

# How to be with Him

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Let us turn to **John 7: 32-36**

## **John 7: 32-36**

- 32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.
- 33 Therefore Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me.
- 34 "You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come."
- 35 The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?
- 36 "What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"

It is helpful for us to ponder over the life of the Lord Jesus, how He lived His life, how He related with people, how He responded to situations. From here, we can understand more how we can relate with the Lord Jesus in a way that would be meaningful. If we call Him Lord, then we need to know who He is and what He expects of us.

In this context, we are told that the Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him. The crowd, they were talking about the Lord Jesus and different ones had different opinions; and in that situation, the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.

We are then told: Therefore Jesus said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come."

Why did the Lord Jesus say that the Jews would not find Him and would not be able to go to where He was going? What was the intended meaning? What was the significance to the Jews, and what is the significance to us?

Did the Lord Jesus imply that the Jews would very much like to be with Him and they would like to follow Him wherever He went but they would not be able to find Him, they would not be able to be with Him? Was that what the Lord Jesus was saying, that those who loved Him, who wanted to follow Him, would not be able to find Him, would not be able to be with Him?

If we look at the context, we know that that basically is not the meaning. We are told that the context was: the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. Therefore Jesus said... He was responding to that situation. They were seeking to seize Him and He said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come."

We look at the context: The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"

The Jews did not understand; they did not know what the Lord Jesus was saying. They wondered: Was He intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, that means, not stay amongst the people in Judea, in Galilee, but to go amongst the Dispersion (the Jews who were among the Greeks), so these people here would not find Him?

Why is it they did not understand what the Lord Jesus was saying?

One of the reasons as I see from the context is that they were not paying close attention to what the Lord Jesus said. And this often is the case.

In our lives, it is the same. There are many things that God wants to tell us but because we are not paying close attention, we do not know what He is saying.

Notice the Lord Jesus said: "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me." He said: "I am going to Him who sent Me." So that is the reason why they would not be able to find Him, they would not be able to be with Him: They could not go there.

What then was the Lord Jesus saying?

Why did the people respond in that way?

As we have seen in the various situations where the Jews responded to the Lord Jesus, most of the time they were thinking at the natural plane, they were thinking at the physical level; they were thinking in terms of what was naturally important to them, what they were motivated to do, and what they wanted to have. Their thoughts were in the direction that the Lord Jesus might go among the Dispersion, living among the Greeks and also to teach the Greeks.

But He said: "I am going to Him who sent Me."

If the Jews had paid attention, they would have known the Lord Jesus was speaking about God, His Father, who sent Him into this world, and He was going back to Him, but He would be with them a little longer.

"You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come." If we look at the next **Chapter**, we may see a bit more as to why the Lord Jesus said these words.

#### **John 8: 21-24**

- 21 Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."  
 22 So the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?"  
 23 And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.  
 24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

If we look at the context in **John 8**, again it is a situation where the Jews were seeking to kill Him, and the Lord Jesus said again to them: "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come." If we compare this with **John 7**, you will notice that in **John 7**, He said: "You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come." Here, in **John 8**, He said: "you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."

So this phrase "will die in your sin" comes in between these two aspects that He mentioned: "I go away, and you will seek Me"; and the other aspect: "where I am going, you cannot come."

So if we look at the whole context, we can see that the Lord Jesus was addressing the people who were sinful, who were bent in an evil direction; and they were seeking to kill Him. To this group of people, He told them: "You will seek Me, and YOU will not find Me... where I am going, you cannot come."

But the Lord Jesus made a qualification. He said in **verse 24**: "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." So that statement, "...you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come", is qualified by this part where He says, "...unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

That means the Lord Jesus is telling them: "If you truly believe in Me, you will seek Me and you will find Me; and where I go, you can come."

We can consider this further another time but for the time being, I want to concentrate on this aspect: We are living in a world where there are two opposite directions – moving in the positive moral direction or in the negative moral direction. And the Lord Jesus is perfectly good: so our attitude towards Him will determine the outcome of our lives.

The Lord Jesus said: "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world."

What was He saying?

First, He is telling them He is not like them: He is from above – He came from Heaven, He is the Lord, He is God who has come into this world. That is one aspect of what He was saying: "I am from above... You are from below".

But the Lord Jesus was not only saying that He came from heaven. He said: "...you are of this world, I am not of this world." And here, He is referring to their identification with the world, the direction of the world. That is why the Lord Jesus told His disciples: "...you are not of the world...I chose you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you."

The Lord Jesus had not taken His disciples physically out of the world. But when we repent and we truly believe in the Lord Jesus, in our hearts we are moving away from the world – we are being taken out of the world. And that is the critical issue. The Lord Jesus came from above: He came from heaven to bring this about.

Although the Jews were opposed to Him - many of them were seeking to kill him - the Lord Jesus was giving them an opportunity to repent.

He said: "You will die in your sins if you continue this way. You will seek Me, you will not find Me. Where I go, you cannot come." But if they were to repent, if they were to believe in Him, then the situation would change.

The Lord Jesus came to save the world. He knew that we were sinners. His purpose in coming into this world is precisely to save those who are sinful, those who have gone astray. It is those who are sick that need a physician; those who are well do not need a physician. The Lord Jesus came to call sinners.

But being a sinner does not mean that we have to continue to remain a sinner and also, there are many different kinds of sinners.

There are sinners who have gone astray and have no intention of changing their way of life. They want to continue to live self-centred lives. These are unrepentant sinners.

There are other sinners who have gone astray, they recognize they are wrong, they want to change; they seek forgiveness from God, they seek God's help to be changed. And these are the sinners who can be saved, who can be helped.

So if we want to benefit from what the Lord Jesus has done in coming into this world to save sinners, then we need to appreciate what the Lord Jesus sought to do and how we can benefit.

When the Lord Jesus said, "...unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins", what did He mean by that?

This is where many people may think: What is important is to help unbelievers to recognize the Lord Jesus is the Saviour of the world – He died on the cross for us – if you believe that, you will be saved. Is that true? Maybe... maybe not... It depends on what that belief means to you.

If you believe that the Lord Jesus died on the cross for mankind – just recognition of that reality – you will not be saved just by that recognition. You may even tell other people about it. You can even profess that as a fact. You will not be saved.

The belief that will save us has to do with the change of direction in our heart – repentance – and then trusting the Lord for forgiveness and His enabling to transform our lives.

So there has to be the response of our heart. The primary aspect has to do with our attitude and our response toward the Lord Jesus, including who He is and the meaning and direction of His life.

He says: “I come from above.” Do you believe that? Do you recognize that to be true, that He is not just an ordinary man, that He is God Himself come from heaven to save us? He dwelt amongst us as Man. And do we recognize that when He came into this world and dwelt with us as a Man, He was not of this world? He did not live like the people of this world. He did not follow their values: the spirit of the world. He lived on the basis of the will of God: that which is perfect and good. He was always conscious of what is the right path.

So if we are to believe in Him, it must include our identification with Him, to live as He did – that is, we also cannot remain in this world in our hearts. We have to be prepared to change our whole way of life that we will live the way that the Lord Jesus lived.

It is not just profession – what we say we believe – but are we true to what we believe?

The Lord Jesus came into this world because He loved us. God sent Him into this world because He loved us.

Do we truly love God and do we truly love what is good? Do we truly care for others in the way we ought to do? So that is an issue that all of us will have to consider: The reality of our faith, what does it mean?

The Lord Jesus told His disciples who were sincere, who wanted to follow Him, and He said, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not do the things that I say?” That is a contradiction: You say you believe but you do not live by what you believe.

So this is an aspect that we need to consider deeply. Do we want to be with Him? Do we really want to be with Him? Will we be comfortable to be with Him?

Many of us think it is a good idea to be with the Lord Jesus: We seek Him, we find Him; where He goes, we can go.

But that will be meaningful to us only if we truly love Him and we love what He loves. The things that are precious to Him, that are important to Him: that is what is precious to us, important to us. The way He loved the world is the way we will love the world, in terms of the people in the world. The way we reject the world is the same as the way that the Lord Jesus rejects the world, in terms of the spirit of the world, the direction of the world.

So while the Lord Jesus loved all mankind, we see the Lord Jesus was always opposed to that which was morally negative.



He always took that stand. That is why he rebuked the Pharisees for the way they lived their lives. That is why He showed compassion towards the sinners who repented.

But it does not mean that we must become very sinful people who repent then the Lord will appreciate us.

We look at the example of Daniel. He lived his life from childhood, seeking to honour the Lord. Yes he also failed, but he set his heart when he was young to really follow the Lord, and the Lord watched over him, helped him, nurtured him, and the Lord appreciated his life.

So we must not think that the more we sin, the more the grace of God would be manifested and that would be a good thing. No. God's grace is for us when we do sin.

But we are to work hard not to sin. We are to work hard to be like Him, to be transformed, to live like Him. But when we do fail, we recognize it. Yes, we must deal with it as soon as possible. We should not let the sin continue to grow and develop layer after layer. We should deal with it, seek the Lord's forgiveness and respond more deeply to Him. In that way, we will be able to seek Him and find Him and where He is, we will also be.

So then, as we come before the Lord, let us consider our love for the Lord. To what extent do we truly love Him by the way we live our lives each day?

Are we walking according to what is pleasing to Him where, when He looks at our lives, He will say, "This is a meaningful path: I appreciate your life and I will be with you, I will be close to you"?

Or is it such that when we live our lives each day, the Lord Jesus finds it very difficult to draw near to us because our hearts are occupied with the things of the world, not the things of eternity; and we continue to seek for the things of this world?

So that is something that each one of us will have to ponder over before the Lord and ask Him to help us to respond more deeply to Him and to become what we ought to be.