

Introduction

Karen and I were playing wordle at lunch last week, and the word for the day was really stumping us; neither one of us could figure it out. I was unrelenting and determined to solve the puzzle. I stayed at the table for twenty minutes trying every combination of letters possible until I eventually tried knell. I had to look up the definition, since neither of us knew the word. It means the sound of a bell rung solemnly for a death or funeral. Jesus was not unrelenting in playing Wordle, but He was unrelenting in His pursuit to save the lost. In Luke 19:10, we read that the Son of Man had come to seek and to save that which was lost. Jesus was unrelenting in His searching and seeking to save the lost, which included the Pharisees, who were seeking to put Him to death.

(Lk 19:10) “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

In the song, One Thing Remains, composed by Brian Johnson, he wrote about God's unrelenting love. The song is talking about God's love for us, and it never fails and never gives up. God is love, and this unrelenting love of God reveals His character. God is unrelenting in His love and pursuit of us. Here are the words to the chorus:

(Ch) Your love never fails, never gives up, never runs out on me.

(V2) On and on and on and on it goes... (it overwhelms and satisfies my soul. And I never, ever, have to be afraid. One thing remains

In Philippians, Paul wrote that he was convinced that He (God) who began a good work in us would be faithful to complete it. God is unrelenting in His work in our lives.

(Php 1:6) “*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*”

In regard to pursuing the lost, God is unrelenting as well. In Luke 15, Jesus told the parable about the lost sheep. The shepherd left the ninety-nine sheep to search for the one lost sheep. When he found the sheep, he rejoiced that he had found the lost sheep.

(Lk 15:4–5) “What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? {5} “When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.”

Then Jesus told a second parable, this time about a woman who had ten silver coins and lost one of them. The woman lit a lamp and swept the house and searched carefully until she found that one coin. Then she rejoiced over finding the coin that she had lost.

(Lk 15:8–10) “Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? {9} “When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!’ {10} “In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

The main point of these parables was to talk about the attitude we should have about sinners who repent. His next parable was about the prodigal son, who represented sinners who repent. The

older brother represents the Pharisees, and he did not have the right attitude about his brother who had repented. The father wanted the older brother to rejoice that his younger brother, who was lost, had been found. I am just drawing one additional point from these parables, and that was shepherd's pursuit of the lost sheep, and the woman's pursuit of the lost coin. Jesus is unrelenting in His search for the lost sheep.

In our passage today, Jesus is unrelenting in His pursuit of the Pharisees. He knows that they have plotted evil against Him and have determined to put Him to death. He also knows that His time is not yet; His hour has not yet come. Jesus had come to seek and to save that which was lost, and the Pharisees and religious leaders were lost. Even though many of them were hostile, He was unrelenting in His pursuit to save them.

This could have been Part 4 of My Time Is Not Yet Here. Jesus went to the Feast of Booths, and He was still in Jerusalem, and this is a continuation from John 7:52. The chief priests and Pharisees had sent officers to seize Him, but they had been amazed at His teaching and had not arrested Him. Some of the crowd had also wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him because His hour had not yet come. Even though they are wanting to put Him to death, He knows that His time is not yet, and He is pursuing them with the gospel message. He is unrelenting in His pursuit to save some of them. In verse twenty, the Pharisees wanted to seize Him, but no one seized Him because His hour had not yet come.

As a footnote, the story of the adulterous woman that was inserted between our text today and where we left off in John 7:52, is not believed to have been written by John. Most scholars do not believe it should be included in the gospel and is not authentic. That text is not found in any of the original manuscripts and did not appear in any scriptures until the fifth century (AD 400-450), and primarily in the Byzantine manuscripts. Our text is a continuation from John 7:52. It is still the Great Day of the Feast, Jesus is still at the temple, and everyone has not gone home yet. Jesus has another conversation with the Pharisees where He shares the gospel with them.

In our message today, we will look at Jesus' pursuit of the Pharisees in the temple at the treasure. Second, we will look at His next pursuit of the Pharisees in the temple. In the second conversation with them, He is still in the temple, but we are not sure of exactly where.

Jesus' Unrelenting Pursuit

1. Jesus Pursues the Pharisees Again at the Treasury (Jn 8:12-20)
2. Jesus Pursues the Pharisees Again (Jn 8:21-30)

(Jn 8:12–20) “Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” {13} So the Pharisees said to Him, “You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.” {14} Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. {15} “You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. {16} “But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone *in it*, but I and the Father who sent Me. {17} “Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. {18} “I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.” {19} So they were saying to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.” {20} These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.”

(Jn 8:21–30) “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.” {25} So they were saying to Him, “Who are You?” Jesus said to them, “What have I been saying to you *from* the beginning? {26} “I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world.” {27} They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father. {28} So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. {29} “And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.” {30} As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.”

1. Jesus Pursues the Pharisees Again at the Treasury (Jn 7:37-38, 8:12-20)

It was the last day of the feast, and Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” Jesus has just cried out with a big, booming voice, so that the thousands of people who were there could hear what He was saying. He wanted everyone to hear the gospel invitation. Jesus wanted people to know that the invitation was open to anyone who had a spiritual thirst. He was inviting people to believe in Him. Some of the people heard these words and believed, yet others did not believe, and wanted to seize Him.

(Jn 7:37–38) “Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. {38} “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”

After the Pharisees met with the officers and inquired why they had not arrested Jesus, Jesus spoke to the Pharisees AGAIN. He was unrelenting in His pursuit of them. Even though they wanted to put Him to death, He was reaching out to them with the gospel message. Even though they had rejected His message, and the authentication of His identity by the signs that He did, Jesus was still pursuing them. He spoke to them again, and said, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

(Jn 8:12) “Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

This is one of seven “I AM” statements that Jesus made in the gospel of John. He said: “I Am” the bread of Life (Jn 6:35); I Am the Light of the world (Jn 8:12); I Am the Gate (Jn 10:9); I Am the good Shepherd (Jn 10:11); I Am the Resurrection and the Life (Jn 11:25); I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life (Jn 14:6); and I Am the true Grapevine (Jn 15:1).”

John began his gospel by writing that Jesus was the Light of men. John the Baptist was not the light; he was just a witness to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through Him. Jesus is the true Light which coming into the world, enlightens every man. In Jesus there is life. Those who believe in Jesus have the Light of life, and will not walk in darkness.

(Jn 1:4-9) "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. {5} The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. {6} There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. {7} He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. {8} He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light. {9} There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man."

There is a contrast of light and darkness. Light represents righteousness and darkness represents sin. The world is in darkness or sin. Everyone in the world is in sin, which results in death. Jesus came to bring light, or righteousness, so that people could have life. Those that believe in Jesus and follow Him will not walk in darkness, but have the Light of life.

The Pharisees rejected what Jesus said, saying, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true." The Pharisees had seen the same signs that everyone else saw. They saw the man at the pool of Bethesda healed and carrying his pallet. They had seen others healed. When Nicodemus had come to Jesus, he had said, "WE know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these SIGNS that You do unless God is with him." The "we" is the Pharisees and rulers of Israel. These religious leaders saw signs, not just one, but many signs. These signs bore witness that Jesus was from God. Yet the Pharisees are rejecting Jesus and His testimony.

(Jn 8:13) "So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true."

(Jn 3:2) "this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God *as* a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Jesus answered them, saying, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going." Earlier that day, Jesus had told them that they know Him, and where He was from. He said that He had not come of Himself, but was sent there by the Father, who is true. He had told them that in a little while He was going away to Him who sent Him, and where He was going they could not go.

(Jn 8:14) "Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going."

(Jn 7:28-29) "Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. {29} "I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me."

(Jn 7:33-34) "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."

God is righteous and holy. Sin can not come into the presence of God. Because of Adam, all men are born into sin. In Isaiah 53:6, he said that all of us like sheep have gone astray; each of us have turned to our own way. our sins have separated us from God. In Isaiah 59:2, he said that our sins have made a separation between us and God.

(Is 53:6) “All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

(Is 59:2) “But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden *His* face from you so that He does not hear.”

Next, Jesus tells them that they judge according to the flesh, and that He is not judging anyone. Jesus came to save, not to judge. When Jesus returns, He will be returning to judge, but that was not why the Father sent Him. In John 3:17, Jesus said, “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.” Jesus came to save people from their sins. Jesus came so that those who believe in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life with God.

(Jn 8:15) “You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone.”

(Jn 3:16–17) “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. {17} “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

Next, Jesus said that even if He did judge, His judgment would be true, because He was not alone in it. Jesus was sent by the Father, and He only did what the Father told Him. When Jesus comes again, He will come as the judge, and His judgment will be true. For those who have rejected Him, and His payment for their sins, they will not go to heaven, where Jesus and the Father are. The only way to have life is to believe in Jesus.

(Jn 8:16) “But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone *in it*, but I and the Father who sent Me.”

Jesus reminded the Pharisees that in the Law the testimony of two men was considered true. He said that He testified about Himself, and the Father who sent Him also testified about Him.

(Jn 8:17-18) “Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. {18} “I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.”

In John 5, Jesus spoke about how John the Baptist had testified of who He was. Then, He said that the works which the Father had given Him to accomplish, those very works that He was doing, testify that the Father had sent Him. These signs that Jesus had been doing were the testimony of God that Jesus was the Messiah, and that He had been sent by Him. Jesus is telling them the same thing one more time. He is patiently reaching out to the Pharisees, so that some of them might believe and have eternal life.

(Jn 5:36) “But the testimony which I have is greater than *the testimony of* John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.”

The Pharisees responded, saying, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered them, “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.” Jesus is telling them that He and the Father were One and the same. It is a claim to His deity. It is also a statement about the pathway to God. Jesus is the only way to the Father. To have eternal life with the Father, one must believe in Jesus. This conversation ends with a summary statement by John,

saying that Jesus spoke these things in the treasury, as He taught in the temple. No one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.”

(Jn 8:19-20) “So they were saying to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also. {20} These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.”

Where is the treasury? It is located in the Women's Court and it is where people brought their offerings. Some depictions of the temple label a room in the corner of the court of women as the treasury, which is incorrect. The Treasury was not a room, but the whole area. As you come into the court of the women through the Beautiful gate, there are four rooms, one at each corner of the courtyard. The first room on the right is the Wood Chamber, where wood was brought for the sacrifices. In the far-right corner is the Leper's Room. This is where a leper who had been cleansed was to bring his required offerings. (See Leviticus 14.) On the left side of the room as you come through the gate is the Nazirite Room. Those that had taken a Nazirite vow and were presenting their offering would do it in that room. (See Numbers 6.) On the far-left corner was the Wine and Oil Room. People bringing wine or oil offerings would take them to that room.

In between all of these rooms were thirteen treasury boxes, called shopheroth, or trumpets, because they were shaped like trumpets. These thirteen chests were narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom, shaped like trumpets. There were actually eleven treasure chests of the Temple for the voluntary offerings of money, and then also two at the Gate of Susan, for the half-shekel tax. Each of these trumpet shaped boxes are clearly marked with what the offering was to be used for. The treasury boxes were for designated offerings. We do a similar thing by designating on our checks or on an offering envelope what the money being given is to be used for. Some people give offerings above their tithes, and they designate it for the benevolent ministry, facility, missions, or other area ministry. Instead of designating, they put the various offerings in the appropriate trumpet-shaped offering box.

Here is how scholars say the boxes were appropriated.

- Trumpets 1 and 2 were appropriated to the half-shekel Temple-tribute of the current and of the past year.
- Trumpet 3 was for women who had to bring turtledoves for a burnt and a sin offering. They would drop the equivalent value in money into this box.
- Trumpet 4 similarly received the value of the offerings of young pigeons.
- Trumpet 5 was for contributions for the wood used in the Temple.
- Trumpet 6 for the contributions used for incense.
- Trumpet 7 was for the golden vessels for the ministry. If a man had put aside a certain sum for a sin-offering, and any money was left over after its purchase, it was cast into Trumpet 7.
- Trumpets 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 were destined for what was left over from trespass-offerings, offerings of birds, the offering of the Nazirite, of the cleansed leper, and voluntary offerings.

In Mark 12:41-44, Jesus sat down at the treasury and watched people give their offerings. Then He drew attention to the widow's mite. In our text today, He is primarily reaching out to the Pharisees, but there could have been others, including women, who heard this conversation that He had with the Pharisees.

2. Jesus Pursues the Pharisees Again (Jn 8:21-30)

Then Jesus spoke to them again. We do not know if there has been a time lapse between this next conversation and the last one. The giving of details of where the first conversation took place and the concluding statement that His hour had not yet come gives the impression that the first conversation had ended, and that this is a new conversation after a short break or intermission.

(Jn 8:21) "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."

Jesus told the Pharisees that He was going away and they will seek Him, and will die in their sin, because where He was going, they could not come. Earlier that day He had spoken the same thing to them. He had told them that He was going to be with them a little while longer, and then go to the Father who sent Him. He had told them that they would seek Him and not find Him, because they could go where He is going. This time Jesus clarifies why they are not able to go where He is going; they are going to die in their sin, and that is why they cannot go where He is going. Jesus is clearly speaking about going back to heaven to be with the Father. Since God is righteous and holy, those who are still in their sin cannot go. The only way to go where Jesus is going is to have their sins taken away, which is why Jesus, the Lamb of God, had come. In order to have your sins taken away, you must believe that Jesus is the Messiah and follow Him.

(Jn 7:33–36) "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.... {36} "What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come'?"

Even though this is not the first time that Jesus has told them, they were still not understanding what He was saying. They had a general idea that He was talking about death, but did not understand or believe that Jesus was going to heaven. They considered Him to be a deceiver, not the Son of God. Therefore, the Jews answered, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He?" Suicide was considered one of the greatest crimes, and not something that a Pharisee would consider. They would certainly not be following Him to Sheol by suicide.

(Jn 8:22) "So the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?"

Jesus is patient and persistent with the Pharisees. Sometimes we have to hear something more than once before we hear what the person is saying. So, Jesus told them again, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 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." He makes it clear that He is from above, meaning heaven. They are earthly, but Jesus was sent from heaven, and is not from earth. He also made it clear that they are going to die in their sins, and that the only way for them to have their sins taken away is to believe that He is the Messiah.

(Jn 8:23-24) "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."

Since Jesus said, "I am He," they asked Him, "Who are You?" This is one of the most important questions anyone can ask. Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They

answered, John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets. Then Jesus asked them, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

(Jn 8:25a) "So they were saying to Him, "Who are You..."

(Mt 16:13–16) "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" {14} And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." {15} He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" {16} Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The crowd in Jerusalem has been trying to answer the same question. Some thought that Jesus was the Prophet. Some thought that He was the Messiah, and some thought He was a false teacher, leading people astray. In order to have their sins taken away, Jesus had told the Pharisees that they must believe that He is the Messiah.

Jesus responded to their question by saying, "What have I been saying to you from the beginning? I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world." Jesus has told them that He has been sent by the Father, and only does what the Father shows Him to do. He has told them that the source of His teaching is the Father; they are not His own teachings. He has told them that He has authority to forgive sins. He has showed them that He has all authority and power. He has shown them that He can heal any kind of sickness. He has shown them that He has all authority over demons. Jesus has told them very clearly who He is, and the works that He has done have testified that He is the Messiah.

(Jn 8:25-26) "So they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you from the beginning? {26} "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world."

John recorded that the Pharisees had not realized that Jesus had been speaking to them about the Father. Therefore, Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.

(Jn 8:27-28) "They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father. {28} So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me."

When Jesus was lifted up on the cross, darkness fell upon all the land from noon to three in the afternoon. Then, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and there was an earthquake, and the rocks were split. Tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. When the centurion and those with him that were keeping guard over Jesus saw all these things, they became frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" While all these things happened, I believe that Jesus was ultimately speaking about His resurrection from the dead. Jesus was declared the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead.

(Ro 1:4) "who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,"

(Mt 27:45-54) “Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour.... {51} And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. {52} The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; {53} and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. {54} Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

The resurrection of Jesus is the greatest proof that Jesus is the Messiah. When the Pharisees had asked for a sign, Jesus said that He would give them no other sign than the sign of Jonah. Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and then came out. It was a prophetic picture and sign. Jesus was going to be in the grave for three days and then be raised from the dead.

(Mt 12:38–40) “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” {39} But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and *yet* no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; {40} for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Paul wrote in Romans 10:9-10, that one of the requirements to become a believer is to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. We must believe that He was raised from the dead, and we must confess with our mouths that He is Lord.

(Ro 10:9–10) “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; {10} for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul wrote about the gospel he preached, and he spent a whole chapter writing about the resurrection. He said it was of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures... Then he said that if Christ was not raised from the dead, our faith is in vain. The resurrection of the dead is not only the greatest sign; it is a vital part of the gospel message.

(1 Co 15:3–14) “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, {4} and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures... {14} and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.”

After telling the Pharisees that they will know when He has been lifted up, He told them that He was not alone. He said, “He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.” One of the ways that Jesus always knew the Father was with Him was that He was always doing what pleased the Father. In our lives, when we do the things that are pleasing to the Father, we can also rest assured that the Father is with us. Additionally, we have God’s promises to us. Jesus said that He would never leave or forsake us. We can stand on His promises that He is with us, even in the challenging times in our lives. The Pharisees had decided to put Him to death, and Jesus knew that He was only with them for a short time, and then He would be put to death and that He would be going back to the Father.

(Jn 8:29) "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

As Jesus spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. Jesus had reached out to the Pharisees. There is no reason not to believe that some of the Pharisees who heard Him came to believe in Him. Nicodemus, who had been searching for the truth, and possibly, a secret disciple, may have been one of those who came to believe that day.

(Jn 8:30) "As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him."

In addition to the Pharisees, this was the last day of the Feast, the Great Day of the Feast, and there were thousands of people in town for the feast. He was in the Court of the Women, where everyone could go, and there were probably many people in the crowds who became believers.

Conclusion and Applications

Jesus has two conversations with the Pharisees. He knew that they wanted to seize Him and put Him to death. However, He had come to seek and to save that which was lost, and the Pharisees were lost. He was unrelenting, even in the face of persecution and death, in His efforts to reach out to the Pharisees with the gospel.

One of the common gospel tools is a booklet published by Billy Graham, called, *Steps to Peace with God*. I have used this bridge illustration many times, especially when I was a prison chaplain, and have led many to Christ with it. In the booklet, there are four steps to finding peace with God.

In Step One, God's Purpose is stated: Peace and Life. It is based on Romans 5:1, which says, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." God has reached out to us, sending His only begotten Son into the world so that those who believe may have everlasting life (Jn 3:16). They also quote John 10:10, where Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and so they may have it abundantly..."

(Ro 5:1) "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"

(Jn 3:16) "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

(Jn 10:10) "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly."

Jesus did not have this gospel tract with Him, but He did tell the Pharisees that the Father had sent Him. He was also reaching out to them AGAIN. He kept reaching out to the Pharisees and others, and preaching the gospel.

In Step 2 of the tract, the Problem is stated: Separation. Romans 3:23 and 6:23 are used. These verses state that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; and the wages of our sin is death. They also use Isaiah 59:2, which states that "your iniquities have separated you from God..." In our passage, Jesus told the Pharisees two different times that they were sinners and were going to die in their sins. He told them that in order for them to go where He is going and

not to die in their sins, they would have to believe in Him. He was telling them that they were separated from God because of their sins. Jesus clearly stated the problem, their sin.

(Ro 3:23) “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

(Ro 6:23) “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(Is 59:2) “But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden *His* face from you so that He does not hear.”

Step 3 is God's Remedy, the Cross. They use 1 Timothy 2:5, 1 Peter 3:18, and Romans 5:8 to let them know that Jesus is the only way to bridge the gap between God and us that was caused by our sin. There is only one mediator and that is Jesus. Jesus told the Pharisees that unless they believed that He was the Messiah, they would die in their sins. He was the only way that they could go where He was going. If they rejected Him, they would die in their sins.

(1 Ti 2:5) “For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus,”

(1 Pe 3:18) “For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;”

(Ro 5:8) “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Step Four is Our Response, Receive Christ. They use Revelation 3:20, John 1:12, and Romans 10:9 to invite people to receive Christ. In Revelation, God is standing at the door and knocking, wanting to come into our lives and dine with us. In John 1:12, we are told that we must believe and receive Him in order to become children of God. In Romans 10:9, we must believe that Jesus was raised from the dead and confess Him as Lord.

(Jn 1:12) “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,”

(Re 3:20) “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”

(Ro 10:9) “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;”

Jesus had invited everyone to believe in Him. He had stood up and cried out (shouted out), “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me...” Drinking from Jesus was just another way of saying to come believe in Me.

(Jn 7:37–38) “Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. {38} “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”

Even though Jesus did not have the Steps to Peace with God tract, He had preached the gospel message to the Pharisees. They were seeking to put Jesus to death, and He was preaching to them so that they might be saved from death. He was unrelenting in His pursuit to save them so that they would not die in their sins.

God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. He wanted the Pharisees to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, and He wants you and I to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. God is patient and does not want any to perish. Jesus was patient, not wanting any of the Pharisees to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

(1 Ti 2:3–4) “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, {4} who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

(2 Pe 3:9) “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

If you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, that He came and died for our sins, and was raised from the dead, and you would like to receive Christ into your life today, I invite you to receive Him by confessing Him. Here is the sample prayer in the Steps to Peace with God that people are invited to pray:

Dear Lord Jesus. I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died for my sins. I want to turn from my sins. I now invited You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust You as Savior and follow You as Lord, in the fellowship of Your church.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for sending Jesus to die for our sins. Jesus, thank You for coming and always doing what pleased the Father. Thank You for dying for our sins. Thank You for being unrelenting in Your pursuit to save the Pharisees. Thank You for the example that You set for all of us to follow. Thank You for pursuing each one of us, and inviting us to drink from Your living waters. Help us to be unrelenting in our pursuit of the lost, even those who are hostile towards You or us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- How can you explain Jesus' unrelenting pursuit to save the Pharisees, especially since they were trying to put Him to death?
- Jesus kept preaching the same message to them. It took more than one gospel presentation and invitation. In our reaching out to people with the gospel, what might we have to do?
- Jesus clearly told the Pharisees that they were going to die in their sins, and that they could not go where He was going. Are we bold in sharing this truth with others, or are we more concerned about possibly offending them?
- Jesus knew that the Father had not left Him alone, but was with Him. How do we know that the Father is with us at all times? Can you think of an example(s) where you knew God was right there with you?
- Jesus only did the things that were pleasing to the Father. Do we use this criterion in our everyday life and decisions about what we are doing? How can this mindset make a huge difference in our life?

- Jesus said He was the light of the world. In Matthew 5:14, He said that we are the light of the world, and that our light should shine before men in such a way that they may see our good works and glorify God in heaven. What are some ways that our lives can shine before men so that they glorify God?

Jesus' Unrelenting Pursuit

Introduction (Lk 19:10, Php 1:6, Lk 15:4–5, 15:8-10, Jn 8:12–30)

1. **Jesus Pursues the Pharisees Again at the Treasury** (Jn 7:37-38, 8:12-20, Jn 6:35, 8:12, 10:9, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1, Jn 1:4–9, 3:2, 7:28-29, 7:33-34, Is 53:6, 59:2, Jn 3:16–17, Jn 5:36, Mk 12:41-44)
2. **Jesus Pursues the Pharisees Again** (Jn 8:21-30, Jn 7:33–36, Mt 16:13–16, 27:45-54, Ro 1:4, 12:38-40, Ro 10:9–10, 1 Co 15:3-14)

Conclusion and Applications

Steps to Peace with God (Billy Graham Evangelistic Association)

Step 1. Peace and Life (Ro 5:1, Jn 3:16, Jn 10:10)

Step 2. The Problem: Separation (Ro 3:23, 6:23, Is 59:2)

Step 3. God's Remedy: The Cross (1 Ti 2:5, 1 Pe 3:18, Ro 5:8)

Step 4. Our Response: Receive Christ (Re 3:20, Jn 1:12, Ro 10:9, 1 Ti 2:3–4, 2 Pe 3:9)