

## Sermon Summary

Life in Jesus.Church

John Series: **Sent to Bear Witness**

Tim Keller, **John 12:37-50**

**January 9, 2022**

### Introduction

This is the last part of the last Sermon Jesus delivered to the public. After this...he goes to the upper room with the disciples to give them instruction before they are "sent out". But we can know that in this last teaching, Jesus is delivering an important, but not an easy message. He gives us three difficult truths: *you need my power to believe, you need my light in the darkness, and your only hope is the judgement of God.*

### ***You need my power to believe***

In verse 37, Jesus tells us that many who saw the miracles did not believe. And he gives us two reasons why that is true. First, God has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts. Then, in verse 43, he says they loved human praise more than the praise of God. THEY hardened their own hearts. We are told the same thing in Exodus as Moses asked Pharaoh to let his people go. Various passages in Exodus say, God hardened Pharaoh's heart, but in Chapters 7-9, it also says in several places that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Which is it?

This is one of the most important teachings in the bible, without which you can't understand big swaths of what the bible says. (God said to his people, "I am sending Assyria to attack you as punishment! But he also said, I will punish Assyria for the evil intent they had in their hearts.)

Is God in control of our choices, or are we responsible for our own choices? The answer? "Totally". Because the bible teaches on the one hand, that everything that happens, happens according to God's plan. Everything you do *or decide* is in his plan. Your choices are yours to make and you are responsible for them. Both are true. We think the relationship between God's control and free will is a zero sum game. We can't comprehend how this can be true. Keller tells us he has been preaching for 40 years and he still doesn't understand this. But he adds that this truth is wonderful and couldn't be better and more practical for 3 reasons.

1) *I can have initiative, but still experience peace.* Do you really want your wisdom to control how your life goes? Talk about anxiety! But if all I do is "fated", I become cynical and passive...why do or decide anything? Look at the lives of Jacob and Joseph. They made many stupid decisions...but there was no plan B. They were not coerced, but they were responsible. It was all in God's plan. God didn't say, "Now what is the best I can do...they screwed up!". Every stupid thing they did was woven into a perfect plan A. Even our choices are part of his plan.

2) *This truth leads to humility.* You chose to believe, but Jesus says in John 6:44 that, "I didn't love you because you loved me...you loved me because I chose you!" I wasn't chosen for what I accomplished...Jesus just loved me because he chose to! I want to think I am somehow better than others...this truth leads me back to humility.

3) *This truth gives us security.* My future...my security comes from God, not from me! God chose us in love before the foundation of the world. Even if I make bad choices, his love will always be on me. He said so, and I can know it is true.

### ***You need my light in the darkness***

In verse 46, Jesus says, "I have come as a light that no one should stay in darkness." He isn't saying you "might" live in darkness if you don't believe, he is saying, "You ARE in darkness now, and your only hope is me." Darkness is a metaphor...one that we also use. Darkness is a metaphor for hope. "I am really having a rough time, but I can see the light at the end of the tunnel." Darkness is also a metaphor for evil. Jesus is saying this world does not have the resources to provide you with hope or to provide a solution for evil. He is saying, "Only I can give you that!"

*Consider hope.* Secular science, without religion, assumes everything has a natural cause. Man exists for no particular reason, and that nothing man does will affect the progress of the universe. Hopes, fears, beliefs and feelings don't matter. We will all rot, die and be forgotten. That is darkness, and without Jesus, there is no hope for the future.

*Consider evil.* The world does not offer a solution for evil. We have laws...but as Martin Luther King pointed out...some laws are unjust! A just law is a manmade code that is in harmony with the law of God. Man made laws are put in place by those with the most power, but many are unjust and don't solve the problem of evil. But if there is light, something beyond this world...eternal law...then we can know what is right...just and unjust.

### ***Your only hope is Judgement Day***

In verses 47-50, Jesus is saying there will be a judgement day. Another difficult message to hear. In verse 48 he says, "*There will be a judge on the last day.*" As Christians that should make us feel *really excited, but scared to death.* If there was no judgement day, there would be no hope for justice in the world. But as Christians, *we should be excited* because we know that's when every sin is paid for, every wrong made right. If there was no judgement day, man would have to take it on himself. But because there is a judgement day, we can know God will make everything perfectly right on that day, something man could never do.

But we should also be *scared to death.* No one has clean hands...who thinks they can stand before a righteous judge on judgement day? But we see the answer in verse 47. Jesus says, "I didn't come to judge the world (this time) but to save it." He didn't come to bring judgement, but to bear judgement for our sins. The one who has the right to judge the world was being judged. He took our sins. Our judgement day has already happened. And he says, "Come to me, and I will give you rest."

What comfort should Judgement Day bring us? We have hope for a future, but also peace for today. *I can look forward to seeing again, the one who took my judgement and died for me. He will return, but he will embrace you!*

To summarize, Jesus says in his last public teaching, "Know my love, my light and my power!"