



Calvary of Albuquerque

What to Do with Jesus? - John 11:45-57

From the Series, Believe:879

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

Any lawyer can tell you that whenever the star witness is a resurrected corpse, you have a pretty good case! But Lazarus being alive from the dead doesn't seem to persuade everyone. And so the big issue becomes what shall we do with Jesus? The decisions made here set the clock in motion for an impending hate crime—the crucifixion of Christ. But from heaven's vantage point, this is all part of God's plan for redemption. Let's see the responses and how we can make a difference.

OUTLINE

- I. Division—People Are Divided over Christ (vv. 45-46)
- II. Discussion—People Will Often Discuss Christ
 - A. Some Are Afraid (vv. 47-48)
 - B. Some Are Calculated (vv. 49-52)
 - C. Some Are Indifferent (vv. 53-57)
- III. Determination—Some People Are Determined against Christ (vv. 53-54)



Talking Points:

1. Who was your rival in school? How serious was this rivalry? How do you feel about him/ her now? Could you ever be that person's friend?
2. In witnessing, how do you determine when it is best to be silent or to speak up? What help does this passage give you in making this decision?
3. When was the last time you took someone to lunch to have a discussion about Jesus?

DETAILED NOTES

Our choices are powerful and consequential: good or not good. Someone once said, "We make our choices and then our choices turn around and make us." Anytime a notable event happens, it takes time to process. We think it over and frame some kind of decision about that event so we can deal with it.

In his book *One Solitary Life*, James C. Hefley stated, "I am within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that One Solitary Life." How has He affected people? What are the common choices and decisions people make regarding Him? What do then do with Jesus? How can we help them make the right choice?

- I. Division--*People Are Divided over Christ* (vv. 45-46)
 - A. Many Jews believed
 - B. Some did not believe
 1. Would expect all would believe (not an evangelistic crusade, church service, or merely hear of them miracle; they saw the resurrection of Lazarus with their own eyes!)
 2. It is the hardness of a human heart that rejects an alien will ruling over them; it doesn't matter what they see.
 - a. They accuse Christians of being predisposed to belief
 - b. Unbelievers are predisposed to not believing
 - c. Children of Israel
 - Parting of the Red Sea
 - Mann from heaven every day
 - Water from a Rock
 - Pillar of cloud and pillar of fire led them through the wilderness
 - Their hearts were hardened

- d. When Jesus fed the multitudes with loaves and fish, soon after: "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more." (John 6:66)
 - e. Rich man and the poor beggar: "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'" (Luke 16:31)
- 3. According to Princeton University Religion Research Center, 82% of American adults agree with the statement: "Event today, miracles are performed by the power of God."
 - a. They are not all believers
 - b. Miracles don't cause belief
- 4. Some didn't just not believe, they told the Pharisees
 - a. Took the healed blind man to the Pharisees (See John 9:13)
 - b. Afraid to believe or do anything unless sanctioned by religious authority
 - c. It is a mistake to live your life through the lens of other people's approval

"Fearing people is a dangerous trap," (Proverbs 19:25)

What is your personal conviction based upon the truth of God's Word?

What does the Bible say?
- C. Division is not always a bad thing
 - 1. "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword." (Matthew 10:34)
 - 2. When people are clearly divided they know where they stand
 - 3. "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad." (Matthew 12:30)

II. Discussion--*People Will Often Discuss Christ*

A. Some Are Afraid

- 1. Saducees
 - a. Council - Συνέδριον - sunedrion Sanhedrin , seventy ruling elders of the Jews
 - b. Probably a smaller meeting of representatives
 - c. Don't deny the miracle occurred, but must decide how to deal with it
 - d. Sadducees
 - Not spiritual, liberal in their thinking
 - Didn't believe in the Old Testament except the first five books
 - Didn't believe in angels, spirits, or the resurrection
 - Political more than religious figures
 - Rich aristocracy of Jerusalem
 - Bowed to what Rome wanted to keep their position and money intact
- 2. Pharisees
 - a. Strictly religious
 - b. Believe the Bible and oral traditions
- 3. Sadducees' and Pharisees' hatred for Jesus exceeded their hatred for each other
 - a. Set aside their differences to come against Jesus
 - b. Didn't want to allow Jesus to get in the way of their interests
 - c. Their politics and status were at stake and were more important than spiritual truth or eternal life
 - d. *"Whoever seeks God as a meanstowarddesired endswill not findGod. God will not be used."* --A.W. Tozer

B. Some are Calculated

- 1. Caiaphas - High Priest
 - 1. Blasphemous statement "Either Jesus must die, or this nation is going to die"
 - 2. God spoke prophecy through the blasphemy
- 2. All around us, discussions are going on
 - a. People are vocal and unafraid to express their opinions
 - b. We should not be afraid to weigh in on the discussion
 - c. Average human will speak 370, 110,001 words. Commit to allocating some each day to tell others about Christ
 - d. "Anyone who has ever read the Bible knows that God wants us to be involved with spreading his good news far and wide. Nothing is more fulfilling than seeing ordinary people turned into extraordinary followers of God. Atheists who become missionaries. Once wayward kids who are now inspired worship leaders. Hardened inmates who become compassionate pastors. Former drug abusers who rescue the lives--and souls--of addicts. Is there anything better? That somehow, in some way, God might take this seemingly routine day and surprise me with an opportunity to tell someone about the good news that has the power to turn their life inside out." *The Unexpected Adventure: Taking Everyday Risks to Talk with People about Jesus* By Lee Strobel and Mark Mittleberg

III. Determination--*Some People Are Determined against Christ* (vv. 53-54)

- A. Plotted to put Jesus to death
- B. Set the gears in motion for the crucifixion of Christ
- C. Wanted to save their nation
- D. Thought they had eliminated Him, he came back to life and started something they were unprepared to deal with
 - 1. Thousands converted to Christianity
 - 2. In 70 A.D. ,Rome destroyed their city and their temple
 - a. According to Josephus, You couldn't tell a temple once stood there
 - b. "The very steps they took to save their nation were the steps that destroyed their nation." --William Barclay
 - c. John wrote his gospel in 90 A.D., 20 years after the destruction: the irony would not be lost on the readers at that time.
 - 3. Christianity continued to spread
- E. Schemes to get rid of Jesus
 - 1. Rome blamed the atrocities of their nation on the Christians (fed to Christians to lions, burned them at the stake, Caesar Nero used them as torches to light his garden, put believers in animal carcasses and let wild dogs hack them to pieces,

- molten lead was poured on them, etc.)
- 2. Diocletian - another wave of persecution (ministers imprisoned and killed, churches destroyed)
- 3. The more they were attacked the more they grew
- 4. Worldview of Christianity became the dominant view in the Roman Empire
- 5. 16th century, Friedrich Nietzsche wrote *The Antichrist* -called Christians sick , despicable animals
- 6. 18th century Voltaire: "Christianity is the most ridiculous, the most absurd, and bloody religion that has ever infected the world."
 - 1. Predicted his writings would eliminate Christianity in Europe
 - 2. Within twenty years of his death, the Geneva bible society bought his home, and used it as a center to distribute Bibles
- F. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise You;" (Psalm 76:10)
- G. New atheism
 - 1. Outspoken against Christianity, want to eliminate it
 - 2. Books by Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, etc.
- H. If you oppose Christ, you stand in the company of Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate, Caesar Nero, Diocletian, and what you try will not work. God will make it grow bigger.
- I. "The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the LORD and against his anointed one. 'Let us break their chains,' they cry, 'and free ourselves from this slavery.' But the one who rules in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them." (Psalm 2:2-4 NLT)
- J. "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:13-15)
 - 1. Salt
 - a. The world is corrupt
 - b. Salt prevents decay
 - c. Without you the world will decay faster than without your presence
 - d. Salt stops corruption
 - e. Salt adds flavor
 - 2. Light
 - a. The world is dark
 - b. Light dispels darkness
 - c. Light shows the way out of darkness
- K. "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." --Edmund Burke
- L. The only thing necessary for evil to abound and Satan to triumph is for God's men and women to say and do nothing.
- M. You must be engaged, because even among the most ardent unbelievers there may be a defector or two.
 - 1. Joseph of Arimathea
 - 2. Nicodemus

Application:

- 1. People are divided over Christ, so make sure you are very for Him.
- 2. People often discuss Christ, so weigh in on the discussion.
- 3. People are often determined against Christ. Don't let that scare you; live to see defectors.

Greek Terms: Συνέδριον - sunedrion Sanhedrin , seventy ruling elders of the Jews

Figures Referenced: A.W. Tozer; William Barclay; Edmund Burke; Voltaire

Publications Referenced: *One Solitary Life* by James C. Hefley; *The Unexpected Adventure: Taking Everyday Risks to Talk with People about Jesus* By Lee Strobel and Mark Mittleberg; *The Antichrist* By Friedrich Nietzsche

Cross References: Psalm 2:2-4; Psalm 76:10; Proverbs 19:25; Matthew 5:13-15; Matthew 10:34; Matthew 12:30; Luke 16:31; John 6:66; John 9:13