

"My Time Has Not Yet Come"

John 7:1-13

Thought for the Day: A true follower of Jesus Christ is not ashamed to publicly acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior and longs for the approval of God rather than the approval of the world.

In John six Jesus presented Himself as the Bread of Life who was sent by God from heaven to bring eternal life to all who believe in Him as Savior and Lord. Sadly, as a result of His teachings, many of those who had been following Him, rejected Him and no longer followed. In chapter seven, Jesus attends the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem where He goes to the temple and presents Himself as the Source of living water for those who believe in Him (vss. 37-39). Chapter seven challenges us to decide for ourselves: Which side are we on? Are we on the side of Jesus, or on the side of the world? Will we accept His claims that He was sent from heaven to teach us the ways of God, or will we reject Him as a liar and deceiver? Will we acknowledge that He alone can satisfy our spiritual thirst, or will we continue to look to the things of the world to satisfy our deepest needs?

1 After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him.

- There is a gap of about six months between the events recorded in chapters 6 and 7.
- During this time Jesus remained in Galilee in northern Israel rather than in Judea to avoid confrontations with the Jewish religious leaders who were seeking to kill him.
- He was not afraid of the Jewish leaders; rather, He knew that it was not yet God's appointed time for Him to die. When the time was right, He would willingly give His life as a ransom for sinners according to God's plans and purposes.
- According to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, most of this six month period in Galilee was spent discipling the Twelve and preparing them for their future ministry.

2 Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand.

- The Feast of Booths (Tabernacles) was one of three festivals that all Jewish males were required to attend. (Deuteronomy 16:16; Exodus 23:14-17; 34:22-24)
- It was a commemoration of the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness when the people lived in tents and temporary shelters or booths.

3 So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. 4 For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world."

- His brothers challenged Him to go to Jerusalem, perform some miracles there, and manifest Himself openly. In their minds, the Feast of Booths was a great opportunity for Jesus to openly perform His miracles and build His following.
- Their challenge did not come from sincere hearts! It was more an expression of ridicule, sarcasm, and unbelief. They were taunting Him and mocking Him.
- Jesus was an embarrassment to His family! (Mark 3:21)
- This reminds us of the manner in which Joseph's brothers treated him. Like Joseph's brothers, Jesus' brother may have actually hoped that He would be put to death. (*MacDonald, p. 2121*)

5 For not even his brothers believed in him.

- "His brothers had no sincere desire to see Him glorified. They did not really believe Him to be the Messiah. Neither were they willing to trust themselves to Him. What they said was said in sarcasm. Their hearts were not right before the Lord. It must have been especially bitter for the Lord Jesus to have His own brothers doubt His words and His works. Yet how often it is that those who are faithful to God find their bitterest opposition from those who are nearest and dearest to them." (*MacDonald, p. 2121*) (Cp. Matthew 10:34)

6 Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.

- The "time" (literally, the set time or the proper time) Jesus is referring to is the time of giving His life on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world according to the purpose, plan, and time schedule of His heavenly Father. (Cp. John 2:4)
- Jesus was operating according to God's timetable, not that of the world; He would not allow the skepticism and sarcasm of His brothers to dictate His actions.
- The approval of His heavenly Father was far more important to Him than that of His brothers!
- "Jesus knew exactly what lay before Him, and it was not the will of God that He should go to Jerusalem at this time in order to make a public presentation of Himself. But He reminded His brothers that their time was always ready or opportune. Their lives were lived according according to their own desires and not in obedience to the will of God. They could make their own plans and travel as they pleased, because they were only intent on doing their own will." (*MacDonald, p. 2122*)
- Jesus' brothers had no apparent desire to know or follow the plan of God; they were not concerned about operating on God's timetable. They could use their time as they wished, fulfilling their own wants and desires.

7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.

- "The world could not hate the Lord's brothers because they belonged to the world. They took sides with the world against Jesus. Their whole lives were in harmony with the world. The world here refers to the system which man has built up and in which there is no room for God or for His Christ... The world hated Christ because He testified concerning it that its works were evil. It is a sad commentary on man's depraved nature that when a sinless, spotless Man came into the world, the world sought to kill Him. The perfection of Christ's life showed how imperfect everyone else's life was. Just as a straight line reveals the crookedness of a zigzag line when they are placed side by side, so the Lord's coming into the world served to reveal man in all his sinfulness. Man resented this exposure of himself. Instead of repenting and crying to God for mercy, he sought to destroy the One who revealed His sin." (*MacDonald, p. 2122*)
- If we choose to stand against the evils of this world, we too can fully expect to be hated by the world! (John 15:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:12-13)

8 You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come."

- "The Lord told His brothers to go up to this feast. There was something very sad about this. They pretended to be religious men. They were going to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. Yet the Christ of God was standing in their midst, and they had no real love for Him. Man loves religious rituals because he can observe them without any real heart

interest. But bring him face to face with the Person of Christ and he is ill at ease. Jesus said that He was not yet going up to this feast because His time had not yet fully come. He did not mean that He would not go to the feast at all, because we learn in verse 10 that He did go. Rather, He meant that He would not go with His brothers and have a great and public manifestation. It was not time for that. When He would go, He would go quietly and with a minimum of publicity." (*MacDonald, p. 2122*)

- Jesus would not go up to the feast until His Father told Him to do so and He would go in the manner that best fulfilled the purposes of God, not man.
- "The Lord's meaning is clear. He was not saying that He would not attend the feast at all, but that He would not go with his brothers in the manner they expected. Nor would He allow the Jewish leaders to take His life because His time had not yet fully come. When Jesus did lay down His life... it would be at the very moment God had predetermined." (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*)

9 After saying this, he remained in Galilee. 10 But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private.

- As a devout Jew, Jesus desired to attend the feast, as required (see verse 2). But as the obedient Son of God, He did not do so openly, but as it were, in secret. (*MacDonald, p. 2123*)

11 The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?"

- They were not looking for Him to worship Him, they were seeking to kill Him! (John 5:18; 7:1)

12 And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray."

- More and more, the teachings of the Lord and His Word are being rejected by the world today. Good is being called evil, and evil is being called good.
- Essentially, the world is saying that Jesus is not a good man and His teachings are leading people astray. We need to decide which side we are on!

13 Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.

- "The opposition of the Jewish rulers to Jesus had become so intense that no one dared to speak openly in favor of Him. Doubtless many of the common people recognized that He was truly the Messiah of Israel, but they did not dare to come out and say it because they feared the leaders would persecute them." (*MacDonald, p. 2123*)
- Given the increased opposition and persecution that is coming to Christians today, the temptation is to not speak openly of the Lord, to not identify ourselves with Him. (Luke 9:23-26; Matthew 10:32-33)