

Study Eight Crystal Clear

Clear

Easy to perceive, understand, or interpret

In John chapter seven, we see evidence of Jesus' intentionality and the focal point of His life and ministry: the Father. Just as in the chapters before, we see Jesus' unrelenting declaration: "I am not here on my own, but He who sent me is true."¹ This one begins with Jesus ministering in Galilee and a conversation with His unbelieving brothers who insist He ought to go to Jerusalem – center stage, as it were, of the Jewish nation. They egg Him on, trying to force His hand, saying, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world."² The reason they encouraged him to go to Jerusalem was because:

if Jesus is interested in religious prominence, his brothers reason, sooner or later he must prove the master of Jerusalem. Otherwise he will always be regarded by the authorities and by the upper echelons of society as no more than a rustic, rural preacher.³

¹ John 7:28 NIV

² John 7:3-4 NIV

³ Carson, D.A. p. 306

Jesus' response to his brothers is convicting, even today:

The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil. You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, because for me the right time has not yet come.⁴

When Jesus said to his mother at the wedding in Cana, "My time has not yet come," the Greek word used for time was *hōra*, meaning hour or time. While the word here, *kairos*, means approximately the same thing, within the frames of reference, Jesus is referring to an entirely different chronological event. *Hōra*, when used in John 2:4, was referring to Jesus' hour of crucifixion – the time that was appointed for Him by the Father for the salvation of the world. In this case, *kairos* still indicates an appointed time, however, Jesus is referring to a much more general circumstance, the appointed time for Him to go up to the Feast of Tabernacles.⁵ As Biblical scholar William Barclay points out:

It did not matter when his brothers went to Jerusalem, for no one would notice they were there and nothing whatever depended on their going. ...but Jesus' going was a very different

⁴ John 7:6-8

⁵ Carson, D.A. p. 307

thing. ...Jesus had to choose his moment, for when he arrives something happens.⁶

In a way, Jesus' refusal to go up could have been taken by His brothers as a slap in the face. "It is almost as if they are being excluded from divine sovereignty – not that God suspended his providential reign in their case, but that what they did was utterly without significance as far as God was concerned."⁷ Their actions were insignificant because they belong to the world, according to the next verse. They did not know or care about God's agenda, but rather were entirely consumed with themselves, their choices, and their lives. Jesus, living humbly before the Father, in total, submissive obedience, has an appointed time; they, on the other hand, do not.

How do you respond in situations like this? Do you move at the injunction of your friends' demands and suggestions? Or do you wait for the word of the Lord concerning matters which require a decision? It is easy to be swayed by the wisdom and clamor of the world if we do not have a razor-sharp understanding of both our identity and our purpose. Jesus repeated again and again that He was sent by God for God's specific purpose. In the same way, as we allow Christ to live through us, we can live with that same focus and know that God has sent us into this world to execute His plans to His good purpose. However, living in that authority means that when we arrive something will happen and for that

⁶ Barclay, William. p. 270

⁷ Carson, D.A. p. 308

reason, we must be in tune with God's Spirit within us and keenly aware of our *kairos* - not moving until He moves.

Scripture Reading: NIV

John 7:1-13

After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. ²But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near,³ Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. ⁴No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵For even his own brothers did not believe in him. ⁶Therefore Jesus told them, "My time is not yet here; for you any time will do. ⁷The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil. ⁸You go to the festival. I am not going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come." ⁹After he had said this, he stayed in Galilee. ¹⁰However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. ¹¹Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus and asking, "Where is he?" ¹²Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people." ¹³But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.

Scripture Meditation:

Mark 14:61-62a "Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' And Jesus said, 'I am...'"

Partner Assignment:

Meet with your prayer partner from this week and Read chapter seven of the Gospel of John. Answer the following questions together:

- A. What does this chapter teach us about Jesus' identity?
- B. What does this chapter teach us about Jesus' mission?
- C. What specifically from this chapter challenges you and why?
- D. What questions or comments do you have for Life Group next week about this chapter? (Make note of them to ask at the beginning of next week's study)

Personal Devotion:

Read Ephesians One and write down all the thoughts and descriptions that apply to the children of God. Then pray declaring and accepting all those things that God has done for you!

GOJ Study Eight, Sample Questions for Discussion:

Pre-Article Questions:

1. For those of you who did the prayer partners assignment, would you share one thing you discovered together this week from the reading and discussion of John Chapter Six or the scripture in Matthew?
2. What do you think Jesus came to earth to do?

Post-Article Questions:

1. What was Jesus' motivation for coming to earth as a deity incarnate according to what we just read? (*Hint: As He says again and again, His Father sent Him. Obedience for the ultimate reward of God's glory was His reason*)

Post-Scripture Reading Questions:

1. What is God's calling on our lives and how could that help you focus as you go about your day-to-day routine? Read Ephesians 1:11-12.
2. How did Jesus' understanding of His calling play a role in His decision of when to go to Jerusalem?
3. Have you ever experienced a situation in your life where timing was of the utmost importance? If you are willing, please share with the group.
4. How often do you wait on the Lord? Do you talk to Him only about big decisions, like where to go to school or who to marry? Or do you talk to Him about everything, from the timing of your arrival in a certain place to your route you will walk to class?
5. Why is it important for us to be sensitive to the Spirit of God?
6. How do you go about listening to the voice of God?
7. How can hearing God's voice on a matter help us to stand firm even when there is peer pressure or our answer causes others to feel offended or even judged?
8. God's *kairos* for Jesus was important because He carried the Father's power into any situation He entered. Why do you think He had that power? (*Hint: He was completely submitted to the Father and did what He saw His Father doing.*)

9. How can we bring God's power into the situations we encounter and what do we need to change for that to be possible? (*Hint: We need to be humble, available, listening, and obedient for the Spirit to rest on us in power.*)
10. Is there anything in your life right now that is hindering you from walking in the fullness of life that Christ offers us? How can our small group help you with this and pray with you about these things?