



**Seeking, Yet Unbelieving**  
**John 7:1-10**  
**Westport Christian Church**  
**May 2, 2010**

After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. "For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For not even His brothers were believing in Him. So Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. "Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come." Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee. But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret. (John 7:1-10NASU)

Have you ever been somewhere and did something that people thought was good, only to go home and have your own family disappoint you? I mean to them you are just who you are, nothing special. Or perhaps someone in the family is seeking some advice and you share with them your opinion and they just look at you like your crazy, and then call someone far away to get their opinion.

How important is it to you to have your family believe in you? It is true that brothers are

notoriously unsupportive of each other at times, and the Bible has plenty of examples of brothers who didn't get along, much less give support by believing in one another. Remember Cain and Abel? That didn't work out very well, did it? Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers...brothers have often had a difficult time appreciating and helping each other's spiritual growth. There are exceptions, but they are rare. The image the gospels give us indicates that Jesus lived with just such a difficult relationship with his brothers.

In the book of John, we come to this section dealing with the unbelief of Jesus' brothers. This was Jesus' half brothers we read listed in Matthew 13. The time had come for the feast of booths and His brothers were basically make fun of and antagonizing Him. I mean they are more or less telling Him, if you think you are so great you need to be out in the public eye. Get out there so everyone can see you. Get down there with your group of boys and show yourself to the world. Now don't get me wrong I don't think that they hated Him or anything like that. But the text does tell us in verse 5, "Not even His brothers were believing in Him.

I don't want to read into the Scripture something that isn't there but I would guess that Jesus' brothers loved Him, they just didn't understand who Jesus is! Now, I'm sure they had to be around when He did some of these miracles and I can't help believe that they were there when Jesus turned the water into wine. They may have been close by when He did some of the other healing but, the fact is they saw, they heard, but they didn't believe. They did not see Him as any different than themselves. While his miraculous powers must have amazed and astonished them, they did not accept his claims to be the Messiah. That is the meaning of these words, "his brothers did not believe in Him." So, today I would like for us to take a look at Jesus' brothers as to why they didn't believe and how they came to believe.

## I WHY THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE?

There are many reasons I'm sure we could speculate as to why they didn't believe, but I think one of the reason is perhaps, familiarity. Think about this just for a moment. Here are these men that grew up with Jesus, they stayed in the same house. They had the same chores; they went to the same school, they ate the same food. It's sad but I think that it's true so many times we grow up with someone in the same house yet we don't know them or in some cases have no respect for them. Perhaps that is the reason we read in Matthew 13 "He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household." And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief. (Matt 13:54-58)

Maybe they didn't believe in Him because of envy. Now, I'm sure that all of you came from perfect homes where no one was ever envy or jealous of another, so if Jesus' family was like yours there surely couldn't be that. Here is Jesus traveling around and everywhere He go there was a crowd or at least the twelve. "While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." (Matt 13:54-58)

This had to make it difficult on the family, don't you think? I mean after all you can't even meet with Him because He is always busy talking with someone else. Jealousy can be a powerful hindrance to seeing things clearly. And maybe they had their own reasons as to what they thought was right. Maybe that is what they meant in verses 2-4, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. "For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world."

You know I think it is easy to reject someone when they don't live up to our expectation. For whatever reason, His brothers did not believe He was the Messiah.

I feel that there is a warning for us. Do we let familiarity blind us to the truth? Do we reject what a close friend or relative may tell us? Especially since they have their own faults of which we are well aware? We need to keep in mind that truth can be communicated by imperfect messengers Paul states in Philippians 1 there were some who were going to share the truth with the wrong motive but the truth can still be proclaimed. Do we let envy get in the way of truth? Are we jealous that we might be wrong and others may be right? Do we think that by admitting others are right, it somehow makes them better?

Truth, salvation, is too precious to let envy or jealousy keep us from it. Do we let preconceived notions obstruct a clear evaluation of the truth? Are you refusing to reexamine your cherished beliefs? Just the other day I heard about a church that fired their preacher. It seems that for years this church had been practicing something that the preacher wanted to change. When the preacher stated to them that what they were doing was not Scriptural, their commit was, that's the way we have done it for years, so they fired him.

Truth requires a willingness to hear and has nothing to fear from investigation. We must not allow ourselves to become so familiar with the things around us that we no longer see Jesus for who He is, the Messiah.

## II. HOW THEY CAME TO BELIEVE?

We know by reading and studying the Scriptures that Jesus' brothers did come to know Him as the Messiah. James became the leader in the church in Jerusalem, and is the author of the book of James from our New Testament.

Jude, himself became a major part of the spreading of the gospel and today we have his letter recorded in the Bible as well. According to secular history, James and Jude were both martyred for their faith. So, what brought about the change? What made the difference? The resurrection of Jesus from the dead! Jesus appeared to James as well as the others. (1 Co.15:7) The significance of Jesus' resurrection proved that He was the Messiah. Miracles can be faked, rising from the dead cannot! -- The resurrection shattered any blinders of familiarity, envy and preconceptions.

A BLESSING FOR US TODAY... It is understandable that one might find the gospel story incredible. A man born of a virgin? A man who was the Son of God? A man who supposedly... 1) Walked on water? 2) Calmed the seas? 3) Fed thousands with five loaves and two fish? 4) Healed the sick and lame, gave sight to the blind, raised the dead? 5) Was Himself raised from the dead? Yet there are more good reasons to believe the incredible story, like the conversion of those like Jesus' brothers, who at first did not believe for whatever reason and then came to know Him as Lord. Who were persuaded by overwhelming empirical evidence - Acts 1:3 To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Acts 10:39-41 "We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. What else can explain the transformation of Jesus' brothers? It was the same thing that transformed the disciples of Jesus! An Orthodox Jewish scholar put it this way, "If the disciples were totally disappointed and on the verge of desperate flight because of the very real reason of the crucifixion, it took another very real reason in order to transform them from a band of disheartened and dejected Jews into the most self-confident missionary society in world history." - Pinchas Lapide, former Chairman of the Applied Linguistics Department at Israel's Bar-Ilan University (TIME, May 7, 1979) 3) This scholar concluded that a bodily resurrection could possibly have been that reason! It would have been enough evidence for the conversion of His brothers and others who first doubted. It should also strengthen our faith in Jesus!

CONCLUSION; The unbelief of Jesus' brothers should serve as a warning to each of us. How easily such things as familiarity, envy, and preconceptions can blind one. The unbelief of Jesus' brothers should also serve as a blessing. Their eventual conversion implies overwhelming evidence of Jesus' resurrection. Since we believe in Jesus through the words of such men, the foundation of our faith is stronger with the help of their own example. We can heed the exhortation given by one of Jesus' brothers: "But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life." (Jude 20-21)

Does this describe your faith today? Are you sold out to Jesus? Do you allow Jesus full access to your life and heart? Can He say as well as do whatever He wills with you? This is the ultimate goal of faith. That Jesus Christ so rules our lives, we bow before him and submit ourselves fully to his works and words.

I pray this morning that you not be seeking and unbelieving, but that you be seeking and believing.

AMEN