusalem for a religious holiday, putting on a religious show while having deeply irreligious thoughts and plans. That's nothing new. That's here in Jerusalem that day.

And the people also have ideas about Jesus too, look at verse 12. "And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." Yet for fear of the Jews," for fear of these religious leaders, "no one spoke openly of him." What you see in verse 12 is public opinion, and it's divided, and they're whispering because they don't want to make their religious leaders mad at them and they get kicked out of the synagogue.

Regardless though, some are still talking, and they say, "Jesus, well first, he's a good guy. He's a positive influence. He hasn't broken any of God's rules." Others say he's the worst kind of guy. He's a deceiver. He's broken God's laws against false teaching, and should be, according to Deuteronomy 13, he should be executed for leading people astray. In fact, Jewish writings from the 200s AD, called the Talmud, those writings, when they talk about Jesus, say he was executed for this reason, for leading people astray. What you see at the end of verse 12 becomes the accepted opinion of the Jewish public until this day. You see it right here.

So, as we consider public opinion in our text, it would be good for us to point #1) ***Assume the Public's Jesus is False***. Point #1) if you're taking notes, ***Assume the Public's Jesus is False***. The public opinion you hear from the media, teachers, family, friends, whatever, should be seen as guilty until proven innocent when it comes to their opinions about Jesus. Assume whatever they say, it's going to be false, just like we see here in John 7. Jesus warned, Matthew 24:5, that there would be "many false Christs", quote, "many false Christs". And the result of the work of

these "many false Christs" is, quote, "they will lead many astray." So that's the idea. Public opinion promotes that, pushes that forward. False Christs.

So, let's consider public opinion from verse 12. Let's consider the expression of public opinion preserved for us in our text. Was Jesus a good man or was he a deceiver? He was neither. Both are false, just like I'm saying. So like I said, assume the Jesus of public opinion is false, just like the Jesus of these public opinions in verse 12 is false. Jesus was not a good man. You know that, right? He was not a good man. He was not a good teacher. Good men, good teachers don't teach that their God have the attributes of God, can forgive sin, raise people from the dead, and is the only way to heaven.

Think about it. If I stood up here and said, I and the Father are one. You believe in me, you'll have eternal life, and I will raise you up. I will raise you up on the last day. You would sit there and go; he has lost his ever-loving mind. We need to get out of here, start posting all over the internet, stay away from that church, because that pastor went insane. Right? That's what you would do. You would not say, man, he's such a good teacher. That is just some good stuff coming out of his mouth, right? No, you wouldn't do that. And by the way, this wasn't the periphery of his teaching, like he mainly taught love your neighbor and be nice to people, but he occasionally said some crazy things like he's God. No. This is the core of what he said. He was the core of his own teachings. So, if he was wrong on the core of what he taught, he is a self-centered, arrogant man. Which means what? He's not a good man.

So he's not a good man, maybe the other people in verse 12 are right, maybe he's a deceiver? But hold on, is that even possible? Do crazy people display the kind of character that we see Jesus have in the New Testament? Anyone ever interacted with somebody, you're like, they're crazy? Anybody? Anybody? In that moment, did you think, they are acting just like Jesus in the New Testament"? Did that ever cross your mind? Did that ever come across, even a fraction of a thought in your mind? Of course not. Why? Because Jesus is the least crazy person in history. If Jesus is insane, what does that say about you? What does it say about me? Right?

Maybe he's purposefully deceiving people though. Is that even possible? If he was a deceiver, he's the best deceiver in the history of the world. Think about it, he lied, not about periphery things, like things that don't matter, he lied about core issues in reality. Think about it! He claimed to be God, in a context where monotheism reigned supreme, and people who believed monotheism were willing to die for that idea. They were constantly ridiculed by the rest of the culture for being monotheists, and yet, in that context, Jesus says, "I am not one God." And what? People believed. He claimed to be the Lord, in a context where that word was used for Roman emperors. So you say, "Jesus is Lord", that statement is political treason against the power of the day. And people did it anyway. Jesus is Lord. They were willing to die for that idea, and many did.

And he claimed to be the only way to heaven, in a context where there was already a way to heaven, belief in the God of the Bible. And he says, "Believe in God" what? "Believe also in me, because I am that God!" Saying that to strict, devout Jewish people, who embrace that idea,

despite tremendous family and public pressure to stay in Judaism, they did it anyways. So, when we try to come to terms with what Jesus said and did, calling him a deceiver, whether knowingly or unknowingly, just doesn't fit the facts. He wasn't a deceiver, and he wasn't a good man. He is who he said he is, which is what? He is the Godman, God who became a man to rescue humanity from our sins, that's who he really is. Anything less is automatically and categorically what? It's false, right? It's false. You should say yes, it's false.

Okay, why? Because it is a false Christ, because it disagrees with him. So, when public opinion pontificates about Jesus, it is safe to assume Jesus, the Godman, who saves sinners from their sins, is not the Jesus that they will be pontificating about. You know that saying, "I know you're lying because your lips are moving"? You know that saying? That should be in the back of your mind when you see public opinion about Jesus. When that is presented, "I know this is going to be unbiblical lies." Listen, we're constantly bombarded with public opinion on Jesus, from media, social media, pastors, teachers, friends, family. And I just hope you see that whether it's kind and respectful, like, "he's a good man", or whether it's attacking, like, "he's leading people astray", either way, it should be guilty in your mind until proven innocent. Public opinion, then and now, is the false Christ that leads people astray.

So, keep that fact in the back of your mind as you hear people pontificate about the historical Jesus, or the Jesus of history, which is very common today at this time of year, Christmas and also Easter. The Jesus of history and the Jesus of the Bible, newsflash, they are the same person. To try to distinguish those two is to create a false Christ. It doesn't exist, and you need to assume that that's what's happening when public opinion is being expressed about Jesus. Don't be surprised when some politician or teacher or social media influencer gets Jesus wrong. Be surprised when what? When they get him right. That's when you should be surprised when they get him right. When what they say about him matches what he said about himself, because public opinion is a false Christ.

And listen, the paradigm is not my pastor versus public opinion, or my parent versus public opinion. It's what? It's public opinion versus Jesus. Okay? That's the paradigm. So, just like you are the expert in what? In whom you are, let's let Jesus be the expert in who he is. Which, by the way, is why we go slowly through books of the Bible. So, we mine out of it all the truth that we need, so that after being saturated with truth, week after week, we all grow in what is called discernment, so that we make sense of the public opinion about Jesus that contradicts the truth about him. And then we know, oh, that sounds true. Oh, that's false, that's false, that's false, that's false. This is why we do that, so you have the discernment that you need when public opinion gives you a false Christ, which is what they only give.

Now the scene fast-forward to around day four of this eight-day feast. Look at verse 14. "About the middle of the feast," so about day four, "Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching." Now, if you've been following along closely, you might be confused right now. Why is Jesus teaching in the temple, where thousands and thousands of people would be, when He arrived there, what?

Secretly. How do we make sense of that? Seems like a contradiction, but I'm glad you asked. Let's take a look. If he arrived, let me reiterate what I said before, if he arrived with thousands of people, like he will six months from these events, it would've likely led to a premature triumphal entry, which got him arrested and killed, and would've contradicted prophecy. God has a specific time for that to happen, Daniel 9 speaks to that, and it's supposed to happen not at the Feast of Booths, but the Feast of Passover, where lambs are sacrificed for sin, and he would offer a sacrifice for the sins of the world as the Lamb of God.

So, because that would happen if he came with everybody else publicly, he arrives secretly. But He's only arriving secretly. The plan was not to stay incognito the whole time. No, he's there to teach people the truth. And as he does, the Jewish authorities, verse 11, who were seeking for him, what? They find him. And here they are listening to him, verse 15, they say, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" Again, you can't see it in English. This sounds like a "Wow" they're amazed, right? Even has that word, they marveled, they were blown away.

But no, this is contempt for Jesus again, because we have that same word again. "How is it that this guy has learning? He didn't formally study under any of our official rabbis. He's not approved by any of us to be a teacher in Israel. He doesn't have the right, the permission, the authority. He doesn't have any of that to teach anybody." Well, like them, Jesus's teaching was not His own. Their teaching was from other rabbis, Rabbi So-and-So says this and that and the other thing. Jesus's teachings, verse 16, are not his own either. But he had something superior to any rabbi ever.

Verse 16. "So Jesus answers them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me." In other words, everything he taught came from God himself. Therefore, his teachings carry a weight, a gravitas, an authority, a relevance, that no rabbi, no school of rabbis, not even the whole history of rabbis could ever hope to give. And verse 16, notice he was "sent" here by the one whose Word he is teaching. So by rejecting Jesus, think about it, by rejecting Jesus, these leaders rejected the God that they were at the feast to worship. Oh, I'm here worshiping God. Jesus says, "No, you're not. If you reject me, you don't even know the God that you're here to worship."

When public opinion is a false Jesus, and when repentance is not an option for people, keep in mind what we just saw in the text. And point #2) ***Expect the Public to Discredit the Real Jesus. Expect the Public to Discredit the Real Jesus.*** If they're not going to submit to Jesus, they will seek to discredit him. We see this throughout the gospels, the early chapters of Acts, the religious authorities seek to discredit Jesus so that they don't have to deal with him. And I want you to see there are dozens of examples I can show you, but I want to show you one in John 8, because it's close, and it's particularly vicious. Look at John 8 and drop down to verse 39. Same group of religious authorities that he's talking to in chapter 7, He's talking to here in chapter 8.

It says, "They answered him, "Abraham is our father," 8:39. "Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me," there's that indication. These are the same religious authorities. "You seek to kill me, a man who

has told you the truth that heard from God." Sound familiar? "My teaching is not my own, it's from him who sent me." Verse 16.

"This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father, even God." It seems like a weird thing to say, right? It seems out of context. What are they saying, when they say that? "You are doing the works your father did." "We were not born of sexual immorality." Translation, like you were. Oh yeah, your mom was a virgin. Sure, whatever. No, she was unfaithful. That's how you were born. And notice, we have one Father. Translation? You have two. You have two, and you don't even know who your real dad is. You see how vicious they get with him? You see the hatred that comes out of them in this text? This kind of discrediting of Jesus is going to continue all the way into his trial, where false witnesses are brought forward, who discredit him, who try to get a conviction for execution.

And this is the thing, if you cannot handle the real Jesus, you have to seek to discredit him in order to maintain your rejection and your rebellion. The real Jesus demands that you respond. As I've said before, he's not a piece of art that you just look at, admire, and then walk away. He demands a response. If he is the Godman who became one of us to save us from the penalty, we all deserve for all of our sins, if that's who he really is, you have to discredit him, or what? Or you will believe. It's one or the other. These religious leaders are bringing up his education, not because they're amazed at this guy. Wow, he has no formal education, he's such a good teacher! That's not verse 15. They're bringing up his lack of formal education to discredit him, since so many people are walking away from them and listening to him. This is professional jealousy expressing itself and discrediting Jesus.

As you hear about all the false Christs of public opinion, and there are many, the reason for it is not because there's just this mountain of evidence that discredits the Bible, and Christians just believe what they do in the face of all that evidence, because they just believe what they believe, and don't bother me with the facts. No, it's just the opposite of that, in fact. Every objection to Christianity has a good answer. And since Christianity has been attacked from the very beginning, there are thousands of answers to the thousands of objections. The reason for the discrediting, the thing that gives you discernment as you look out into the world that is discrediting Jesus, is really simple. The real Jesus demands that I turn from my rebellion and trust in him. If I don't want to do that, if I want to keep my sin, which is where Jesus goes in verse 17, if I want to keep my sin, then I will discredit Jesus, I'll discredit the book about him in the New Testament, in order for me to keep my independence.

How often does public opinion seek to discredit the people that disagree with it? Been paying attention the past few years? It's the same thing here. Public opinion seeks to discredit Jesus, because Jesus assaults what they teach, and because he assaults how they treat the people who are trusting in the ones who create public opinion. So, expect public opinion to seek to discredit the real Jesus, and expect that the force of public opinion will influence the people you love, and that they will use credentials. Like here, "he's not approved teacher." Use their clout. "We know

what's true and they don't." Even use ridicule, like we're seeing in our text, to discredit the Jesus that you hold so dear.

And if you expect him to be discredited, then it's imperative that you equip yourself to answer the attacks. What discrediting do I know is coming from my kids and my grandkids, my friends, my family? How do I get the truth that I need, in order to help them with the truth that they're going to need, to combat the discrediting that you know they're going to face? Again, this is why we offer classes, and do podcasts, and write blogs, and preach the Bible almost every night of the week here. Why? It's all to try to shepherd you well, and part of shepherding is protecting you from the wolves of error.

Verse 17, Jesus further confronts their attempt to discredit him when he says, "If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I'm speaking on my own authority. The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but" now he refers to himself "the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood." He says, verse 16, "My teachings, not theirs, my teachings come from God, and you can evaluate my teachings, and really you can evaluate anyone's teaching, in the following way." Verse 17. Humanly speaking, if you want to know if teachings come from God, consider how much you want to do God's will. If doing God's will matters to you, if you want to do what God wants you to do, you will see a connection between that desire, Jesus says here, and whether or not you know his teachings are the real thing. You'll know God's Word, you'll know his words are true, when God's will is what you want.

In verse 18, humanly speaking, if you want to know if Jesus's teachings are from God, consider who gets the glory for the teaching. That's what he's saying to them. Does the teacher get the glory, or does the Father get the glory? The one who's speaking from himself, he's talking about them, the one who speaks from himself, speaking his own words, his own ideas, own theories, he's seeking glory and honor for himself, he says. But verse 18, by speaking the words of God, Jesus says that He's seeking God's glory, not his own. Which, he further says in verse 18, proves that what he's saying is true, and there's nothing false in him or nothing false coming out of him.

Now, again, it might not seem like it to us, but I tried to bring it out a little bit, this is a massive slam on these religious leaders. Why? Because they thought, "I exist to do God's will. I'm here in Jerusalem, at this feast, to do God's will. That's why I'm here." And he's saying, if that was really your motivation, then you would already know if my words are true or not. And you think my words are false, you're discrediting me? That proves God's will is not what's on your mind." And verse 18, He digs deeper into that, where he says there in verse 18, "The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory." This is all they did. I'm Rabbi So-and-So, and Rabbi So-and-So says this, Rabbi So-and-So says that. They only spoke on their own authority. Jesus says, that means that you're dominated by one thing: getting glory for yourself, not God.

What Jesus is doing here is he's exposing the motives for their rejection. So, it's important for us to point #3) ***Consider the Motives Behind Public Rejection. Consider the Motives Behind Public Rejection.*** What is it that's driving public opinion on Jesus? What motivates people to



reject Jesus? There are lots of reasons, but if we stick to the ones that we see in just our text, the reasons people reject Jesus are right here in what Jesus says to these leaders. First, people reject Jesus because they don't want to do God's will. They don't want to do God's will, because they want to do their will instead. They trust that what they want is better than what? Than what God wants. In other words, there's a lack of faith, which leads to a lack of repentance for their rebellion.

So, people reject Jesus because they don't want Jesus to be in charge, and public opinion is just a collective expression of that desire for Jesus not to be in charge. So he's got to be somebody else, he's got to be something else, because if he is the Godman, then that's calling on me to respond, and I don't want to, I want to keep my rejection. Just know rejecting Jesus is never a purely intellectual thing. The arguments are smoke screens, excuses that hide the truth, and the truth is they just want to be their own God. They do not want God telling them anything. They do not want God to have control over anything in their lives. They want to stay in their rebellion, and their refusal to repent is what drives public opinion.

So, no one is even close to being able to evaluate Jesus's words accurately and without bias until they've come to the point of wanting to honor God and do what He wants them to do. "I just need all my questions answered." Jesus says that's actually a lie. Instead, it should be, "I need to act on what I know God wants me to do; believing Jesus here that God will make things more clear as I do." So, are you willing to act on what you know God wants you to do? Until you are, you won't ever know if this Jesus thing is true, or if it's just a made-up adult fairytale. But in moments like this, you already know what God wants from you, and it is to believe. To put down your weapons and believe.

Second, people reject Jesus because they want the glory. So this is the discernment. The public rejection of Jesus is motivated by the desire for glory, for honor, recognition of their greatness, and Jesus is a threat to people's greatness. See, the person that wants glory for themselves, like these religious leaders who used God and used ministry to get glory for themselves, that motive blinds public opinion from the truth, because the motive for what they're saying is that people see how great we are, rather than how great God is. If I discredit Jesus, what am I doing? I'm robbing him of glory, and by doing so, what's happening? I'm taking that glory where? Giving it to me.

Jesus, verse 18, sought the glory of the Father in everything he said and everything he did. And because of that, notice verse 18, he, quote, "is true". He doesn't just speak truth, he, notice, "is true". And then he doubles down on this by saying what? "In him," referring to himself, "In him there is no falsehood." Question, anyone here want to raise their hand and say, I am true. There is no falsehood in me. Anybody want to do that? You know why you don't want to do that? Because you're not God. That's why. But here you have Jesus taking attributes of God, and what? Applying them to himself. Why? Because that's who he really is. Only God can accurately say these things about himself, and that's what Jesus does here, because that's who he really is.

So, when anyone expresses public opinion on Jesus, and it just so happens to express a rejection of the real, biblical Jesus, Jesus makes clear why that is happening, verse 17 and verse 18. It's

because the people expressing public opinion are in rebellion against what God wants, they are a rival to him, who want the glory that only belongs to God, they want that glory for themselves. So, when public opinion comes against what you know to be true from God's Word, true about God, true about Christ, and salvation, and all of that, now you don't have to worry. It's nothing new. It happened in Jesus's day, just like it happens in our day.

So just assume the Jesus that the public is pedaling is not the real Jesus, because it's not going to be. Expect that people who will not embrace the real biblical Jesus will seek to what? Will seek to discredit him, to prop up their false Jesus, in the hopes that that's enough to stay away and protect themselves from the real Jesus. At least that's what they believe in. And remember, the motives that drive the rejection that comes from public opinion. They do not want to do God's will, because they're actually rebels against him. But what they do want is what? God's glory, because they're actually rivals against him, rebels, and rivals. That is the heart expression that comes out of public opinion, rebels, and rivals.

I wonder if that describes you. I don't want to do what I know God wants me to do. I want to do what I want to do. I know God wants me to respond to this message in a certain way, but I don't want to. And in fact, if I look at my life if I'm honest, I want attention. I want people to see how great I am, not how great he is. See, if you're a rebellious rival here today, or if you're watching today, it is so that you would hear Jesus talking to rebels and rivals in our text and do what these rebels and rivals refuse to do, which is to lay down your weapons, to end your rebellion, to repent of your rebellion, and believe in Christ. To come to the one who loves rebels, who will forgive your rebellion, and turn you from a rebel and a rival into a child of God; forgiven, forever accepted in him. Just believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are hundreds of people here that Jesus has done that with, turned them into rebels and rivals, and if you were to ask them, they would say, it was the greatest moment of my entire life. Do not rob yourself of that reality by gripping, suicidally, onto your own rebellion as God's rival. Let it go. Come to the one who said he will give you rest for your soul, because your sins will be forever forgiven, the Lord Jesus Christ. Not a good man or a deceiver, the Godman. Let's pray.

Jesus's teaching through the Book of John is something that I've done many times before, but this time, what stands out to me loudest is how gracious you are to people that hate you. In your kindness, you confront them. In your kindness, you show them the truth, you hold up the mirror of truth so that they would repent. And yet, over, and over and over again, they refuse. I pray now that that would not be true for anybody within the sound of my voice. That they would not harden their heart, but that they would see the example of these hate-filled religious teachers and say, I don't want to be like them. I want to repent. I don't want to be a rebel against you. I want to believe. Please do that in the hearts of people here today and watching. Thank you. Thank you, Jesus for loving rebels. That truth gives hope, it gives peace, it gives joy, knowing that this is true about you. May that truth fill our hearts with gratitude and worship as we take communion and remember your death for our sins. For the glory of your name, Amen.