Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Jesus: A Good Man or a Deceiver?
Scripture: John 7:1-13
Code: 1515

Following the Divine Timetable

John chapter 7. A tremendous message in that song. I don't know if you know that song, the song is entitled, "There is no greater love." Certainly we who know Jesus Christ have experienced the greatness of that love. And there is no match, there is nothing that can touch the love of Jesus Christ.

And as we think of that we turn to the words about Jesus Christ again, this morning, as we look at John's gospel. John, of course, by way of this gospel, is presenting to us very clearly, very relentlessly the person of Jesus Christ. John's message is Christ...simple, uncluttered, always the same on every page in every chapter in every incident, His message is ever and always this, Jesus Christ is God. That's John's message. Jesus Christ is God. You turn the page, and there it is again, Jesus Christ is God, God in a human body. All through this gospel we see that same recurring message. As we come to chapter 7, it is no different.

We also told you that John's theme has a sub-theme, that though his theme is Jesus is God, John also deals with a sub-theme of how men responded to Jesus. So all through the gospel you have this continual presenting of Jesus Christ and then that constant sub-theme of the reaction of people to that presentation. Christ would make a statement and people would react. Christ would do a miracle and people would react. Christ would preach a sermon and people would react. John presents the claims of Christ and people react. This is the recurring point of John's gospel. He is presenting Christ as God in human flesh, and then presenting along with it the reaction of men.

Now as we enter in to chapter 7 and 8, we are entering in to a new section in John's gospel. This is a new section. And if you were going to title this section you might call it "High intensity hatred," because these two chapters, chapters 7 and 8, are the chapters that really bring to a blaze the smoldering hate that has been going on toward Jesus Christ in Jerusalem and Judea.

Now as you remember, since chapter 6, or chapter 5 actually, Christ has been up in Galilee, the northern part. He has left Jerusalem because they were trying to kill Him down there. He's left there. He's been ministering in Galilee. In these chapters, chapters 7 and 8, He returns to Jerusalem and He finds that the hate has not died out. It has been like ashes smoldering and when He comes back

it bursts into a doubly violent flame, finally culminating in a plot in chapter 11 to take His life and that ultimately culminating in His crucifixion. So this chapter begins at a tremendous high intensity of hatred and Jesus Christ, in these two chapters, has moved back to Jerusalem, or He will begin to move back to Jerusalem as we shall see this morning. And incidently, this morning's passage is in a great way just setting the scene for us. It doesn't have a tremendous lot of doctrinal content to it, it just sets the stage. From here on in we're going to see some tremendously significant things. Now that is not to discount this passage for the whole counsel of God is for our profit. But nevertheless, it is by and large setting the stage and in these two chapters we're going to see the antagonism and the strife toward Jesus Christ that happened when He returned. The final climax, as you well remember, being His death. If you want to get a little idea of how these two chapters end, just look at the last of the two chapters, verse 59 of chapter 8, which says, "Then took they of stones to cast at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them and so passed by." These two chapters culminate in mob violence in an attempt to stone Jesus Christ. They gather their wits a little bit by chapter 11 and they go aside from the mob violence idea and they plot His death as a council. But here the culmination of what Christ does back in Jerusalem in these two chapters causes such intense hatred and violent reaction that they all grab stones to stone Him.

And so, in these two chapters, mark it well, Jesus again confronts people and He says, "This is who I am, how are you going to react?" He makes the claim to be God and we see the reaction of men. Again we see the confronting Jesus, Christ walking into the midst of society, walking into the midst of men and saying, "Here I am, here is what I am, here is where I came from, here is what I demand." And then charting the response and the reaction of men. But, you see, that's the way it is with Jesus, He always does that. It's no different today than it was then. He is still confronting men. Jesus Christ confronts our world today. He confronts our life. He confronts us with Himself and says, "This is who I am, what are you going to do about it?" Pilate said, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?"

Every man who has ever lived has been confronted since the time of Christ with what to do with the person of Christ. And really, though you can categorize a lot of different reactions, they fall into two basic categories. When a man's ideas and a man's ideals and a man's personal goals and a man's personal attitudes clash with Jesus Christ, one of two things happen...either that man submits and surrenders to Jesus Christ or that man rebels and fights against Jesus Christ. And when he does that he soon wishes to eliminate Jesus Christ from his presence all together. Jesus Himself said, "He that is not with Me is...what?...against Me." There's no middle ground. Jesus Christ confronts a man and that man decides. Every man then is faced with the same basic, simple alternative.

If you allow Jesus Christ into your orbit at all, you're going to face the decision. You can either do what He wants, or you can do what you want. And if you decide you're going to do what you want,

then the sooner the better you want to get rid of Jesus Christ, you want to eliminate Him. That's exactly what happened in Israel. Jesus said, "Here I am, here's who I am, here's where I came from, here's what I want from you," they said, "Sorry, we don't buy." And they could not then tolerate Him staying in their midst and so they sought to eliminate Him. That's exactly what will happen as He returns to Judea. Now we'll see many varying kinds of reactions, but it all culminated in a desire to eliminate Him as the great mob stood outside that day and said, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Any other attitude and response except personal faith in Christ ultimately culminates in the desire to eliminate Him. So again, relentlessly, repetitiously Jesus confronts the world and demands a reaction, and He gets it. And the reaction will eventually blossom like some black rose into hatred and murder.

Today we look at the first thirteen verses and they set the stage for the entire section. They record for us Jesus going to the Feast of Tabernacles. And it is at this feast and around the season of this feast that all of these events of chapter 7 and 8 take place. It is at the next Passover that He loses His life, so it's not too far away, maybe only five months. And we're going to see in these verses many truths, they're woven into it although it is as much data historical, there are truths and principles woven here. And you ought to, by this time if you've been coming for very long, you ought to be able to grab the truths, the principles that you see in these passages and mark them down, write them in your Bible, write them somewhere on a piece of paper. And, in fact, it was even suggested that we might have an outline, so we've provided that for you. Maybe you can scratch some things on that. You ought to be able to grab principles of God's operation as we go through narrative passages and so we'll hope that you can do that.

There are many truths here but I want you to see on truth that dominates this whole passage, and here it comes, it is this, Jesus is on a divine timetable. Jesus operates on schedule with divine plan. Jesus' life is no random thing. He is operating on a divine timetable. And at exactly the very split second that God designed, the life of Jesus Christ will intersect the cross, no later, no sooner than God has preordained in eternity past. Jesus is on a divine schedule. The Bible tells us, Paul told the Galatians that Jesus Christ came into this world in the fullness of time when it was exactly the right split second for Him to arrive. And just as He came in the fullness of time, so He acted in the fullness of time, so He died in the fullness of time, so He rose in the fullness of time and so will He return, Paul told Timothy, when the times are right. The whole thing is on God's clock.

You say, "Well wait a minute. God's eternal, He doesn't operate on the basis of time." Listen, God is eternal but when God operates in the world of men, He operates on time.

As we come to this chapter, we're going to find out there's a seven-month gap that has taken place between chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 occurred around the Passover time and the Passover time took place in April. Chapter 7 occurs at the Feast of Tabernacles, that took place in October, seven months have gone by, seven silent months. John says nothing about these months, that's because

John's purpose isn't to present the chronology of the life of Christ. John's purpose is simply to present certain incidents that tell us that Christ is God and how men reacted to that, as I've said before.

So, Christ has for seven months stayed away from Jerusalem. He hadn't been there for seven months. During those seven months there was an important time with His disciples, important things were going on, and we'll look at those as we look at the passage. Now again, a very basic outline to this, there are two main parts. The first nine verses deal with the subject of the wrong time. And this is teaching us that Jesus is on a divine timetable, that's the main lesson we're learning. The second section, verses 10 to 13, teach us the right time. The wrong time and the right time, Christ only acts at the right time. When He was persuaded to act at the wrong time, He rejected it. When the right time came, He acted. He does things on schedule, God's time. So, we see, first of all, in the first nine verses the wrong time. We'll see four basic things here, the remaining, the request, the response and the rationale. That's just to help you to identify things in your mind.

First of all, in the first nine verses Jesus Christ is not quite ready to return to Jerusalem. He's still going to stay in Galilee. It's not quite right to go back. The time is not right. And so He remains. And we see this remaining in verse 1, notice it. "After these things, Jesus walked in Galilee." That's the picture of journeying through Galilee, moving through Galilee. The other gospel writers tell us He went to the northwest. He went clear to the Phoenician border. He went way to the extreme north, way to the extreme southwest to Decapolis. He moved all about in the rural areas, avoiding the populated areas around the lake, the Sea of Galilee, and around Capernaum where He had been really refuted and really where His disciples had walked away from Him and said, "We don't want anything to do with You anymore." And already hostility had been born. He avoided those areas and spent the time in the rural areas. He was walking in Galilee. And you'll notice it says, "After these things," and that would recall chapter 6, after the incident of chapter 6 all of the miracle there and the teaching on this great sermon on the Bread of Life, after that He walked in Galilee. And since that chapter 6 took place around the Passover, and this chapter 7 takes place at the Feast of Tabernacles, we know it was about a seven-month walk which is a long walk.

Jesus had something to do during those months, something very, very, very important. You say, "What did He do?" Well the other writers tell us some of the things He did. He did some miracles. He did some teaching, mostly with very small groups, not large multitudes particularly. He also confronted the Jewish leaders and they came through with that great final apostasy where they accused Him of doing what He did by Satan and He said, "That's blaspheming the Holy Spirit and that means you can't be forgiven."

But on the other side, He did some other things. Those were just incidents here and there. Most of those months He spent with twelve people, twelve disciples. And He did some things that were very important for them. Number one, He taught there, and I mean He taught them for seven months, day in, day out, week in, week out for seven months He taught those disciples. He spent seven months with twelve people, teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching.

Second thing He did was, while He was teaching them He told them that He was going to be rejected. He told them He was going to die.

The third thing He did was He took a few selected ones up on a mountain and He showed them His glory in what the Bible calls His transfiguration. For seven months He centered His ministry on twelve people. All the other things were extraneous to those Twelve.

That's a tremendous truth, folks, that is a tremendous truth. When those seven months were over, He was ready to go back to Jerusalem, but not until. Now mark this, would you please, it's a great principle, mark it, listen. Remember this, in chapter 6 Jesus spent two days, you get that?, two days with a multitude of 15 to 20 thousand people. That's all, two days. He spent seven months with twelve disciples.

You say, "So what's the lesson?" The lesson is this. Discipleship is the priority. Did you get that lesson? Discipleship is the priority. Jesus Christ came to make disciples. Jesus Christ before He left said, "God into the world and have mass meetings." No. He said, "Go into the world and...what?...make disciples, teaching them." That's what it's all about. This is what God wants. God is not merely so concerned with mass meetings as He is with reproduction among disciples. That's the whole point.

You know, a lot of people get a lot of excitement out of the size of a certain thing. And it's important that there be size in some things. I mean, the more people you can have, the more people you'll reach with the gospel. We understand that, obviously. And as I've told you before, I have never yet in my life in this ministry, nor will I ever, prayed for God to send one more person to this church. I would never be so bold as to pray that. I don't feel I have the right to ask God for one more till I have begun to make disciples out of the ones He's already given me. The success of any church, folks, is not how many bodies are jammed into the building. The success of any church is what is the depth of their discipleship. That's the key. That's what it's all about. Anybody can get a crowd. That's the easy part. All we have to do is have free peanuts and balloons and striped giraffes running around on the grass and we could have crowds. No problem. Easy, it only takes money and a little bit of ingenuity.

But you know what is very difficult? To make disciples cause it takes a life poured into another life. That's how you make a disciple. The Bible never says get a crowd. The Bible just says make disciples. Of course, sometimes a mass meeting is important to initiate the gospel. Of course it is. But Paul told Timothy the essence of what it's all about when he said, "Find some faithful men, Timothy, and teach those faithful men that they in turn may teach others also. And you know what will happen? You'll set off a chain reaction of reproductive disciples who will just keep reproducing themselves." That's what it's all about.

There is a ministry to the mass, my friend, but the ministry to the mass is never and can never be a substitute for your personal ministry in reproducing yourself in the life of somebody else. Listen to me. If you're a Christian, if you're a Christian...watch it...you by the very virtue of your Christianity are responsible to be reproducing yourself in somebody else's life. Incidently, before you start reproducing yourself, back up and find out what you are before you want to reproduce yourself. Start where you are. When you are what you should be in the sight of God, then begin to reproduce yourself. That's why you're here. If you know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you are responsible to make disciples. You're not responsible to go to church. You're not responsible to go to Sunday School. You're not responsible to give your money each week. You're not responsible for that, the Bible says not one thing about that. But you are responsible to make disciples.

Now, of course, you'll want the fellowship of believers and you'll want to share what God has given you. That's a basic principle. But nowhere is there a list of commandments...go to church, put your money in the offering, go to Sunday School...that's not there. That's understood because you want the fellowship and you're committed. But what is there is make disciples, make disciples, make disciples.

Ask yourself this? How long have you been a Christian? In the years that you've been a Christian, who are your disciples? Where are the ones that you reproduced in the faith? Oh not somebody that you led to Christ and then wandered away. I mean a disciple that you can look at and say, "Look at that life." You say, "Well that's...that's really kind of taking the credit, isn't it?" You know what Paul said to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 1:6 he said this. "Do you know why you're such a wonderful church?" This is what Paul said. He said, "Because you were followers of me."

You say, "Paul! What kind of an egotist are you?"

Paul says, "You have followed me as I have followed Jesus Christ, that's why you are what you are." Nothing wrong with following somebody as long as they're following Jesus Christ. That's the divine pattern. Also to Timothy, "Be thou an example to...what?...to the believers." A pattern, a copy,

tracing paper, reproduce yourself, reproduce yourself. Tragically and sadly this is the great hindrance in the work of God today is we do not reproduce ourselves. We expect mass things to do it for us. Listen, as Christians in this world today we are suffering because we do not have any depth. I thank God for those that have that depth and I know that many of you are moving into the area of learning how to become a disciple and then to produce a disciple, and this is exciting. But for the vast majority of the organized church, quote/unquote, there's no such thing as reproduction. We're suffering from that very fast and God has to use a mass evangelism often to compensate for the failure of a person to do an individual work.

Listen, we need Christians who count, you know. We need Christians who matter. We need Christians who confront the world, those who really know the Word of God and can reproduce themselves. But what we have are mostly Christians who know nothing, do nothing and cannot reproduce. And that's the tragedy of the church.

And so, Jesus knew that the whole world needed His message, right? He knew that. He knew the whole world needs this message and He could have gone around the world fast by divine power and whoosh....just like that and told everybody. But He didn't. He spent seven months with twelve people. One of them was a waste. He spent seven months with them.

You say, "Well why didn't He spend seven months going around the world preaching the gospel?" I'll tell you why. If Christ had done it all and left, that would have been the end of it, right? If you ran an organization in which you had all kinds of people under you and you did all the work, what would happen if you left? It would be the end of your organization. They always say that the great...the great character of a successful administrator is his ability to walk away and know that everything will function when he goes. Listen, if Jesus Christ had done everything, He would have come and gone and that would have been it. So Jesus Christ had to reproduce His life in the lives of twelve people. When He went away He could say to them, "It's your job, men, and I know you're going to do it." And they turned around and reproduced themselves and you and I are living reproductions from those original twelve. But for the most part, they are the authors of the Word of God, the New Testament.

Christianity is the heritage of eleven people, and added later a twelfth, Matthias, because Jesus poured His life into twelve who would be around to pour their lives into twelve more, and twenty-four...whatever. That's what the church is all about, folks, the church is a discipleship station where we are to reproduce ourselves. That's why we emphasize teaching, knowledge of the Word of God.

Some people have the idea that all the church is supposed to do is evangelize. No, no, no, no. In fact, really primarily the pulpit is not a place of evangelism. We were talking about it the other day the fact that shepherds don't beget sheep. Sheep beget sheep, right? We're not to spend all our time

evangelizing the world. We're to make disciples who will reproduce themselves. And I'll tell you, somebody was saying to me, you know, a lot of people change churches. People have come into our church maybe from another church and somebody thought that maybe that wasn't a good thing. And I said, "Well, I would never seek people from other churches, never. Never will do that. But I'll tell you one thing, if a person is in a church where they are not learning the Word of God, where they are not being nurtured in the Word of God, where they're not studying the Word of God, where they are languishing in ignorance of the Word of God, consequently are non-reproductive, then I praise God for putting them in a place where they can become productive." I think this is happening. I read an article where I saw the 75 largest churches in America and out of 75 of them I think 74 of them were evangelical. Today people are gravitating to places where they can learn the Word of God. And I think it's exciting because if ever we do need people who are productive, we need them today. We need rule of discipleship.

And so, Jesus worked with twelve. Well that's probably just the positive reason why He stayed. The negative is also in verse 1. "For He would not walk in Judea because the Jews sought to kill Him." He wasn't ready to go back because He knew when He went back it would mean His death. Remember back in chapter 5 verse 18 where they had tried to kill Him, they sought the more to kill Him, it says, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but He claimed to be equal with God. And so the Jews were ready to kill Him in the southern part, down there in Jerusalem, Judea and He wasn't ready to go back and have that happen.

Well you say, "Couldn't He have prevented it?" Of course He could have prevented it. But He went there for the purpose of dying and so He wanted to wait till the right time to die to be on God's schedule. But the Jewish leaders wanted His death. They wanted it desperately. By the time even you get over to chapter 10 and verse 30, He says, "I and My Father are one," and the Jews took up stones to stone Him. You go over to chapter 11 verse 53 and 54 and He's making more claims and they're getting into a little council meeting and they're saying, "We've got to get rid of Him." So He knew there was hostility. And He couldn't let this death come about until it was ready. He wasn't about to go down there, cause He knew that would bring about His death, until exactly the right time. Plus, He had to stay with His disciples to make them what they needed to be.

And so we see the remaining. Then we see a request that arises. Verse 2 tells us the Feast of Tabernacles was at hand, that was a remembrance of God's protection of Israel in keeping them in the wilderness wanderings for forty years when they dwelt in tents or booths. And at the Feast of Tabernacles happened from the fifteenth to the twenty-second of the month Tishri which is our October and during that time for about a seven-day period they built booths in the street, in the squares, up on the roofs and everywhere around Jerusalem were these booths symbolizing God's faithfulness in the wilderness.

Well it was time for this feast and, of course, every Jewish male was required to go to the feast, this was standard procedure. Verse 2 tells us that the feast had arrived. Very important feast instituted by God back in Leviticus chapter 23 and the Jewish people were to have a part in it. There was part of it which was a remembrance of the water coming from the rock and Christ will refer to that later on in this chapter and we'll see this feast unfold because Christ when He preaches in Jerusalem adapts His sermon to the feast that's going on. And we'll see that in weeks to come.

So the feast was going on. Now in view of the feast, verse 3, the request. "His brethren," by that is meant His brothers. Now Jesus had half-brothers. The reason they were half-brothers is because they were sons of Joseph and Mary and He was the Son of Mary and begotten by the Holy Spirit. So, in a sense, He was only a half brother. You say, "Well who were His brothers?" Well, the Bible tells us who they were. In Matthew 13:55, don't look it up, just listen, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary and His brethren...here's their names...James, Joseph, Simon and Jude?" James became the pastor of the Jerusalem church and Jude wrote that little epistle just before the book of Revelation. So here are His brothers. And they come to Him. "And they said unto Him," and here's their request, "Depart from here," that is up here in Galilee, "and go into Judea," that is down there where Jerusalem is, "that Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest."

They said...Go down to Jerusalem and do these things You're doing. Now there's a lot of speculation about why they asked Him to do this and the Bible doesn't really say. Some people think they had an impatient zeal for Him to show His glory. Hardly in view of verse 5, they didn't even believe in Him. Other people say, "Well, actually they had a malignant desire and a hatred for Him and they wanted Him to fall into the hands of His enemies and be killed." Well I don't quite think that's there either, it doesn't say that. What was the reason they wanted Him to go down there?

I think it's kind of two-fold and kind of all woven together. First of all, I think one of the reasons why they wanted Jesus Christ to go down there was because they wanted to see some of these miracles for themselves and they wanted to really see if He was for real. They figured if He can go to Jerusalem and do these miracles, and Jerusalem is going to accept Him, that's proof enough for us. Because at this point they didn't believe in Him either. And I think, in a sense, they may have wanted to be convinced. And so they figured if He can...if He was really doing these things, you'll notice they put the word "if" there because they don't know whether He's doing them or not for real, if You really are doing these things, then go down there and do them. And then we'll be able to really identify You and make a verdict. I mean, it will be the acid test. If You can knock off Jerusalem, You're in.

But I think there was another thought, too. I think secretly in their hearts they could not deny His power. They had been raised with Him. Certainly they knew His power. And they were very likely

hoping that He was going to go down there and become some political Messiah. And just think what that meant? You know, we're His brothers, fellows. If He's in, we're in. And they figured they might slide into some glorious fame and so forth on His coattails. But they didn't see Him as a true Son of God, anyway. Perhaps in true Jewish fashion they were looking for a political Messiah. They figured if this was it, Jerusalem will be the acid test. And if this is it, He'll set up His deal down there and we'll get in on it. And so they said to Him, "Do this in Jerusalem. If You're for real, go down there and do it." Jerusalem is really the test, wandering around up in the boondocks in Galilee is not going to prove anything. If You're really who You say You are, You're going to have top convince the headquarters, the mucky-mucks in Jerusalem.

So all of His miracles in Galilee seemed to them beside the point. He needed to do something in Jerusalem. Notice that it says, "Thy disciples." Now He had probably already gained some disciples and by that I don't mean the twelve at all, just followers that He had gained in Jerusalem the first time He was there. Plus all the ones in Galilee would have gone there for the Feast of Tabernacles. So all the disciples that He had made in Galilee and there weren't really a lot of them, and the ones that He had gotten down there in Jerusalem would be together there. And so they say, "Go there that Your disciples can see these fantastic things that You do. This will be the real test."

And after this request they kind of give a reason for it in verse 4. They say, "For no man that doeth anything in secret." I mean, nobody that's got anything to say whispers it. Nobody that's really got some fantastic announcement does it in secret. "But He seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." In other words, what are You hiding for? If You came to be the world's Savior, then show Yourself to the world. If You came to cure the world's ills, then show Yourself to the world. What are You doing hiding up here in Galilee? All this secret stuff is inconsistent with Your claims.

You see, this is exactly the wrong way to look at it. Christ was establishing His gospel to the world by building it into twelve people...eleven. He was establishing His gospel by pouring it into the lives of these eleven. Infinitely more than He would have ever done it by some public manifestation in Jerusalem as evidenced by the miracles that He did do there. Every time He did a miracle, everybody reacted violently and they wound up killing Him.

Here's a key to the attitude of the brothers, if you'll notice it in verse 4. It's the word "if," do you see it there? If...they didn't believe...they didn't believe. I mean, "If You really do these things, if You're really for real, if You've really got this power, then why are You sneaking around Galilee, why not get down there if You really do these things?" They weren't really convinced. And again they give Him the same line that Satan did. You know, if you really want to be an instant hero, You can just dive off the temple. Remember that one? And the angels will gather You up and set You down. And the

people will go, "Ohhh," you know. "Must be Messiah," you know, because a lot of guys had tried a swan dive off the temple and it hasn't worked. But if Jesus could actually do that, cause by the Old Testament talked about, you know, coming to the temple and all of this, that would be convincing. He says, "I don't go that route. Not that sensation route."

Mark this, Jesus never operates on sensation. He never operates on pure emotion. He always operates on teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching, make disciples, make disciples, make disciples. That has roots, folks. You follow the thrill seekers and you're going to find that today's thrill is tomorrow's drag and you're going to need another thrill better than the last one. Christ never established Himself on sensation. If you want to evaluate a ministry, any ministry, any place, any time, you evaluate it on the productivity of disciples. You evaluate it on the teaching that's going on. That's how you evaluate a ministry. Not the size of it, not the mass of it, not the sensation of it, and not the emotion of it, the teaching, discipleship, that's the key.

So, while they thought Jesus was wasting His time, He was indeed spreading the gospel around the world by getting eleven men who would reproduce themselves all over the world. So, Jesus taught His twelve. And verse 5 adds, "For neither did His brethren believe in Him." Kind of an exciting story that they did come to Him because they appear in Acts chapter 1 verse 14 with a group in the Upper Room waiting for the Holy Spirit to come and they're there...they're there and Jude wrote that little book, and James became the pastor of the Jerusalem church. They came around all in God's good time.

Well look at Jesus' response, very quickly. We've seen remaining and their request, now look at the response in verse 8. We skipped some verses and will come back to them. Verse 8, "Jesus says, 'Go ye up to this feast, I go not up yet unto this feast.'" Now verse 9, "When He had said these words unto them, He had abode still in Galilee." His answer is no, no you asked me to go, I'm not going to go, it's not time to go, I'm not ready to go. Things aren't right to go yet. See, nobody forces Jesus' hand, especially unbelief. Remember the principle we've learned for three weeks in a row now? Jesus never commits Himself to...what?...to unbelief. He never does. Unbelief says, "Do this," He says, "No." Jesus never commits Himself to unbelief, willful unbelief. No one forces Jesus' hand. And these people were all ready to go on a big festival caravan, as was the common way, and they had all moved together in this kind of a caravan deal, moved to Jerusalem. Not Jesus, He wasn't going with them. He isn't going at their whim to do tricks and win popularity, that's not why He came.

Jesus gives His reasons for not going with them in the rationale. His response was verse 8 and 9, His reasons, verse 6, 7 and part of verse 8. Look at verse 6, "And then Jesus said unto them," here's the reason He wouldn't go, watch it, "My time is not yet come." Stop right there. It's not time for Me to God. Jesus says, "I will manifest Myself at the right moment, not any sooner." If He did go, you

know, at the next feast He manifested Himself fully, didn't He? But, you know, the very same week that He manifested Himself riding into the city and they all cried, "Hosanna to the King," and they threw palm branches at His feet, that same week was the same week that they nailed Him to a cross. So He knew that His manifestation would only end in His death and He said, "I can't do it, it's not the right time. I've got things to do before then. This is not the time. My time has not yet come."

Jesus is on a divine timetable. Over in verse 30 of chapter 7, "Then they sought to take Him, but no man laid hands on Him." Why? Because His hour wasn't come, they couldn't touch Him. Over in chapter 8 verse 20, "These words spoke Jesus in the treasury as He taught in the temple, and no man laid hands on Him for His hour was not yet come." And also over in chapter 12, I think it's verse 27, "Now is My soul troubled and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour but for this cause came I unto this hour." Christ says I wish I could get out of it humanly speaking, but I know I came into the world for this hour. Christ had a destiny pre-written in eternity past to intercept the cross in a split second and He had to do it in just exactly the moment that God had ordained it. The climax of history, the epoch of the ages was the cross and it was going to come off on schedule, on time, not a split second sooner. You see, God operates on time. Jesus told the disciples in Acts 1:7 one time, He said to them this, they were asking about when will all these things come to pass, He said unto them, "It's not for you to know...what?...the times or the seasons which the Father has put in His own power," Acts 1:7. God operates in certain times.

And actually, Paul's great sermon on Mars Hill in Acts 17 when he was identifying the unknown God, Paul describes God in the character of His relationship to time. In one verse, verse 26, "God had made of one blood all nations of men and hath determined the times before appointed." God has re-written...pardon me...pre-written history on time, on schedule. And, man, it's zeroing in right now on the final climax, the return of Jesus Christ which will happen at the split second that God has already ordained in eternity past that it should happen. Everything's on time. Jesus says, "My time, not yet."

But then in the next statement, in verse 6, He draws a gulf between Himself and His brothers that's as wide as infinity, watch it. "But...verse 6 in the middle...your time is always ready." Now what is He saying there? He's saying this, I am on a divine schedule, you're not on any schedule. What do you mean? Just this, just this, watch it, Jesus Christ is on God's timetable, they could come, go, do anything they wanted to do, they weren't on any timetable. You say, "What do you mean by that?" Just this, a sinner...a sinner, a person without Jesus Christ, his whole life is a random, it doesn't matter what he does, just random sin, purposelessness, pointlessness, going nowhere, meaning nothing. You have no divine timetable without Christ. You have only one date with God, what's that? Death, that's all, that's the only date. That's already set. That's written down in God's book, your death, the date of your death. Maybe for some of you it will be December 4, 1970, I don't know. If you don't know Jesus Christ, that's the only destiny you have with God, one date, death. You're not on a divine timetable, you're just floating around, random sin. Jesus says, "Your time is always ready, you can come and go, it doesn't even matter."

To put it simpler, listen. The only life that counts is the Christian life. Only the believer, only the one who knows Jesus Christ is on divine time all the time, every moment, every hour counts for eternity. Paul says two places, Ephesians 5 and I think Colossians 4, he says two places, "We are to redeem...what?...the time." The psalmist said, "My times are in Thy hands."

You know something, Christian? If you are a part of Jesus Christ, if you are a believer, then you are a part of God's divine redemptive schedule. Your life's not your own. You're on time, you're on God's time. What are you doing with His time? Every moment, every hour, every day counts for God. Yet most Christians dilly-dally and dink away their time, but it's not their time, it's God's time.

You know, you go to work and you get a job and you go and get your time to be there and your time to go home and you work. Do you know what would happen if you came in when you felt like it? Oh, I don't know if I'll work a couple of minutes and then I'm going to go and have a little... You wouldn't make it, man. I'll tell you something, very simple. If you spent your employer's time like you spend God's time, me too, we'd be on welfare. If we spent our employer's time like we spend God's time...Listen, Christian, you are on divine time, you are redemptive history. Every moment matters. And these people who don't know Jesus Christ, random sin, only one date...death, that's all. Make your time count.

Then Jesus adds another thing in verse 7 in a rationale for why He doesn't go. He says this, "The world can't hate you, but Me it hates because I testify of it that its works are evil." He says...You can come and go, nobody's going to bother you. If I go to Jerusalem, they're going to kill Me. Why? Because I tell them the truth about themselves, you're part of the system. The world loves its own...oh man, the world just really loves its own. The world doesn't persecute each other. The world system tolerates its own. You stand up and rebuke the world system and call it evil and call it what it is and you're going to get a reaction, folks. That's what Jesus did. He ran right smack into the system and called it what it was, sin, sin, sin. They didn't like to hear it.

In John 15 Jesus perhaps puts to us the most searching question of discipleship in all the Bible. Listen to this. "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you." Now listen to this, "If you are of the world, the world would love its own." The world loves its own. But, "Because you're not of the world, I've chosen you out of the world, therefore the world...what?...hates you." Searching question...are you ready? This is your test for this morning, one question...what does the world think of you? What do they think of you? They hate you? Or are you sort of snugly and wrapped and feel very warm and comfortable in the world? Are you on the world's course? Do you do what the world does? You enjoy the world's life? Or are you the constant antagonist of the world so that the world hates you? The world should hate the Christian. And the Christian should hate the

world. Not the people in the world but the evil system of the world.

Why do you think Paul said this? "Come out from among and be ye separate, touch not the unclean thing." Because he knew that that was the character of discipleship and Hebrews gives us the greatest example of that, Jesus Christ, of whom it says, "He was holy, harmless, undefiled...are you ready for this one?...separate from sinners." Well He touched them in His daily walk and He loved them, but in terms of conduct, they were a billion miles apart. You have no place in the world. So said Jesus, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." You're in trouble.

So, Jesus says, "I'm not going for two reasons. Number one, it's not the right time. Number two, they'll kill Me and it will be off schedule." And so we see the wrong time in these verses. We see Him remaining. We see the request, His response and His rationale. Now very quickly and because it's very simple, it just introduces us to the next passage, I want you to see what happens when the right time comes in verses 10 to 13. This will just be a moment.

Now the right time teaches us two things...the return and the reaction. Your little outline there might say the results, but the reaction would probably be better. The right time, in His own time He goes. He doesn't go with His brothers in a big festival caravan, He's not ready for a big public display. He's not ready to be the center of everything publicly, He knows what that will bring. So in His own time, in His own way, He goes secretly, the right time. First of all, they return, verse 10, "But when His brothers had gone up, then went He also up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret." This time He goes quietly, secretly.

Why? The first time He went to Jerusalem, you remember how He went the first time? Man, He arrived in Jerusalem, walked right in the temple, grabbed a cord, made a whip, started swinging that whip and wailing on people, flipping over tables and all those people started bailing out. He said, "I'm here, mark it, people." And, man, they did. Then the hostility began. The second time He came back to Jerusalem, remember how it was? He just came as a pilgrim to the feast. He was there publicly. He was there but He didn't do any great dynamic works. The third time He comes, He comes secretly. Each time with less and less dynamic action. You know why? Because the hostility kept growing and growing and growing and growing. The hatred.

Now we see some of this reaction, notice the reactions in verse 11 to 13, we'll just introduce them because they're really the content of the rest of these two chapters. The first reaction is that of the Jews. And by the term Jews, John refers to Jewish leadership, the Pharisees, the hypocritical rulers of the Jews. Look at their attitude. "Then the Jews sought Him at the feast and said, 'Where is He?'" You know, you can just hear it. "Where is He? Don't tell us all you people came down here from Galilee without Him." See, why did they want Him? They wanted Him because they wanted to kill

Him, that's why. They wanted His blood. Where is He?

Isn't it interesting that Jesus became the topic of conversation when He wasn't even around? He had made such a fantastic impression upon the whole nation that every time they got together, Jesus automatically was the topic. And He's not even around yet. He's secretly set apart. The reaction of the Jewish rulers was hatred, open antagonistic hatred. And that's the reaction of a lot of people even today. Whenever I think of that I always think of Madeline Murray, an example of hellish hatred of the person of Jesus Christ. I'm sure there are many, many thousands of other examples.

Then we see some different reactions...not quite so bad, not good. Verse 12, "And there was much murmuring among the people concerning Him." This is interesting because the word indicates whispers. They were all...psst...psst...psst. They're all talking about Jesus. You say, "How did He get to be the topic of conversation, He wasn't even around?" Just by virtue of who He was. He had so dominated the thoughts and attitudes of those people that all He could talk about was Jesus. Here they all got together...Have you heard about Jesus? What Jesus? What is He? And they're all murmuring very quietly, nobody talks out loud. And some one is saying, "He's a good man, I think He's a good man." Somebody else is saying, "No, no, no, He's a deceiver," see. "He deceives the people."

What is He, a good man or a deceiver? Good man...wrong. Deceiver...wrong. Nice going, folks. You're both wrong. Good men don't claim to be God. Crazy people do, not good people. A deceiver might claim to be God, deceivers can't do miracles. Good man, deceiver? Who is Jesus Christ? Who is He? And they're whispering...who is Jesus Christ?

But look at verse 13. They were all scared to death. "Howbeit no man, or however no man spoke openly of Him, for fear of the Jews." They wouldn't even say, "Well I think He's..." See. You say, "Why were they afraid of the Jewish leaders?" Because of this, folks. The Jewish leaders had the whole of Judaism in absolute slavery. Did you know that? They couldn't think for themselves. Everything was a verdict of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin made a final verdict on everything. And nobody would dare commit himself until somebody had stood up, blown a horn and said, "The Sanhedrin declares that Jesus is...ta-da." And then they would be willing to say, "Oh, you know, now they've made a decision. It must be." And they'd fall right into the pattern. Nobody would dare stick his neck out on deciding who Jesus was publicly or openly because they were afraid that they would go against the verdict of the Jews. That's the kind of slavery they had.

So here the reaction begins to start. Jesus has arrived. It begins to try to build. Some are saying He's a good man. Some are saying He's a deceiver. And the Jews are openly hostile to Him but nobody is saying anything out loud because they're afraid that if the Jews come up with a different

verdict than what they've said, they'll get thrown out of the synagogue, which means excommunication from all the life and society of Israel. So nobody says a word.

So we're introduced to the subject of the reactions to Jesus Christ. At the right time He went and He stirred reactions. Who is He? Is He a good man? Is He a deceiver? Who is He? Want to know who He is? Look at verse 69 of chapter 6 . Peter said it, "And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ...who is He?...the Son of the living God," that's who He is. That's who He is.

Do you know Him? Is your life on a divine schedule? Or do you have only one date with God? Death.

Father, we thank You, this morning, for teaching us Your Word. Thank You for the truths that are herein. Lord, we know that this passage is really kind of a background passage for others and yet, Lord, we've learned some things about how You operate, about how Christ operated, about who He was. We know there are probably some people here, this morning, who may be debating the fact of who is He? A good man, deceiver, or the Son of the living God? Lord, we just pray that Your Spirit would overrule doubt and misunderstanding, convict of sin and teach the truth that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of the living God. We'll thank You in Christ's precious name. Amen.

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