

John 7:31–36

<sup>31</sup> And many of the people believed in Him, and said, “When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?”

<sup>32</sup> The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.

<sup>33</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me.

<sup>34</sup> You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.”

<sup>35</sup> Then the Jews said among themselves, “Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?

<sup>36</sup> What is this thing that He said, ‘You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come’?”

### **“Seeking Christ” John 7:31-36**

INTRO:

We have listened in on our Lord’s conversation with the crowd at the feast of booths. You will remember Jesus arrived at the middle of the feast and began to teach in the Temple. His presence and teaching sparked varied responses from the people there at the feast. Some marveled at Him because He knew the Scriptures so well, and had not studied at the feet of a recognized rabbi. Others (the Pharisees and the religious leaders) sought to have Him arrested and killed.

**Verse 33** is a turning point in this conversation and in this Gospel. *“Then Jesus said to them, ‘I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me.’”* This is the first time, the Lord Jesus spoke of *“going away.”* There would be an end to our Lord’s earthly mission. He said this right after the religious leaders sent some officers to arrest Him. Then we read, *“Then Jesus said to them, ‘I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.’”* Why could they not come where Jesus was going?

*I. The Leaders Could Not Come Because They Would Not Submit to God (v. 31-32).*

*II. The Jews Could Not Come Because They Did Not Understand (v. 35-36).*

*III. We Can Come Because We Believe in Him (John 13:33-36).*

*I. The Leaders Could Not Come Because They Would Not Submit to God (v. 31-32).*

*“The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.” Verse 32*

A. Remember what we read in verse 31,  
*“And many of the people believed in Him, and said, ‘When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?’”*

These words struck terror in the hearts of these Pharisees. The worst-case scenario as far as they were concerned was for the crowd to somehow think that Jesus was the Messiah. So, they went to their enemies and made a deal to send the Temple authorities to arrest Him.

B. When Jesus heard this, Jesus said what He said in **verse 33**. The word translated **“then”** is really **“therefore”** in the Greek. Because Jesus knew what the Pharisees and chief priests did, He said the words He said to the crowd. These words were first a response to the leaders. He said, **“where I am you cannot come.”**

1. Why could they not come? Jesus diagnosed their basic problem back in **verse 17** when He said,

**“If anyone wills to do [God the Father’s] will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.”**

2. These **“spiritual leaders”** really had no desire to obey God. They had their own system of religion. They had their own way of approaching God, and in their own minds God was obligated to take them on their terms. The truth is, God takes no one on their own terms. He takes us on His. We must come to Him by faith in His Son. We come not resting in our efforts, but only upon His mercy.

**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” Titus 3:5.**

## ***II. The Jews Could Not Come Because They Did Not Understand (v. 35-36).***

A. Not only would the religious leaders not be able to follow Jesus, a majority of the Jewish people in the crowd also could not go where Jesus was going.

**“Then the Jews said among themselves, ‘Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What is this thing that He said, ‘You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come?’”**

B. While in the Gospel of John the phrase **“the Jews”** usually refers to the spiritual leaders of the Jews, I suspect that this group is the same as the group described earlier in **verse 25** as: **“some of them from Jerusalem.”** These were those who lived in Jerusalem, most likely a large percent of the crowd. They also would not be able to follow Him to where He was going. Why could they not follow Jesus to where He was going?

1. They could not follow because they could not understand what Jesus was saying. Their mindset was on physical things. If He was going away, they could not recognize that He was talking about going to heaven to be with God the Father. In their mind going away was going away from Jerusalem among the Jews scattered among the Gentiles.

2. Although Jesus was abundantly clear, they could not understand. Some people will never come to the Lord to save them, because they cannot understand the truth of the Gospel. This underlines two very important points when it comes to sharing the Gospel with others. First, when we share the Gospel we must be crystal clear in what a person must believe to be saved. If the Gospel is not understood, it cannot be accepted. Second, even when we do our best to be clear, unless the Lord works in the heart, they still cannot understand and believe.

***“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”***

**1 Corinthians 2:14.**

Even the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, was not understood!

### ***III. We Can Come Because We Believe in Him (John 13:33-36)***

A. While the leaders would not come to Christ because they did not submit to God, and the Jews could not come because they did not understand, there are some who can and will go to the Lord Jesus in eternity.

B. We read of those who will be able to follow Him to His Father later in John’s Gospel. In **John 13:33-36** we read,

***“Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.’ Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, where are You going?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.’”***

In the context of **John 13**, the disciples except for Judas are in the upper room with Jesus. As Jesus spoke of His departure to the Father, He reminded them of what He said to the Jews on two occasions. You will seek me, He says, and ***“as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’”***

1. If all we had was **verse 33**, we would think that those who follow Jesus have no more hope than the unbelieving Jewish crowd. But **verse 33** is only the beginning of our Lord’s thought, He finishes the thought in **verse 36**,

***“Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.”***

He interrupts the thought to tell us what we need to be doing in the meantime. After we become His disciples and before we go home to heaven, we need to love one another.

2. How will this happen? How will the disciples (and us) someday be with the Lord Jesus and God the Father? Jesus outlined it in this very conversation in **John 14:1-6**,

***“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”***

We will go to Him because He will come back and take us to be with Him.

3. How can we be sure that we are of the number for whom He will return or who go to be with Him when they die? This is where Thomas’ question is so special. Jesus said, ***“I am the way (to God and to eternal life). I am the truth. I am the reality of what life is all about. In fact, I am life itself. The way to God the Father is exclusively through Me, the Lord Jesus Christ alone.”*** (my extended translation).

4. The only way we can go to be with Him is if we come to Him now by faith. We come by faith in Christ alone to save us. In a real sense we need to seek Him now if we are to go to be with Him later.

C. Now let us try to apply all of this.

1. The first thing we need to ask is, "Are you and I one of His disciples?" Have we come to Him by faith alone and received Him as our Savior and Lord? He said in **John 6**, ***"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."***

2. Second, if we are one of His disciples, are we actively seeking Him in a day by day relationship by faith? Are we abiding in His love so that we can love our brothers and sisters in the Lord?

3. Third, can we help others find Him? Are we seizing every opportunity that the Lord gives us to share who He is and what He has done with those who do not know Him?

**Hymn #511 *Now I Belong to Jesus***