

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## JOHN 7.1-24



**T. M. Moore**

*A Scriptorium Study*

*And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,*

*He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

The Gospel of John: John 7.1-24  
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## Introduction to *John 7.1-24*

The Feast of Tabernacles was at hand, and this provided Jesus with an excellent opportunity to press His claims. He did go up to the feast at the beginning, but only in the middle of it, because He deemed this the wisest course of action.

The people in Jerusalem were divided over Jesus. Some believed Him to be a good Man, but others insisted He deceived the people. The religious leaders sought to kill Him, but that wasn't going to happen just yet.

In Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus gives us a lesson in making the most of the opportunities. Let's have a closer look.

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## 1 In Galilee

*Read and meditate on John 7.1, 2.*

John offers us a place to catch our breath before Jesus heads into His next confrontation with those who were seeking to destroy Him. But that dark tone of foreboding remains, and is growing.

*<sup>1</sup>After these things, Jesus walked again in Galilee, for He would not go to Judea, where the Jews determined they would kill Him there.  
<sup>2</sup>The Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.*

- John 7.1, 2

*Reflect*

1. We recall that Jesus had been ministering around the Sea of Galilee, where He fed the thousands and taught in the synagogue at Capernaum. There we saw the tension around Him increasing, because people were amazed at His signs, but could not get their minds around His teaching. Some were offended and turned away. Others pondered how to get rid of Him. Jesus was aware of all this, so He remained in Galilee rather than return to Judea. Why would this brief *caesura* in Galilee have been important for Jesus and His disciples? Complete this prayer: *Lord, You were never in a hurry. You always managed Your pace in ministry, and always did things Your way. Help me also to...*

2. The last time Jesus had been in Jerusalem in Judea was back in chapter 5, when He healed a lame man. He will refer to that incident in John 7, so it seems to have been significant in brewing up the state of things in Judea. He had healed a lame man on the Sabbath. Why would this have inflamed the Jews against Him? What threat was Jesus to them? *I don't expect everyone to be happy to hear the Good News, Lord, but...*

3. Jesus certainly knew that He was going to be killed by the Jews in Judea. He had alluded to His death in His conversation with Nicodemus, during a previous visit to Jerusalem. This being so, why was Jesus reluctant to go to Judea and let Himself be taken and killed? *Lord, You have a time for everything, and You are the Lord of all time. Let me use the time You give me today for...*

4. The mention of the Feast of Tabernacles points us back to Jerusalem, where the Feast would have drawn pilgrims from all over Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Review the Feast of Tabernacles in Deuteronomy 16.13-15, Ezra 3.4-7, and Deuteronomy 31.9-13. What about this Feast would have offered Jesus a unique opportunity to advance His message? *You teach us, Lord, to make the most of all the opportunities You give us. Help me today to...*

5. By this time, most people in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee had heard about Jesus, and they were forming opinions about Him. What had they heard? How did what they'd heard challenge their settled views about God, religion, and life? Should we expect our witness for Christ to be unsettling to people? Explain. Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“The law of Moses commanded that the Jews should hurry to Jerusalem from the surrounding countryside to celebrate there in a type the Feast of Tabernacles. And the spiritual person will from this perceive the gathering together of all the saints into Christ when they shall be brought together from the whole world after the resurrection of the dead to the city that is above, the heavenly Jerusalem, there to offer the thank offerings of the true pitching of tabernacles, that is, of the framing and permanence of bodies, corruption having been destroyed and death fallen into death.”  
*Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

We can be sure that, while He remained in Galilee, Jesus was busy about the work for which He had been sent. The time with His disciples must have been important, as were the needs of the many people in Galilee. Paul says we should make the best use of the time God gives us. Jesus certainly did. How do you try to make certain you are doing the same?

*Closing Prayer*

I was glad when they said to me,  
“Let us go into the house of the LORD.”  
Our feet have been standing  
Within your gates, O Jerusalem!  
Jerusalem is built  
As a city that is compact together,  
Where the tribes go up,  
The tribes of the Lord,  
To the Testimony of Israel,  
To give thanks to the name of the LORD.  
For thrones are set there for judgment,  
The thrones of the house of David.  
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:  
“May they prosper who love you.”

Psalm 122.1-6

**Psalm 122.1-9** (*Nettleton: Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*)

I was glad when they said to me, “To the Lord’s house let us go!”  
Holy City, let our feet be firmly planted in your soil.  
Jesus builds His Church forever, where His people sing His praise!  
As Your Word decrees forever, we will thank You all our days.

On the throne of David, Jesus sits to judge the nations all.  
As our holy peace increases, we are safe who on You call.  
Grant us peace, Lord, by Your favor, for Your people’s sake, we pray.  
For the Church’s sake, O Savior, we will seek Your good today.

## 2 A Brotherly Challenge

*Read and meditate on John 7.3-5.*

Jesus' brothers want Him to go to Jerusalem and do His stuff at the feast. This seems like a reasonable suggestion. But not to Jesus. Not yet.

*<sup>3</sup>His brothers said to Him, "Go to the land of Judah, so that Your disciples may observe the works You do. <sup>4</sup>No one should say or do in secret anything while he seeks to be heard and followed openly. If You must do these things, then go and show Yourself unto the world."<sup>5</sup>For it was so, that even His own brothers did not yet believe in Him.*

- John 7.3-5

*Reflect*

1. How would you describe the attitude of Jesus' brothers here? Does it sound a bit snarky to you? Perhaps a little jealous, or clueless? A bit like Joseph's brothers, perhaps (Gen. 37.3, 4)? Complete this prayer: *Jealousy can be a powerful impediment to faith. Lord, keep me from...*
2. Is there an element of truth in the suggestion made by Jesus' brothers? Explain. *Lord, You have redeemed us to do good works, so that others can see You in them. Today, show me how...*
3. Meditate on verse 4. Jesus did many things in secret (think of Jn. 2.1-11, and Mk. 5.40-42); commended doing things in secret (Matt. 6.2-6, 16-18); and He spoke many things that were deliberately hidden from certain people (Matt. 13.11). Were Jesus' brothers wrong? Explain. *I don't want to blare my faith at others, Lord; so help me to...*
4. Can you see how jealousy and unbelief are intermixed in this suggestion by Jesus' brothers? Is there a warning for us here? Explain. *Lord, keep me from anything that hinders belief in You, such as...*
5. What are some other attitudes that might keep us from believing Jesus? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

*Summary*

"His brothers, being led by their human thoughts, spoke these words to him. They wanted him to reveal himself before everybody through his signs so that they might also be glorified through him. They did not possess a perfect faith in him if they believed that he needed to reveal himself completely before everybody concerning the nature hidden in him and that he had to be exalted over everybody." *Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428 AD)*

If not even those closest to Jesus believed in Him – despite all His good works – this should serve as a warning to us. Judas fell away. Mark fled the mission field. Demas loved the world too much. How

do you protect yourself against drifting into unbelief (Heb. 2.1-3)?

*Closing Prayer*

The LORD *is* on my side;

I will not fear.

What can man do to me?

The LORD is for me among those who help me;

Therefore I shall see *my desire* on those who hate me.

*It is* better to trust in the LORD

Than to put confidence in man.

*It is* better to trust in the LORD

Than to put confidence in princes.

Psalm 118.6-9

**Psalm 118.1-9** (*St. George's Windsor: Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*)

Thank the Lord, His love endures! All to whom His love is sure,

All who fear Him day by day, let them thanks and praise now say!

Out of my distress I cry; He will hear me from on high.

He will free me from all fear. What can man do to me here?

For the Lord stands next to me; He will give me victory!

Over all who hate my life, I will triumph through the strife!

In His grace I refuge find; in His steadfast love so kind.

Trust not princes, trust not men – Christ shall be our haven then!

### 3 In His Own Time

*Read and meditate on John 7.6-11.*

Jesus was a realist when it came to the world of His day. He was on a mission of God's love, but He understood that not everyone would see Him that way.

*<sup>6</sup>Then Jesus said, "My set time is not come; your time will always be. <sup>7</sup>The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I say its works are evil. <sup>8</sup>You go to this feast. I am not going to it, for My time is not yet fully come." <sup>9</sup>When He had said these things, He stayed for some time longer there in Galilee. <sup>10</sup>But when His brothers had gone to Judea, then He also went up to the feast. But He went secretly, rather than openly. <sup>11</sup>The Jews were seeking Him. They wondered where He was.*

- John 7.6-11

*Reflect*

1. Though it's not in the original Greek text, some translations supply the word *yet* in verse 8 (NKJV: "I am not yet going up..."). Why? Does it compromise Jesus' veracity to leave it out? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, Your Word may not always be easy to understand, but it is always true and sufficient. Today, help me...*
2. What reason did Jesus give for not going up to the feast? Does it seem to you that He intended His response to illuminate something about His brothers to them? Explain. *Let the light of Your Word shine on my heart every day, Lord, so that...*
3. Here again, as in John 2 (when speaking to His mother), Jesus alludes to a "time" that was set for Him. The Jews want to kill Jesus, and He is willing for this to happen. But He is sovereign over the timing. Why do we need to know this? Why did Jesus mention this matter of His "time"? *You are the Lord of time, Jesus, including my time. Help me use the time You give me each day for...*
4. Jesus remained in Galilee a while, but finally went up to Jerusalem after His brothers had gone. Why did He go in secret (v. 10)? *Lord, You make Yourself known in Your way and time. Help me to use my time and all my ways, Lord, to...*
5. The Jews were looking for Jesus at the feast. We know why, and so did Jesus. The people feared their religious leaders (v. 13), so they must have been put on warning about associating with Jesus. Do people interfere with others' believing in Jesus in our day? Explain. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“He goes up, not to suffer, but to teach. But why does he go up secretly? If he had gone up openly, he would not only have been among them, but also would have kept the violence and impetuosity [of the Jews] in check, as he had often done before. But he couldn’t keep doing this all the time, because if he had gone up openly and again blinded them, he would have disclosed his divinity to a greater degree which, for the moment, he did not want to do. And so he concealed it.... The things that Christ did in a human way were done, in other words, not only to establish the fact of his incarnation, but also to educate us on how to be virtuous. For if he had done everything as God, how would we know what to do when things happened to us that we didn’t want to have happen?”

*John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

Jesus carefully managed His earthly sojourn. He knew what He had to do, and what had to be done to Him. And He knew when. The Feast of Tabernacles was a right time for Him to do His work, but not a right time for Him to be killed. Why is it important for us to know that Christ is the Lord of time?

*Closing Prayer*

I will bless the LORD at all times;  
His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.  
My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;  
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.  
Oh, magnify the LORD with me,  
And let us exalt His name together.  
I sought the LORD, and He heard me,  
And delivered me from all my fears.  
They looked to Him and were radiant,  
And their faces were not ashamed.  
This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard *him*,  
And saved him out of all his troubles.  
The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him,  
And delivers them.  
Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;  
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!

Psalm 34.1-8

**Psalm 34.1-9, 3** (*Alleluia [Lowe]: Mighty God, While Angels Bless You*)

I will bless the Lord at all times; I shall praise Him evermore!  
My soul makes its boast in Jesus – Him we gladly all adore!  
Magnify the Name of Jesus!  
Let us lift His Name in praise!

When I sought the Lord, He answered, and from fear delivered me.  
Those who look to Him are radiant; shamed their face shall never be.  
Magnify the Name of Jesus!  
Let us lift His Name in praise!

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When I cried to God, He heard me, and from trouble rescued me.  
'Round their camp His angel lingers that they may delivered be.  
Magnify the Name of Jesus!  
Let us lift His Name in praise!

Taste and see how good is Jesus; blessed are all who in Him hide.  
None shall lack for any blessing who in Christ will e'er confide.  
Magnify the Name of Jesus!  
Let us lift His Name in praise!

## 4 Disagreement about Jesus

*Read and meditate on John 7.12, 13.*

The word was out and spreading about Jesus, but the reviews were mixed. Many people were testifying about his good works and wondrous teaching. But the religious leaders were spreading lies about Him, and warning the people to steer clear. All the more reason for Jesus to be present at the feast, so people could judge for themselves (Jn. 7.24).

*<sup>12</sup>And there was much complaining there concerning Him. Some said, "Yes, He is good." But others contradicted them: "How could He be? He's a deceiver!" <sup>13</sup>No one though spoke openly of Him. The Jews would know, and all the people were afraid of them.*

- John 7.12, 13

*Reflect*

1. Again, John reports that "there was much complaining" about Jesus among the people. The verb indicates a certain measure of unsettledness. At least people were talking about Him. Should we be trying to get people talking about Jesus today, even if all they do is complain? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, show me what I can do to get the people in my Personal Mission Field to start talking about You. Today, let me...*

2. The people's complaining about Jesus reveals a spectrum of opinions, from good to wicked. How do the people in your Personal Mission Field feel about Jesus? Do they fall somewhere on that spectrum? How could you find out? *I need boldness, Lord, to talk with people about You. Give me wisdom to know...*

3. What were the sources of these opinions about Jesus? Who would have reported that He was a good Man? Who would have insisted that He was deceiving the people? Which of those voices is being most heard in your Personal Mission Field? *Lord, You have sent me to particular people, week after week, and I...*

4. Why were the people afraid of the Jews? What could they do? What power did they wield over the people? Why are Christians today afraid to talk about Jesus? What power do others have over them? *Lord, whenever I fear what people might think or do because of my witness...*

5. In the Kingdom of God, the Christian lives in the tension between patiently waiting to realize more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom, and being troubled by those who oppose the Gospel, deny God, and reject faith (cf. Rev. 1.9). Jesus understood this tension, and He thrived in it. How do you experience this tension? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

*Summary*

"Whoever had any spark of grace said, 'He is a good man.' ... The rest say, 'No, he seduces the

people.' That something like this was said of him who was God is a consolation to any Christian of whom the same may be said. If to seduce is to deceive, Christ was not a seducer, nor can any Christian be. But if by seducing you mean bringing a person by persuasion out of one way of thinking into another, then we must inquire what the way of thinking is that you are calling them from and to. If from good to evil, the seducer is an evil person; if from evil to good, he is a good one. If only we were all called, and really were, that sort of seducers!" *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Jesus was an unsettling presence in His world. We have seen this over and over. Why do we as His followers not relish this role?

*Closing Prayer*

Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning,  
For in You do I trust;  
Cause me to know the way in which I should walk,  
For I lift up my soul to You.  
Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies;  
In You I take shelter.  
Teach me to do Your will,  
For You *are* my God;  
Your Spirit *is* good.  
Lead me in the land of uprightness.  
Revive me, O LORD, for Your name's sake!  
For Your righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.

Psalm 143.8-11

**Psalm 143.7-12** (*Divinum Mysterium: Of the Father's Love Begotten*)

Answer quickly, O my Lord! Do not hide from me Your face!  
For my spirit fails and I am like those who do not know Your grace.  
In the morning let me hear Your steadfast love; Lord, I trust You, show my way!  
I lift up my soul and pray!

Rescue me from all my enemies! Lord, I refuge seek in You.  
Let me know Your will, O Lord my God; make me know what I must do.  
Let Your Spirit lead me on to level ground; save my life! Preserve my soul!  
Rescue, Lord, and make me whole!

## 5 A Question of Authority

*Read and meditate on John 7.14-18.*

Jesus confronts the question of authority, because He knows this is on the mind of His detractors, and therefore, of those who listen to them. But He won't address this subject on *their* terms.

<sup>14</sup>*About the middle of the feast, He went into the temple and began to teach.*

<sup>15</sup>*Amazed, the Jews said, "How can this Man preach like this? For He does not know letters, nor has ever studied such deep things before."*

<sup>16</sup>*But Jesus answered, "My instruction is not Mine, but His Who sent Me. <sup>17</sup>And if His will anyone would do, then he shall know My teaching, whether I have on My own authority been speaking, or if I am speaking words that come from God on high.*

<sup>18</sup>*He seeks to glorify himself who speaks his own words only; but the One Who seeks the glory of the One Who sent Him, He is true, and no unrighteousness can be in Him.*

- John 7.14-18

*Reflect*

1. Suddenly, in the middle of the feast, Jesus entered the temple and began to teach. By then, we may suppose that most folks had given up on His being present. Why do you suppose He waited until the middle of the feast to begin teaching? Complete the following prayer: *Lord, our world is becoming lulled to Your presence and deaf to Your Word. Today, let me...*

2. Note the response of the Jews. They raise doubts about Jesus' credibility as a teacher by impugning His reputed lack of formal education. In effect, they were saying, "You can't trust anything He says because He isn't educated like we are." Do we hear this objection today, if perhaps in a modified form? Explain. *It's possible that I might be accused of not knowing what I'm talking about when I urge others to believe in Jesus. Lord, I need You to...*

3. Jesus – like some spiritual sensei – takes their jab and pulls them off their intellectual platform onto His. Of course, He's not His own authority! God sent Him, and He spoke with the authority of God, not of some human teacher or tradition. Are you confident, when you share the Gospel, that you speak with the authority of God? Explain. *Lord, give me boldness in bearing witness, so that...*

4. Continuing this tact, Jesus attacks the putative authority of His detractors by saying they were seeking their own glory, and not God's (v. 18). Is this true of those who oppose the Gospel in our day? Explain. *Lord, we see all kinds of people seeking to draw attention to themselves, to gain honor or glory for their opinions, views, or beliefs. Jesus would have unsettled such people, and I...*

5. The Gospel comes down to a question of authority, whether that of respected human beings and their schools of thought, or that of God. We must be well aware of the one, but firmly positioned only on the other. Explain. Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

*Summary*

“He tells them, You will fully know that ‘my doctrine’ comes from God the Father when you choose to follow his will rather than your own.... He justly accuses them because they unreasonably mock what he teaches, even though God the Father consents and agrees with what he is teaching, and (what is also true) even co-teaches and co-interprets [with Jesus] ... No person of sound mind would ever think that Jesus here casts aspersions on his own words. Rather, he is saying that his words will never be anything other than in agreement with the will of God the Father. For the Father speaks by his own Word and Wisdom and offspring. But that [offspring] in no way speaks differently from the [Father]. How could it?” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

Jesus does not fear to buck established traditions or scorn the education that supports it. He was from God. He is God. His Word is true, and the only Word in which we should hope. How does this instruct us in our calling as witnesses and disciples?

*Closing Prayer*

For You are my hope, O Lord GOD;  
*You are* my trust from my youth.  
By You I have been upheld from birth;  
You are He who took me out of my mother’s womb.  
My praise *shall be* continually of You.  
I have become as a wonder to many,  
But You are my strong refuge.  
Let my mouth be filled *with* Your praise  
*And with* Your glory all the day.

Psalm 71.5-8

**Psalm 71.4-8, 3** (*Solid Rock: My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*)

From wicked hands redeem me, Lord, from all who wrest and break Your Word;  
My hope, my confidence from youth, my praise forever reaches You.  
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;  
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

While many see in me a sign, I shelter in Your strength will find.  
Lord, fill my mouth with endless praise and with Your glory all my days.  
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;  
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

## 6 Judge for Yourself

*Read and meditate on John 7.19-24.*

If only these people knew how to read Moses, or valued Moses more than the religious traditions that kept the leaders in power and the people subject to their every whim. Their judgments could not be trusted, and Jesus urged those who heard Him to judge for themselves.

*<sup>19</sup>Did Moses not give you the Law? And yet you do not keep it. Why are all of you intent on killing Me?"<sup>20</sup>So then the people said, "You have a demon. When did anybody seek to kill You?"<sup>21</sup>"I performed one work" He answered, "which is why you marvel.<sup>22</sup>If a man is circumcised upon the Sabbath, so that all the wise and holy Law of Moses is upheld, are you so angry that a man is well, who had been lame, because I healed him on the Sabbath?"<sup>24</sup>Do not judge by looking on appearances, but judge with righteousness."*

- John 7.19-24

*Reflect*

1. Jesus flatly asserted that the people who opposed Him were not operating in line with the teaching of Moses. Speaking only from the authority of their traditions, they were blind to the plain Word of God. Does this sort of thing happen among believers in our day? Explain. Complete the following brief prayer: *Lord, keep me grounded in Your Word, lest...*

2. If reason fails, resort to name-calling. How juvenile is the response of those leaders to Jesus' accusation? He has a *demon*? Unable to debunk His authority, and their own feeble authority exposed and undermined, they become *ad hominem* in their argument. Do we see this today? How should you react if someone tries to make you look bad because you hold firmly to God's Word? *Lord Jesus, thank You for sending me into the world with the Good News of Your Kingdom. Today, help me to...*

3. Jesus knows that all this animosity goes back to the episode in John 5, when He bucked their authority to rule on what can and cannot be done on the Sabbath (vv. 21-23). And again, as He did with the manna in the wilderness, He throws their own putative authority back in their face, showing that Moses shared His view of the Sabbath, and not theirs. People these days claim all kinds of authorities to back their decision not to believe in God or the Gospel. Such as? *Lord, I need to understand where people are coming from when they resist the Good News. Teach me to...*

4. Jesus used the Jews' authority against them, leaving them with nothing more to say, since even Moses, whom they flaunted, was seen to be working against them. We should be ready to do the same in our day. For example, how would you respond to someone who's trying to fend off God and the Gospel by adamantly insisting there is no absolute truth? What is their authority for such a

view? Is that view itself a statement of absolute truth? And if it is, where does this need for absolute truth come from? *It's clear, Lord, that I need to take more interest in the lost people in my Personal Mission Field. Help me to get to know them, and please open for me...*

5. Jesus suggested that the religious leaders were judging “according to appearance,” that is, outwardly, on the basis of received opinions and settled positions of authority. What did He commend instead of this? What are the implications of this for you? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

*Summary*

“The Lord reproved those who unjustly blamed him for having healed on the sabbath days. For he did not make void but fulfilled the law by performing the offices of the high priest, propitiating God for people, and cleansing the lepers, healing the sick and himself suffering death, that exiled people might go forth from condemnation and might return without fear to their own inheritance.” *Irenaeus of Lyon (135-202AD)*

Belief in the Gospel comes down to a question of authority: To which authority will we submit in this life? God, speaking in His Word? Or our own best ideas about the way the world should be? Why do people so often reject God’s Word and rely on themselves?

*Closing Prayer*

Those who trust in the LORD  
*Are* like Mount Zion,  
*Which* cannot be moved, but abides forever.  
As the mountains surround Jerusalem,  
So the LORD surrounds His people  
From this time forth and forever.  
For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest  
On the land allotted to the righteous,  
Lest the righteous reach out their hands to iniquity.  
Do good, O LORD, to *those who are* good,  
And to *those who are* upright in their hearts.

Psalm 125.1-4

**Psalm 125.1, 2** (*St. Gertrude: Onward, Christian Soldiers*)

All who trust in Jesus, strong as Zion stand!  
Naught shall ever move them from their promised land!  
Like the hills surrounding safe Jerusalem,  
Christ surrounds His Church and holds her in His mighty Hand!  
All who trust in Jesus, strong as Zion stand!  
Naught shall ever move them from their promised land!

## 7 At the Feast of Tabernacles

*Read and meditate on John 7.1-24.*

Jesus knows that the Jews have determined to destroy Him. But He is undeterred. He manages His time to make sure that everything that must happen does happen. And He is not cowed by those who oppose Him, though they appeal to tradition, reason, Scripture, and even name-calling. Jesus is in charge, and His Word will not fail.

<sup>1</sup>After these things, Jesus walked again in Galilee, for He would not go to Judea, where the Jews determined they would kill Him there. <sup>2</sup>The Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. <sup>3</sup>His brothers said to Him, "Go to the land of Judah, so that Your disciples may observe the works You do. <sup>4</sup>No one should say or do in secret anything while he seeks to be heard and followed openly. If You must do these things, then go and show Yourself unto the world." <sup>5</sup>For it was so, that even His own brothers did not yet believe in Him. <sup>6</sup>Then Jesus said, "My set time is not come; your time will always be. <sup>7</sup>The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I say its works are evil. <sup>8</sup>You go to this feast. I am not going to it, for My time is not yet fully come." <sup>9</sup>When He had said these things, He stayed for some time longer there in Galilee. <sup>10</sup>But when His brothers had gone to Judea, then He also went up to the feast. But He went secretly, rather than openly. <sup>11</sup>The Jews were seeking Him. They wondered where He was. <sup>12</sup>And there was much complaining there concerning Him. Some said, "Yes, He is good." But others contradicted them: "How could He be? He's a deceiver!" <sup>13</sup>No one though spoke openly of Him. The Jews would know, and all the people were afraid of them. <sup>14</sup>About the middle of the feast, He went into the temple and began to teach. <sup>15</sup>Amazed, the Jews said, "How can this Man preach like this? For He does not know letters, nor has ever studied such deep things before." <sup>16</sup>But Jesus answered, "My instruction is not Mine, but His Who sent Me. <sup>17</sup>And if His

*will anyone would do, then he shall know  
My teaching, whether I have on My own  
authority been speaking, or if I  
am speaking words that come from God on high.*

*<sup>18</sup>He seeks to glorify himself who speaks  
his own words only; but the One Who seeks  
the glory of the One Who sent Him, He  
is true, and no unrighteousness can be  
in Him. <sup>19</sup>Did Moses not give you the Law?  
And yet you do not keep it. Why are all  
of you intent on killing Me?” <sup>20</sup>So then  
the people said, “You have a demon. When  
did anybody seek to kill You?” <sup>21</sup>“I  
performed one work” He answered, “which is why  
you marvel. <sup>22</sup>If a man is circumcised  
upon the Sabbath, so that all the wise  
and holy Law of Moses is upheld,  
are you so angry that a man is well,  
who had been lame, because I healed him on  
the Sabbath? <sup>24</sup>Do not judge by looking on  
appearances, but judge with righteousness.”*

- John 7.1-24

*Reflect*

1. Why were people beginning to believe in Jesus? Why were some opposing Him? In every generation, some will believe, some will oppose, and some will just not make up their minds. How should we prepare for each of these responses (cf. Acts 17.32-34)? Complete this prayer: *You have sent me as You were sent, Lord – to embody and proclaim Your Kingdom. Give me grace for today so that...*
2. Jesus knew certain people hated Him (v. 7), but that did not cause Him to back down from His witness. Jesus did not fear others, or what they might do to Him. Do you? *Give me boldness, Lord, so that I might be strong to...*
3. Jesus shakes things up, but not because He's loud or brash or bullying. He simply proclaimed the truth. I think many believers in our day are reluctant to share their faith because they're afraid of upsetting people. What counsel would you give such people? *Lord, if people get upset with me, let it be because of You, and not because of...*
4. Jesus had the Word of God. He *was* and *is* the Word of God. He was not impressed by the flimsy and changeable views of men, and He did not hesitate to expose them for the feeble platforms they were. How does His example counsel us? *I have so much to learn, Lord, but I can't wait until I learn everything to carry out my calling as Your witness. Today, though, I will...*
5. What does Jesus mean by saying we should judge everything – every claim to truth, every opinion or action, everything – with “righteous judgment”? How do you plan to grow in your ability to do this? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

*Summary*

“It requires a lot of work in this world to stay clear of the vice our Lord has noted in this place. It is difficult to maintain sound judgment and to stop judging by appearances. His admonition to the Jews is an admonition to us as well.... Let us not judge, then, by appearances, but hold to sound judgment. But who is it who does not judge according to appearances? It is the one who loves [all] equally. When there is equal love for all, then we do not accept people on the basis of who they are. We are not talking about a situation where we honor people in a different way because of their different degrees of status. This is not an instance where we should be afraid that we are accepting people on the basis [of who they are]. For instance, there may be a case to decide between father and son. We should not put the son on an equal footing with the father in point of honor. But, in respect of truth, if the son has the better cause, we should give him the preference. In this way we give each their due so that justice does not destroy merit.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

What have you learned from Jesus in John 7.1-24 about being a more effective witness for the Lord and His Kingdom?

*Closing Prayer*

Praise the LORD!  
Sing to the LORD a new song,  
*And* His praise in the assembly of saints.  
Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;  
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.  
Let them praise His name with the dance;  
Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.  
For the LORD takes pleasure in His people;  
He will beautify the humble with salvation.  
Let the saints be joyful in glory;  
Let them sing aloud on their beds.  
Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,  
And a two-edged sword in their hand...

Psalm 149.1-6

**Psalm 149** (*Toulon: I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art*)

Sing to the Lord a glorious song and new!  
Praise Him you people, to Whom praise is due!  
Let us rejoice, let us be glad in Him  
Who has created us and cleansed our sin.

Praise Him with dance, with tambourine and lyre!  
To be so praised is God's one great desire.  
Lord, beautify Your holy ones with grace;  
Show us the mercy of Your saving face.

Sing to the Lord, exult with great delight!  
Sing on your beds with joy to God by night!

*The Gospel of John: John 7.1-24*

Sing praise and take His Word into your hand;  
Publish His grace and wrath in every land!

*The Gospel of John: John 7.1-24*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. What are some of the sources of authority people cling to rather than submit to the teaching of Scripture? Why is it important that we understand this?
2. Should we always expect people to believe when we share the Gospel? What kinds of responses to the Gospel should we expect?
3. How can we avoid caving in to fear when people argue with us, refuse to hear us further, or even call us names? How can believers help one another to be more consistent in their witness for the Lord?
4. How can you improve your ability always to “judge with righteous judgment”?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from John 7.1-24? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*Items for prayer:*

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.