

# To Whose Tune Does the Preacher Dance

by Anton Bosch

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*This sermon delves into Luke chapter 7, focusing on the interactions between John the Baptist, Jesus, and the people. It highlights the contrast between John's unwavering commitment to God's message and the people's desire for preachers to conform to their expectations. The sermon emphasizes the importance of preachers staying true to God's Word, resisting the pressure to please people, and the need for individuals to align themselves with God's wisdom through obedience.*

**Scripture:** Luke 7:28, Luke 7:29, Luke 7:30, Luke 7:31, Luke 7:35

**Topics:** "Faithfulness in Ministry", "Aligning with God's Wisdom"

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## Description

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## Transcript

So we're in the gospel according to Luke chapter 7 and we've been dealing with John the Baptist and remember he sends people to Jesus to say well are you in fact the Christ are you the one and Jesus sends back the message and he says well just tell them the things that you see that the deaf hear the blind see and the dead are raised and the poor have the gospel preached to them and then Jesus speaks about who John is and he says have you come to see a reed shaken in the wind in other words John is not vacillating is not someone who is blown by changing doctrines by changing times and so on and so the conversation continues in verse 28 and I'm going to read 28 through 35 so John chapter 7 reading 28 through 35 for I say to you among those born of woman there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he and when all the people heard him even the tax collectors justified God having been baptized with the baptism of John but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves not having been baptized by him and the Lord said to what then shall I like and the men of this generation and what are they like they are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another saying we played the flute for you and you did not dance we mourned to you and you did not weep for John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine and you say he has a demon the Son of Man has come eating and drinking and you say look a glutton and a wine bubbler a friend of tax collectors and sinners but wisdom is justified by all her children and so Jesus

then says that there was no one greater there was no greater prophet there was no greater man in fact then John remember we said the reason for that is because the Old Testament prophets prophesied that which was way in the future John was the one who had the privilege of announcing the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as the as the Messiah and so he was the one who heralded who cleared the way prepared the way for the Messiah and then he said and so a woman there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he and remember the greatness here is not in the sense that we look at it from a human point of view and saying well am I greater than you and I'm more important than you but we have a greater privilege because like the prophets in the Old Testament saw a far off the Messiah and they prophesied that he would come and then John comes and John actually sees him and he says behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world but then John dies and he is he is beheaded and he doesn't see the fulfillment he does not see Jesus dead dying and buried and raised again so he doesn't see the fulfillment of the promises of the new birth and so that is something which was still in the future for John not a long time maybe two years or three years at the most now we have the privilege of having been able to see obviously through the eyes of the Apostles the death burial resurrection of the Lord Jesus so we are in a far greater and more privileged position than John is and then that they had they were prophesying something way in the future John was prophesying that which had come but had not come in its fullness because because the the atonement hadn't yet happened we are preaching the gospel of that which is a finished work and a complete not something which we're hoping for in the future but something which is which is done and so let's move on to verse 29 this is really where we start tonight and when all the people heard him even the tax collectors justified God having been baptized with a baptism of John now I'm not going to go into a long details about the tax collectors we spoke about them earlier when we saw them at John's preaching but remember that the tax collectors were the lowest of the low they were Jews but they had contracted with the Romans to collect the taxes and they were different levels of tax collectors they were those who had bid to get the job and then they would they would franchise that down to other guys who would then do the actual collecting and they would then give Rome whatever it was that they had agreed to and they get to keep the rest the problem was that they use this as a great opportunity to shake people down and to take much more than they were they supposed to do and so they they were cheating the people but more than that they were seen to be agents of Rome they were seen to be people who had sold their own people for money and so people hated them tax collectors were not allowed to go into the temple they were not allowed to visit the synagogues they were outcasts they were as good as lepers in that sense and so what John is saying or sorry what Luke is saying is that even that even the tax collectors notice the word even even the tax collectors in other words the lowest dregs of Jewish society justified God being baptized with a baptism of John now here's a difficult one the tax collectors justified God what does it mean to justify it means to make just to make as though and in God justifying us we say when God justifies us he makes us as though we have never sinned in other words he declares us righteous he declares us just so can God be made just can we justify God in the sense of making him just no he is just he is the definition of justice and of righteousness we can't make him more just than he already is but what we can do is we can ascribe justice to him we can say and we can agree and say God you indeed are just remember we have this concept of glorifying God we say we we glorify God in our praises so can we make God glorious no God is already glorious we can't add to his glory we can't subtract from his glory we can't add to his glory he is glorious within himself all we can do is affirm his glory and what we can do is define or or bring his glory into our lives by saying yes we agree he is glorious so when we worship him we're making we're making him glorious in our own hearts and in our own minds and so the same idea here week they don't add to God's justice they're not making him just he is just they might not justifying him but they are declaring that

God is just now what does that have to do with John's baptism and remember that we have to remember what this baptism was about it was a baptism of repentance and it was a baptism at that time was not reserved for Jews baptism was for Gentiles who wanted to become Jews who wanted to be adopted or assimilated into the Jewish faith and in order for them to become a Jew they had to go through various things and one of those things is they needed to be baptized and we of course have the New Testament version of that that when we become part of the body of Christ we're baptized as an outward expression of the fact that we have been made part of the body of Christ so for a Jew to be baptized by John was a terrible thing because he was admitting the moment a Jew allowed John to baptize him he was admitting I am a Gentile I am now how can he be a Gentile remember what John and Jesus both said you are not of Abraham you are of your father the devil so ethnically they were Jews but spiritually they were Gentiles because they were far from God the thing that defines a Gentile is that they are a far-off in Ephesians and so the Jews were a far-off and by being baptized they're admitting that they are a far-off and that they needed to repent and they needed to come back to God and so by the the tax collectors being baptized they are confessing and saying God is true God is right and God is righteous you see we'll see let me let me just go to the next verse and I'm going to come back to verse 29 there's this little three-letter word and you know that I like these little words because they're so important but but now we have that word but God but here it's not dealing with God is dealing with men but the Pharisee so in contrast to the tax collectors the Pharisees rejected the will of God so what are the Pharisees saying they're saying John your message doesn't apply to us in fact God is lying when he says that we are far from him when God says that we need to repent and that we need to be baptized as Jews God is unjust because look how righteous we are we fast twice a week we pray several times a day we read the scriptures we go to the feast we do all of these things so for God to send his messenger to tell us that we are unjust makes God unjust because he is not judging righteously because God can't see how good I am can you see the difference between them and the tax collectors the tax collectors say yes God is true because his messenger that he has sent tells us but we must repent and yeah we need to repent God is just in his justice and in his in his judgment of us in the way that he sees us God is right and so and remember that this is the same concept when we confess our sins and I don't want to get too far down that road because we have a lot of ground to cover in in a short time but the idea that when we confess our sins 1 John 1 1 9 he is faithful and just to forgive us that that idea of confessing is agreeing with God agreeing with God and so when I agree with God that I have sinned then he is faithful and just to forgive me when I'm fighting God and I say no I you know I don't need to repent I don't need to fix anything I'm okay I'm I'm fine and remember that this today applies to both believers and non-believers many non-believers will not accept the Christian faith because they say I'm fine I can you know I live a good life I can I can get to heaven on my own merits and at the same time there are Christians who need to make right with God who have issues in their lives that they need to repent of but they say no I'm not going to repent of that and when God speaks to me and tells me look you've got to stop doing this or you need to start doing something else I said well you know I I don't you know I don't think that that's right in other words what I'm doing is I'm saying God's judgment is not righteous God is not just in when he convicts me by his spirit when he sends his word to tell me that I need to change and so these people receive the word and they agree that God's judgment is righteous that God's message to them they need to repent and to return to the face is correct and they prove that by being baptized so it's not just a matter of saying well we agree with God and you know that's fine but they actually do something about it they put it into action they put it into practice and remember this whole idea of repentance this is the message John is preaching that repentance needs to lead to a change of life it needs to lead to a something that we actually physically do now we have the next verse which I've already introduced but the Pharisees and the lawyers the lawyers were those remember they they didn't have a

separate what while it was Roman law in the Jewish context there was just the law of God the Torah the Ten Commandments and the 613 commands in the first five books of the Bible that was the law and so these guys were those who did what modern-day lawyers do they studied the law and they dispensed the law and so someone would come and say you know can I do this or can I do that and they would say well according to the law you can't do this or whatever whatever it is now that was part of what they did but one of the other things that they did is exactly what lawyers still do today and that is look for loopholes in the law and Jesus quotes several examples of this and I'm not going to get into those now but but but there are a number of examples of them finding those loopholes and saying well you know I don't have to do this because there's this fine print in the law that allows me to do something different or to or to get away with with my sin and and it's amazing that today Christians are many Christians are very good lawyers they know enough of the Bible to be able to squirm out of the demands of God upon their lives and and oftentimes they're they're a little too clever for their own good when I was in the Air Force we we had a term which came from the the Navy from the British Navy and it's a thing called a lower-deck lawyer anyone heard of a lower-deck lawyer Eric no lower-deck lawyer comes from the Navy when the lower ranks were in the lower parts of the ship and they were there would be guys there who were smart Alex who studied the military law and they knew no this is not a lawful command or they would argue with the officer and say well you know you can't make me do this because of this and this and this and this so they were they thought they were clever they thought they were lawyers unfortunately the Christian faith is filled with lower-deck lawyers they know a little bit and enough to try and justify doing what they do but in fact in the process they're they're abusing the scriptures they're abusing the Word of God and that's what these guys were doing they were just twisting the scriptures for their own ends and for their own purposes and the Pharisees of course we know about them they were so proud of their religiosity and of their long tassels and of the of the the length of their their hair and and all of the stuff that they were doing and and so the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves and and and this is a this is an interesting statement they rejected the will of God for themselves not having been baptized by him by John so what was the will of God for them the will of God was for them to be baptized so how did they know the will of God now I think this is that this is a very important point how did they know the will of God because John told them the will of God John said repent repent and so John is preaching from the scriptures he's preaching from the Old Testament but he's bringing it into their time and he's saying this is what God wants you to do this is God's will for you and that is that he wants you to repent and of course some did and some didn't but I think in this is a very important statement which we which we need to just stop on for a for a few seconds and that is that how do we know the will of God well his will is declared and revealed in the scriptures but he chooses to use preachers to reveal his word to us to make it specific to make it real to us and so they they knew all of the scriptures in the Old Testament that dealt with repentance they knew all of the scriptures that talked about Israel needing to return to God but they they were not listening to the scriptures so God sends John and he says you're not listening to the scriptures you need to listen to the voice of God you need to repent you need to get back with God and so God uses men and and and while this is John and obviously we understand that John is at a far different level to me or any other preacher at the same time God uses preachers to declare his will to declare his will and we say well that's a that's a little tough yeah it is a little tough if we're rebellious and we don't want to do his will if we just want to do what we want to do we say well yeah I can read the Bible for myself and that's the problem is that there are so many Christians who are not prepared to listen to the preacher because they think they know they think that they can figure it out for themselves but the problem is that the moment we try and figure it out for ourselves we tend to do it the same way as the lawyers do and that is that we we look at it and the scripture tells me to do a and I look at it and say well yeah it doesn't really apply to me

because you know this was written two thousand years ago this was a different environment a different culture I'm in a different situation I don't have to do that and and and a million other arguments we have for not doing the will of God and for that purpose God uses preachers to say no this is what God wants you to do you need to listen to God and you need to do what he tells you to do now not all preachers preach the will of God and we're going to speak about those in a few moments but those who do preach the will of God who do preach the Word of God and preach with application there are many preachers who don't preach with application other words they just say what the Bible says they don't say what this means to us and what you need to do how we need to respond to this but when we preach with application we're declaring the will of God today for for for those who are those who are hearing and and you remember Nathan Nathan comes to G to to David David Nathan is a prophet and Nathan tells him the story of this man who took his neighbor's sheep and and and so was he telling David something that David didn't know in terms of justice in terms of righteousness is it is it is it does the law speak about taking someone else's possessions yes it does does it speak about oppressing the poor yes it does so he didn't need Nathan to come and tell him he knew what the law said about those things but it wasn't until Nathan's prodded his finger in David's chest and said you're the guy this is God is speaking to you that David gets the message and that's the problem is that we don't get the message until sometimes God has to send a preacher to us and so in verse 31 then and the Lord said to to to what then shall I liken the men of this generation and what are they like so he's now going to tell a parable in fact he's going to tell two parables connected so what are these people like he is saying and remember that the state of Israel spiritually is the same as the state of the church the general church today it's not very different and so I think that this is very applicable to us today he says they are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another saying we played the food for you and you did not dance we mourned to you and you did not weep so what he's saying is how will I what what will I liken these these Israelites to well the bottom line is I will liken them to spoilt brats to spoilt brats and we all know what a spoilt brat is it's not a very nice thing a spoilt brat is self-centered narcissistic and thinks that everything revolves around them and they can do whatever they want because they are that important now here's the here's the the parable and what he's using here is is the games of the day just kids all play games today we we we have different games boys play generally and yeah I'm old-fashioned but boys generally play with cars and girls play with dolls and what are they what are they what are they in acting when they play with the cars well they're acting like they're an adult they're doing what they see adults do what do what do men do men drive cars women as well obviously what do what do mothers do mothers have babies and they care and nurture for the babies and so when children play those games they're re-enacting what they what they see in the parents and so those days what they would do and this would be in the in the marketplace where they would all come together and so they would they would pipe on the on the flute they would play a tune on the flute and then the other kids must dance because this is what they saw the adults do so they would have music and they would dance the people of Israel the Jewish people love dancing they still do today and so he says in fact what we what the kids did is they played on the flute and then the others just sat there and looked at them didn't didn't dance they didn't play the game and then the other side of the coin is we mourned to you remember funerals were very serious things those days they're still serious today but they were they were over the top over dramatic we spoke about you know a couple of weeks ago about the young man that Jesus raised and there's these these hired mourners who paid to wail and to mourn it's a it's a terrible business the kids watch this and they say well you know and the kids would play funeral amazing but that's what they did and so we played the dirge a funeral song and you didn't mourn you didn't play our game that's really what it is so there's 12 brats because they're saying we wanted you to play we wanted to play the tune and you should dance and you didn't dance we mourned and you didn't play the game now what is

Jesus saying he's saying these people are like this he says that they want to play a tune and they expect you to dance to the tune we have that saying today he won't dance to my tune and I looked it up and they the dictionaries all say they don't know where it comes from I know where it comes from comes from right here comes from here and so and so what is Jesus saying about the generation and what what does this mean well clearly he's referring to himself and to John who are preachers of the gospel and we'll we'll see how this plays out in a in a few moments and so and and and the commentators say well you know the one who played who is supposed to dance is Jesus and the one who is supposed to weepers is John I I don't you know I don't think that that's the point that Jesus is making at all and and it really doesn't matter but the fact is that John would not do what they wanted him to do and Jesus wouldn't do what they wanted him to do now let me let's come back to this idea as we look at the rest of the story because here's the the four again this very important little three-letter word for because John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine and and you said he has a demon or remember that he he ate locusts and wild honey so he didn't eat bread or drink wine and they said he's nuts he's crazy on the other hand the Son of Man has come and he eats and drinks and remember there was this question concerning why did Jesus's disciples not fast so Jesus is not fasting not because he's not keeping the law but he's not keeping man-made rules and so Jesus is eating and drinking and he's he's eating and drinking with sinners and in fact we'll see in the next passage next week we'll see how that Jesus goes into a into a not so good house and a woman who is not so good approaches him so the Son of Man has come eating and drinking and you say look a glutton and a winebibber a friend of tax collectors and sinners now why are we saying they are spoiled brats because when John lived a ascetic life that wasn't good enough for them and when Jesus lived a let's call it a normal life that wasn't good enough for them they wanted John to dance to their tune they wanted Jesus to dance to their tune and neither of them would dance to their tune because as we've just said John came to declare the will of God John was not there to preach what they wanted to hear and neither was Jesus there to preach what they wanted to hear they were both there to declare the Word of God and of course they didn't like that and so here's here's the problem and the problem goes two ways the first part of the problem is the preachers who feel pressurized by people to preach the message that the people want to hear and it's very real particularly if you have a mortgage on the building and you have a big motor car and you have huge expenses and and if people don't come and don't give money well you know how are we going to pay for all this stuff and preachers have huge egos and if there's only 10 or 12 people in the in the audience well that's no that's no good I think I've told you many times one of the the first question when somebody hears that I'm a preacher the first question they want to know is how big is your church because that defines whether I'm successful or not and so how do I get to be successful I get to be successful by applying marketing principles not me but how does marketing work well marketing there's a let me just cut to the to the chase marketing is not about making something and saying well can I get somebody to buy this real marketing is about finding out what people need and then making something that people need so so we all need masks and suddenly everybody is has a sewing machine is making masks because people need it and so here's a ready market if you if you were making leg warmers right now in California I don't think you'd sell very many because there's no market for it there's no need for it so you got to find out what people want what people need and then you make something or you sell something that will meet that need that's how business works and much of preaching is based on that on that same idea what do people want to hear oh well we live in an area where people want to hear that you mustn't wear a mask I will preach that message that works good people will will follow me or maybe I live in an area where people want to wear masks and I say we must we must wear masks now I'm using that as an extreme example but we tailor our message in order to please the hearers in other words who is calling the tune the hearers are calling the tune now we said well what's wrong with that surely

democracy is a good thing but remember the church is not a democracy God is not a Democrat and I'm not saying that as a as opposed to Republican but but God is a God and he says this is these are the rules this is how you look this is what you do we cannot tailor our message to please people because the moment we do that as a preacher I sell my soul I sell my soul we see politicians do this all the time politicians change what they believe on an issue because the constituency has put pressure on them and so they were against something before and the voters say if you don't change your mind we will vote against you and suddenly they get in it they have an epiphany and suddenly they see the light and they say oh okay it's this way and preachers do exactly the same be careful of preachers who change their message because there is pressure being put upon them by the congregation or by society we are not messengers of men we do not represent people we represent God and we must preach and teach the Word of God on the other side if if you're looking for a preacher who will tell you what you want to hear you will find one doesn't matter what you want to hear you want to hear the earth is flat there's dozens of preachers out there that teach the earth is flat you want to hear that Jesus never rose from the dead there's thousands of preachers who preach that Jesus never rose from the dead you want to live in sin and in immorality there are millions of preachers who will preach and say you can live in sin and immorality you cannot choose the preacher based on your tune based on what you want you have to choose the preacher based on his faithfulness to the Word of God I don't understand this thing of people thinking that they can make the preacher preach what they want them to preach just this last week somebody came to me and said you've got to change your message and if you don't change your message you're this and that and the other thing called the name so we spoke about that earlier I will never change my message to suit you I love each one of you I don't want to lose any of you but I will never by God's grace change the message in order to please you say something that will just make you feel good even though it's not the truth or withhold the hard message simply because I don't want to upset you or hurt your feelings God help us as preachers that we may be those who don't dance to the tune of the people but we dance to God's tune that he is the one who calls the shots and what he tells us to say we say that and focus the problem Jesus spoke about shepherds who are hired because they are not true shepherds they are there for the money they're there for the ego trip they're there for for the power that comes with it all sorts of other things and there are too many hirelings in the pulpits today there are too few way too few preachers who are not hirelings and who do not who are not employed by the church but are employed by the Lord Jesus Christ who are not commissioned by the church but commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ and I think we see this in John John couldn't care two hoots about what they said about him because he knew who had sent him and he's representing God and he is not interested in cowering to the Pharisees and to the lawyers and to whoever else he's going to preach the Word of God and he preaches it with intent and with it was with power all right we need to the last verse we're running out of time but wisdom is justified by all her children what's the most important word in that sentence but Simon's been listening but so why is the word but there let's go back what's all I like in the men of this generation and what are they like they are like children now wisdom is justified by her children so he's saying this generation is like this they are like children who are spoiled brats but wisdom is justified by her children so there are two sets of children and there's a but in between those two children two sets of children the first children want things to happen their way the second set of children are justified not not in the sense of being saved but they are defined or sorry wisdom is justified is defined is explained is spelled out by her children Matthew on the same passage instead of children says deeds and so what is wisdom well God is wisdom Jesus is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and so the Word of God is wisdom and so true wisdom remember the scripture talks about human wisdom and God's wisdom divine wisdom and earthly heavenly and earthly wisdom but true wisdom is revealed by her children now how were the other children

they were petulant they were spoiled they were self-centered they wanted things to happen their way the children that comes out of God's wisdom obviously are different and what do they do they reveal God's wisdom the first lot of children reveal their own willfulness these children reveal the wisdom of God and so obviously there's the question which are we are we those who are willful who want things to happen our way or are we those who are revealing God's wisdom through our obedience to Him and very very simple so you have two questions first question is what kind of children or what kind of child are you and secondly what kind of preacher are you looking for father we thank you for your word we thank you Lord for these messages from John and lessons from John and all day they're hard to understand sometimes but I pray that you'd help us to understand Lord we live in a time when preachers are selling themselves for money and selling their their their principles in order to to gain popularity and in order to build a big church Lord I pray that you would help me that I may be simply a representative of voice crying in the wilderness that I may be one who simply represents you without fear or favor Lord that is one of the hardest things because sometimes Lord we are intimidated by some and sometimes Lord we we want the the approval of others but Lord we need your approval and we need to fear you alone Lord I pray for the many preachers that we that we know of and Lord preachers that we hear and that that are around us and Lord many who have sold themselves for a message that will build a large congregation a message that is populist a message that is convenient and Lord I pray that you would help me and help those Lord that I associate with that we may be like John not concerned about what men have to say but Lord that we may preach your word pray Lord that we as children in order we all are children of your of yours pray Lord that we may not be children who want you to do things our way or want the church to do things our way but Lord that we would surrender and submit to your will and Lord that when you call us to repentance that we'll repent and Lord that we will manifest and justify wisdom by our actions and by our deeds and by the way we live we ask these things in Jesus name go with us now Lord keep us and protect us in Jesus name we pray amen

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