

## John, Part 26: God's Timing and the World's Hatred

**John 7:1 ESV** After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. **2** Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. **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." **5** For not even his brothers believed in him. **6** Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. **7** The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. **8** You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." **9** After saying this, he remained in Galilee.

- I. As John 6 drew to a close, we found Jesus, having offended everyone around him by insisting that he alone was the all-satisfying Bread of Life. Because of this, he watched the people who once followed him in droves make a "mass exodus" from his ministry. Christ had even looked at the 12 and asked them, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter had logically answered, "To whom shall we go? You have the words of life. And we have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God."
  - A. As Chapter 7 begins, we find Jesus remaining on his "home turf" in Galilee, in the north of Israel. This is where Nazareth, Christ's home village was. A partial reason for this was that during this time period, Jesus seems to be experiencing a unique period of unpopularity.
    - a) He had lost the favor of the masses by the end of John 6, but we also find even the 12 disciples being swept up in their offense. Jesus even points to Judas' impending betrayal as the chapter closes, indicating that his words may have contributed to Judas reaching the "tipping point".
    - b) As a matter of fact, Jesus seems to be **alone** during the events of chapters 7 & 8; the 12 disciples won't be mentioned again until the beginning of chapter 9.
  2. But in addition to the wedge that has been driven between Christ and the crowds, as well as the 12 disciples, now we read that Jesus was deliberately avoiding Judea (where Jerusalem was). The Jewish leaders there were seeking to put him to death. This animosity is mentioned in chapter 5.
    - a) **John 5:18 ESV** This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.
    - b) Jesus wasn't Judea because he was afraid. He wasn't trying to avoid Jewish persecution, but rather, he was being governed by something bigger than any of those factors.
- B. While in Galilee, he was probably staying near or with his family. The text today mentions the brothers of Jesus. If you were raised Roman Catholic this could be a stumbling block to you. You were taught that Mary had no additional children, as they say she was a "perpetual virgin". This, however, is not at all the teaching of scripture.

1. Luke says that Mary gave birth to Jesus, referring to him as her “firstborn Son” laying him in a manger (2:7). He was not her only son, just her firstborn.
  2. Matthew says that Joseph had no sexual relations with Mary until after the birth of Christ (1:25). It doesn’t say he never had sex with her! In the Jewish mind, a sexless marriage was not a marriage in any sense of the word, meaning that a man and woman were not officially married until that marriage had been consummated.
  3. In addition to this, the brothers and sisters of Jesus are mentioned several times in the gospels and the book of Acts, by both critics of Jesus, as well as his followers.
- C. Verse 2 tells us that “the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand”. the was also known as the “Feast of Tabernacles”, or Sukkot. It is still celebrated by many Jews sometime in late September to late October on our calendar.
1. It was one of the festivals that God commanded the Jews to observe after the Exodus in Leviticus 23. It’s purpose was two-fold.
    - a) First, it was to thank God for his goodness throughout the year, as it was timed to fall at the end of the Jewish calendar year. It was a time of thanksgiving for the harvest. There would be joyful celebrations accompanied by sacrifices and offerings.
    - b) Secondly, it was a commemoration of the way God delivered his people out of Egypt. During the Festival, the people were commanded to live in temporary shelters (“booths” or “tabernacles”) made of palm and willow branches, as they did during their 40 year journey through the desert.
  2. It was also one of three annual “pilgrimage festivals” on the Jewish calendar (the others were Passover and Pentecost). On these occasions, every Jewish male was commanded to appear before the Lord at his temple in Jerusalem.
- D. I’ve mentioned this before, but one feature of the book of John is that he tends to frame the major events of his Gospel around the Jewish festivals; including Passover, Hanukkah, and the Feast of Tabernacles. John does this at least 6 times.
- E. This is not a chronological coincidence on his part. He is making the point that Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of every ritual ignorantly observed by the Jews.
- F. So just to recap: Jesus is staying in Galilee, with his family. He is avoiding Judea because the Jewish leadership is seeking his life. It is time for one of the foremost Jewish festivals to begin; one in which Jesus, as a Jewish male, is expected to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to attend. It is with that in mind that we should look at the remainder of this passage...
- II. John 7:3 ESV** 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.” **5** For not even his brothers believed in him.
- A. Christ’s brothers make what would seem to be a logical argument. “It’s time to go public Jesus! So you’ve had a setback. If you are the Messiah, it’s time to make a splash! A grand entrance! If you’ve really got the goods, why hideout?”
1. Many people make this same type of argument concerning how to make the kingdom of God “successful” (at least by their definition). We need more

publicity! More crowd pleasing gimmicks! And by all means, we need access to the biggest crowds.

2. This is what Jesus brothers were suggesting. There would be no bigger crowds than he could find at the festival! Practically the whole nation would be there. If Jesus would go and show off with a few miracles his celebrity status would be restored overnight!
- B. But John indicates that the brothers weren't motivated by their desire to see Jesus' mission succeed. They were trying (like the Pharisees and Herod did) to force his hand, looking for some confirming sign, because, as John says, "not even his brothers believed in him".
1. By only speaking the truth, and acting in obedience to the Father, Jesus had alienated himself from the crowds, the Jewish leadership, his 12 disciples, and now even his own family.
  2. This is not the first time we see his family responding to him in unbelief.  
**Mark 3:20 ESV** Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. **21** And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "**He is out of his mind.**" What greater proof could you have of their unbelief than that Jesus' family thought he was nuts!
    - a) Jesus had said that "'A prophet is not without honor **except** in his hometown and in **his own household**" (Matt. 13:57), as well as warning those who follow him that, "a person's enemies will be those of his own household" (Matt. 10:36).
    - b) It was just as true for him as it will be for many of us. Following Christ will often have a negative effect on our family relationships, sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently. But you must ask yourself, even in the pain of separation of those we treasure most, "Is Jesus worth it?"
- C. In response to this "triple-dog-dare" from his brothers, Jesus tells his brothers that he will not be going to the feast.
- III. **John 7:6 ESV** Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. **7** The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. **8** You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come." **9** After saying this, he remained in Galilee. Jesus distinguishes himself from his brothers on two points: his timing, and his relationship to the world.
- A. Timing is the first issue. We see this when Jesus states "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here." He is placing a line of demarcation between himself and his brothers based on the way they prioritize their lives.
1. This is not the first time we hear him use this type of language, In John 2, when Mary asks Jesus to do **something** in order to avoid the embarrassment that will ensue when the wedding party they are attending runs out of wine, he tells her **John 2:4b ESV** "Woman, what does this have to do with me? **My hour has not yet come.**" What does he mean by that?
  2. When Jesus speaks of "his hour", he is speaking of the culmination of God's will for his life that will happen with at his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. There **will** be a time to go up to Jerusalem and complete

everything he was born into this world to do, but today's not the day. He will not rush it in impatience, or delay it in fear. He will walk in step with God.

B. This is because Jesus' sense of "what time it was" came from the fact that he was not in charge of his own calendar or appointment book. The Father was.

1. **John 5:16 ESV** So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.** For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

a) A comparison could be made to someone serving in the military. Ron and Danette Weller would love it if their son, Zach, who is currently serving in the Air Force, could come home under any circumstances he chose.

b) But that is not the case! He's a man under government authority! He has surrendered his right to be the final arbiter of his schedule and priorities.

2. The commentator Charles Ellicott says that both Mary in John 2 and the brothers here in chapter 7 "regarded life in its **events**"; meaning they responded to events as they came. But for Jesus, submission to the Father was an "unchanging principle". For them, action was determined by demands of the "outer stimuli"; for Him, only by the eternal will of the Father.

a) Jesus was on a mission much larger than the petty demands and urgencies of his brothers' lives.

b) If going to the feast and doing miraculous signs had served the Father's redemptive purposes, he would have gone. But if he was not led by the Spirit to do so in order to obey the Father, he wasn't budging!

3. What about you and I? Are we moved about mostly by personal ambition and "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunities, or are we committed to doing the will of the Father? This is where the true believers are separated from pretenders.

a) Jesus' brothers could do whatever they wanted whenever they wanted because they weren't "on mission"! They weren't even believers! Their time, priorities, and destinies were their own. Motivated by nothing deeper than selfishness, Jesus said of them, "your time is always here".

b) Why was this so? Because it was **their** time! But Jesus lived to please the Father! Jesus' time was the **Father's** time! Jesus' ministry was the **Father's** ministry. Jesus' purposes were the **Father's** purposes.

4. **James 4:13 ESV** Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" — **14** yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. **15** Instead you ought to say, "**If the Lord wills**, we will live and do this or that." **16** As it is, you boast in your arrogance. **All such boasting is evil.** **17** So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

a) We must surrender all of our plans for our families, careers, money, retirement, health, ministries, etc. if we are to be like Jesus, and pleasing to the Father.

b) We can trust that he has the best interests for us, even when it feels impossible for that to be true. "God will only give you what you would have asked for if you knew everything he knows." - Timothy Keller

5. If God is not completely Lord of everything (your time and plans included), then he is not Lord at all.
- IV. The second point of distinction Christ made between himself and his brothers was the relationship he had with the world. **John 7:7 ESV** *The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.*
- A. Not only are Christ's brothers unlike him because their priorities are governed by a different will, but their social standing with the world is totally different.
    1. Throughout the book of John, and elsewhere, Jesus says clearly that the world (meaning the systems and values that function in the world) have taken a clearly adversarial stand against him and the Father.
    2. **John 15:24 ESV** *If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'*
  - B. In John 7, Christ says that the reason the world hates him is because he testifies about it that it's deeds are evil.
    1. Very few of us enjoy hearing the truth about the most negative aspects of our character! In the perfection and beauty of Jesus, it is impossible not to be aware of our ugliness and lack.
    2. **John 3:19 ESV** *And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and **people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.** 20 For everyone who does wicked things **hates the light** and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.*
  - C. It is clear that at the very base, the holiness of God and the commonness and corruption of the world do not mix.
    1. **James 4:4 ESV** *You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*
    2. The word "enmity" is not one commonly used anymore. It means a deep seated state of hatred, hostility or ill-will. Think about that. That means that if one tries to bridge the gap between the holiness of God and the values of the world that by default they have a hatred, hostility, and deep seated ill will toward God!
  - D. It is important to note that this animosity that exists between Christ and the world extends to his followers.
    1. Over and over Jesus told his disciples that if the world hated him, that we can count on it hating us because we belong to him!
    2. But Jesus told us not to fear even when the world hates us because he loves us, he will never leave us, and he will lead us, guide us, and protect us.
  - E. Yet in spite of the truth of this, I am amazed at how believers are so tempted to sign a truce with a world that God is at war with. The way we do this is apparent in many ways.
    1. It's apparent in the way we hesitate to share the gospel, for fear of offending someone, or looking like a religious nut.

2. It's apparent in the way we neglect personal holiness; looking, talking and acting just like those who are perishing.
    - a) Christian marriages are crumbling at rates that rival the world.
    - b) Statistics show that 77% of Christian men between 18-30 look at porn at least monthly. According to some statistics, 20% of Christian women do as well.
  3. Spiritual things bore or annoy us. We drop in on church occasionally. Our Bibles become more dusty with each passing day. We tip the offering basket as it goes by, and we expect others to teach our kids at church. We have no regular, meaningful, personal communication with the Father through prayer.
    - a) This list is not intended to give you several steps to be a better you. The problem isn't that our moral behavior has not been modified enough, but that we have not invited Jesus to come and ravish our souls; causing us to fall completely and joyfully in love with him and giving us something far more satisfying than what we've been clutching to.
    - b) We have never asked him to guide us and keep us in step, like he was, with the Father, avoiding what should be avoided, and embracing what should be embraced; popularity, comfort and convenience be damned.
- F. So my question for all of us today is this: What exactly is it that makes us distinct (like Jesus was) from the world that he claimed was his enemy? Seriously. Have the guts to ask yourself the question.
1. I say it almost every week, but religious estimates of our worth will not help us. God has called us to be decidedly different. So what is it about you that makes you different?
  2. I am convinced that many who would other find their way in here to hear the gospel don't because quite frankly they see no difference between ourselves and themselves. May God have mercy on our poor, wandering souls.
- V. Oh Father! Let us live by our love for you! Let it result in obedience to your will, and not reaction to our own destructive whims, desires, and impulses. Cause us to abandon every ambition and scheme that would be less than hearing your voice, and living on your timetable. Expose all of our allegiances to this passing world. Show us where we have pursued it's friendship. Call some today to renounce it and to begin anew to run after you. Let joy be their portion and praise fill their hours as they realize that the one who has you needs nothing else. Like Jesus, let us be completely satisfied in you, even if all others were to forsake us. In Jesus name, Amen.