

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN 7:37-52



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 7.37-52
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Introduction to *John 7.37-52*

Is it just me, or it is getting hot in here?

The temperature is certainly rising around Jesus, now that He has begun teaching in the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. The people are divided. Is He the Prophet? Is He the Christ? The rulers both fear Him and want to destroy Him. They don't dare move against Him themselves, but they send the military to take Him captive.

Meanwhile, with all this division and animosity, one man in whom faith has begun to take root, steps forth courageously to stand for the Lord.

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1 The Offer of Living Water

Read and meditate on John 7.25-27.

Jesus was the Master at making the most of every opportunity.

*³⁷Then,
the great day of the feast, Jesus began
to cry out, saying, "Anyone who thirsts
should come to Me and drink. ³⁸If in your hearts
you trust in Me, then as the Scriptures say,
out from your heart will flow this very day
the living water, like a river."*

- John 7.37, 38

Reflect

1. For seven days during the Feast of Tabernacles, the priests filled large jugs of water, retrieved from the pool of Siloam (Jn. 9.7), and poured them out on the temple steps, reminding the people of God's provision in the Wilderness, and invoking Isaiah's promise of water from the wells of salvation (Is. 12.1-4; [Bible History Online](#)). Why is water such a powerful symbol of salvation? Complete this prayer: *Lord, when I was thirsty for life, You quenched my parched soul with the Gospel, and now I...*

2. As this was happening, the people would sing Psalms 113-118. Read through these psalms. What made them appropriate to accompany this symbolic pouring out of water? *Lord, we sing in church, but I don't sing much otherwise. Yet You have given us wonderful words for singing Your praises. Help me to...*

3. On the last day of the feast, the great day, the priests did not pour out water, and declared by not doing so that the promise was fulfilled, since the people were now in the land. Water, salvation, promise, fulfillment, the land: Can you see why Jesus was waiting for this moment? Explain. *Lord, You are so amazing! I want to be an effective witness for You, so...*

4. At just this moment, Jesus stepped forward and declared, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." What was He saying? What was He claiming about Himself? *You are the Well of Salvation, the Promise of God, my Savior, my Provider, my...*

5. Put yourself in that crowd – those people, the priests, the religious leaders. What do you think your immediate response would have been to hearing Jesus say this? Why? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

"Hold on to the gift but acknowledge the giver. When the Lord promised he was going to give his Spirit, he said, 'If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, rivers of living water will flow from his belly.' Where does this river in you come from? Remember your

former dryness. I mean, if you had not been dry, you would not have been thirsty. If you had not been thirsty, you would not have drunk. What do I mean when I say: if you had not been thirsty, you would not have believed in Christ? Unless you had discovered how empty you were, you would not have believed in Christ. Before saying ‘rivers of living water will flow from his belly,’ he first said, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come and drink.’ The reason you will have a river of living water is that you drink. You do not drink if you are not thirsty.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Because the Gospel is true, it marshals truth from everyday experience to impose itself on the minds and hearts of people. Jesus proclaimed His message into an atmosphere focused on the grace and promises of God. How can we become more effective at using *all* truth to magnify Jesus and proclaim His Good News?

Closing Prayer

I will extol You, my God, O King;
And I will bless Your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless You,
And I will praise Your name forever and ever.
Great *is* the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
And His greatness *is* unsearchable.
One generation shall praise Your works to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.
I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty,
And on Your wondrous works.
Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts,
And I will declare Your greatness.
They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness,
And shall sing of Your righteousness.
The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion,
Slow to anger and great in mercy.
The LORD *is* good to all,
And His tender mercies *are* over all His works.
All Your works shall praise You, O LORD,
And Your saints shall bless You.
They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom,
And talk of Your power,
To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts,
And the glorious majesty of His kingdom.

Psalm 145.1-12

Psalm 145.1-12 (*Brother James' Air: The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want*)

I will extol You, God, My King, and ever praise Your Name!
I bless You, Lord, for everything, each day, and e'er the same!
Great are You, Lord, my praise I bring; unsearchable Your fame!

To ev'ry generation we Your wondrous works shall tell.
The splendor of Your majesty we contemplate full well.

We speak of all Your mighty deeds and all Your greatness tell!

Then shall we all the glorious fame of Your great goodness sing –
Your righteousness, Your gracious Name, Your mercy; praise we bring!
Your steadfast love remains the same, mercy our covering.

Your works shall thank You; all Your saints shall bless and praise You, Lord.
Your reign we bless without restraint; Your power fills our words.
Our children we shall educate in all Your splendor, Lord.

2 The Promise of the Spirit

Read and meditate on John 7.39.

Jesus points beyond Himself to the coming of the Spirit. But the Spirit points us to Jesus, Who points us to Father. No wonder Jesus and the Father have sent the Spirit to us!

³⁹He
*was speaking of the Spirit, Who would be
bestowed on those who would believe in Him;
because the Holy Spirit was not given
as yet, since Jesus was not glorified.*

- John 7.39

Reflect

1. Why do you suppose Jesus used this occasion to point toward the Spirit? Complete this prayer:
Thank You, Lord, for the gift of Your Spirit, Who is at work in me to...

2. Jesus here returned to a theme He broached in John 4.13, 14, 24. He insisted that *He* was the well of Isaiah 12, the Fount of every blessing. Meditate on Isaiah 12.1-6. What do we learn about the Gospel from this passage? *Come, Thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing Your praise, and my life to...*

3. Why is “Living Water” such an apt way of thinking about the Spirit? *Lord, let Your Living Water well up today in me, so that I...*

4. Remember John’s emphasis on the glory of Jesus. Here he comments that the Spirit would not come until *after* Jesus was glorified. To what is John pointing us here? How is Jesus glorified in that? *Lord, if this is Your glory, then the glory You want to show through me must be...*

5. To whom is the Spirit given? Meditate on Galatians 4.6. Which comes first, the *grace* to believe, or the *faith* to receive the Spirit? Explain. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

“This ... is not a trivial matter when we read that a river goes forth from the throne of God. For you read the words of the Evangelist John that speaks to this: ‘And he showed me a river of living water, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of the street and on either side was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruits, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of all nations.’ This is certainly the river proceeding from the throne of God, that is, the Holy Spirit, whom he drinks who believes in Christ, as Christ himself says: ‘If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes on me, as the Scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spoke of the Spirit.’ Therefore the river is the Spirit. This, then, is in the throne of God, for the water does not wash the throne of God.... And what wonder is it if the Holy Spirit is the throne of God, since the kingdom of God itself is the work of the Holy Spirit.” *Ambrose of Milan (333-397 AD)*

The Spirit of God is the *Promise* of salvation, the *Bringer* of salvation, and the *Substance* of salvation. Explain.

Closing Prayer

You hide Your face, they are troubled;
You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.
You send forth Your Spirit, they are created;
And You renew the face of the earth.
May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
May the LORD rejoice in His works.
He looks on the earth, and it trembles;
He touches the hills, and they smoke.
I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
May my meditation be sweet to Him;
I will be glad in the Lord.

Psalm 104.29-34

Psalm 104.24-3 (*Creation: Exalt the Lord, His Praise Proclaim*)

How many are Your works, O Lord,
Which You have created by Your Word!
The earth and sea with creatures teem –
They look to You to care and feed.
You give to them, they gather all;
You hide Your face, they fail and fall.
You take their breath, they gasp and die;
You send Your Spirit, they revive.

Lord, let Your glory long endure;
Rejoice! His works are ever sure!
He looks on earth, it quails and quakes,
As we our songs of praises make.
Lord, let our meditation rise
And bring great pleasure in Your eyes.
Consumed shall sinners ever be –
O, bless and praise the Lord with me!

3 Division (Again)

Read and meditate on John 7.40-43.

Even more now, the people are divided about Jesus, some saying one thing, some saying another, still others something else, and some looking to silence Him altogether. So what else is new?

⁴⁰*Then many from the crowd heard this, and cried,
“For sure, this is the Prophet!” Others said,
“This is the Christ!”⁴¹ But some replied instead,
“Will Christ come out of Galilee? ⁴²Do not
the Scriptures say the seed of David ought
to come from Bethlehem, where David was?”
⁴³Division rose among them then, because
of Him.*

- John 7.40-43

Reflect

1. Those people who regarded Jesus as “the Prophet” were probably thinking of Deuteronomy 18.15-19. What did God say about this Prophet there? Were the people who thought this about Jesus correct? Explain. Complete this prayer: *Lord, You certainly are the great Prophet, Whose Word I...*

2. Others said Jesus was “the Christ,” that is, the *Anointed* of the Lord. In the Old Testament, priests and kings were *anointed* for their office by a special ceremony involving the pouring out or application of oil. Jesus identified Himself as the *Anointed One* of Isaiah 61.1, 2 (cf. Lk. 4.16-21). What did those people understand about Jesus, who regarded Him as “the Christ”? Were they correct? Explain. *You are the Christ, Lord Jesus, anointed of God to...*

3. Still other people could not bring themselves to agree with these two camps, because they understood from Scripture that the Christ was the “seed of David.” What did that ascription represent? Were these people correct? *You are the Son of David, Lord Jesus, King of all Your people, my King, to lead me to...*

4. John doesn’t report Jesus saying any more than what we have in verses 37 and 38. Apparently, for the time at least, He was content for this division to continue. Why? *Lord, people today are divided about You as well, but You have sent me to be Your witness so that...*

5. You can feel the temperature rising around Jesus in these verses. Things are heating up, and they will become hotter still. Should we expect anything different? Explain. Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

“They were so astonished at his divine confidence, seeing that his words could no longer be gauged in human terms, that they revert to their recollection of the law as having already declared beforehand concerning the Christ and saying that a prophet would be raised up similar to the all-wise Moses who should interpret to Israel the words from God. ... From the quality therefore of his

words and the superiority of his sayings they say that he is already shown to be the one who was heralded in the law.... They thought that the Christ would be someone other than the prophet of the law.... Whereas two were supposed to come, I mean, the prophet of the law, that is, Christ, and Elijah—they were looking for three, imagining that the prophet was other than Jesus.... But we must observe that they were already fully prepared to believe. They are persuaded by the Savior's words to marvel at him. And yet, without guidance from their rulers, they are borne along a many-branching path of ideas. Some call him and now believe him to be the Christ, others that he is the prophet." *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

Jesus has unsettled the whole nation, and that doesn't bother Him one bit. Sometimes the only way to get folks to settle on to a new foundation for life is to challenge, upset, or undermine their existing one. But as we do this, we need to keep Jesus in the forefront, as the focal point of the new foundation we proclaim. Why?

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!

When I cried to God, He heard me, and from trouble rescued me.
'Round their camp His angel lingers that they may delivered be.

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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 The Power of God

Read and meditate on John 7.44.

Jesus intruded Himself into, and made Himself the focal point, of the concluding ceremony of the Feast of Tabernacles. The people were divided, the rulers wanted to arrest him, and a posse was circling Him, even as He spoke. But, there He was, still speaking.

⁴⁴And none laid hands on Him, although some wanted to arrest Him, even so.

- John 7.32

Reflect

1. Some people didn't care *who* Jesus was. They just wanted to be done with Him. Why? Complete this prayer: *Lord, there will always be those who don't care to know the truth and just want us to be quiet about You. Nevertheless...*
2. John explains that there were people who wanted to "take" Jesus, that is, to kill Him (Jn. 7.1). They had struck fear in the hearts of the people, warning them not even to talk about Him (Jn. 7.13). They scorned Him (7.15), slandered Him (7.20), and "sought to take Him" (7.30). What was holding them back? *Doubtless, Lord, there are many today who wish You'd just go away, but the power that restrained Your enemies then is still at work today. Use that power in me, Lord, to...*
3. We recall that many people were beginning to believe in Jesus (v. 31). Does the fact that many believe in Jesus, and are willing to say so publicly, exert a kind of restraining power over the enemies of Christ? Explain. *We are called to be Your witnesses, Lord. Help me today to...*
4. We recall that those who wanted to take Him had sent out a police force to do precisely that (v. 32). Still, "no one laid hands on Him." He was not ready to be *glorified* (v. 39), and so His enemies would just have to fume and foment, waiting for the Lord's hour to come around. How does God restrain evil in our day? *You are good, Lord, and You are sovereign. I need not be afraid of any evil because...*
5. Jesus continued making Himself known by using various Old Testament teachings, episodes, and images to refer to Himself. People were developing opinions about Him, and taking sides one way or another. But all this division, the many who were believing, and those who wanted to silence Him, came about because Jesus was *there*, proclaiming His message and challenging people's faulty views. What's the lesson here for us? Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

"The Jews are not haphazard in the inquiries about Christ. They can be found going through each and every idea in order to arrive at a perception of the truth. For having first marveled at his words, they next turn to the divine Scripture thinking to find there a most unerring conception of him, for such is its nature. They believe that he shall be of the seed of the thrice-blessed David and shall be revealed in Bethlehem of Judea, persuaded by the prophecies concerning this. ... But the unassisted mind of the Jews was led astray and failed to find Christ merely on account of Nazareth, which was situated in Galilee. It was common knowledge that our Lord was brought up here. ... But they did

not know that he had been born in Bethlehem of Judea of the Holy Virgin, who was of the seed of David (for she was of the tribe of Judah by descent). Merely knowing that our Lord was brought up at Nazareth, they fall away from the truth and lack sound reasoning.” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

The Jews had the *authority* to seize Jesus, and the *power* to do so – at least, humanly and legally. And yet they could not, because Jesus Himself was restraining them from doing so. We do not need to fear people. We must, like Jesus, bear witness to the truth, and let people respond as they will. Are you ready for this?

Closing Prayer

Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*,
“Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us.”
He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The LORD shall hold them in derision.
Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
“Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion.”

Psalm 2.1-6

Psalm 2.1-6 (*Agincourt: O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!*)

Why do the nations vainly rage,
Conspiring together from age to age?
Earth’s kings and all of their counselors stand
Against the Lord and His Right Hand:

“Now let us cast His yoke below,
His Kingdom authority overthrow!
Throw off His Law, reject His Word;
No more be governed by this Lord!”

The Lord in heaven laughs in wrath
At all who embark on this cursèd path.
His angry Word to them is plain:
“Yet shall My King in Zion reign!”

5 Who's Deceived?

Read and meditate on John 7.45-49.

The posse returns empty-handed, and the priests and Pharisees are furious. What was the problem? Why did they fail to bring Him in? What prevented them? His words.

⁴⁵*Then came the officers unto the priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "What's this? Why have you failed to bring Him in?"* ⁴⁶*They said, "No man has ever spoken like this Man!"*

⁴⁷*The Pharisees replied to them, "So then, you also are deceived?"* ⁴⁸*Who has believed in Him among the rulers, or received Him from among the Pharisees?* ⁴⁹*But you are like this stupid crowd. Like them, you too are cursed, for you are ignorant, and do not know the Law."*

- John 7.45-49

Reflect

1. The Pharisees and priests were convinced that sheer brute force would silence Jesus. They were wrong. And anyone today who thinks this is wrong as well. Why? Complete the following prayer: *All power and authority in heaven and earth belong to You, Lord Jesus (Matt. 28.18). So I should...*
2. *What* Jesus said, as well as *how* He said it, exerted restraining power on those authorized to arrest Him. How could that be? *Lord, Your Word is living and powerful (Heb. 4.12). I'll know I believe this when...*
3. Notice where the Pharisees looked for their standard of truth (v. 48). Anyone who didn't look to that same source was obviously wrong. They believed *they* were the keepers of truth, and anyone who didn't agree with them was simply *deceived*. We face a similar situation today. Who are the deceived in our day? *Lord, we have the truth in earthen vessels, in the midst of a world filled with lies and deceit (Ps. 12). Help us Your people today to...*
4. And as for those people who didn't agree with them, well, they were simple *accursed*. When you can't get people to toe the line you've drawn for them, berate or belittle them. That seems to have been the policy among the thought-police of Jesus' day, as of our own. What does such an attitude indicate? *Lord, we should not be surprised when people speak ill of us because of Jesus. Instead, we should...*
5. The "law" to which the religious leaders referred (v. 49) actually meant the *interpretation* of the Law of Moses according to them. For centuries, the rulers of Israel had regarded themselves as the keepers of truth and religion. The Romans backed them because it was politically expedient to do so. But Jesus didn't care about what the rulers taught or what the Romans might do. Jesus *is* the truth, and truth must be seen and told, no matter what. How can we cultivate more of that attitude in ourselves and our fellow believers? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“They perceived that this was not a mere man like themselves, but that this was he who gave water to the saints and that it was he who was announced by the prophet Isaiah. For he was truly the splendor of the light, and the Word of God, the river that flowed from the fountains and watered the paradise of old. But now, to all he gives the same gift of the Spirit and says, ‘If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes on me, as the Scripture says, rivers of living water shall flow out of his belly. This was not for [a] man to say but for the living God, who truly promises life and gives the Holy Spirit.’ *Athanasius (295-373 AD)*”

The Word of Jesus is powerful. It will accomplish God’s purpose, and His purpose is to advance His Kingdom and glory. Why don’t Christians today trust this Word any more than we do?

Closing Prayer

The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;
The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;
The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.
More to be desired *are they* than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
Moreover by them Your servant is warned,
And in keeping them *there is* great reward.

Psalm 19.7-11

Psalm 19.7-11 (*St. Christopher: Beneath the Cross of Jesus*)

The Law of God is perfect, His testimony sure;
The simple man God’s wisdom learns, the soul receives its cure.
God’s Word is right, and His command is pure, and truth imparts;
He makes our eyes to understand; with joy He fills our hearts.

The fear of God is cleansing, forever shall it last.
His judgments all are true and just, by righteousness held fast.
O seek them more than gold most fine, than honey find them sweet;
Be warned by every word and line; be blest with joy complete.

6 Into the Light

Read and meditate on John 7.50-52.

Nicodemus, whom we met in John 3 *in the night*, now takes his first courageous steps *into the light*, as he boldly confronts his colleagues on behalf of Jesus.

⁵⁰Then Nicodemus to them answered (he who came to Jesus in the night), ⁵¹“Does our Law, brethren, judge a man before it hears him, and discerns what he is doing?” ⁵²They replied, “Then you must be from Galilee as well! Go search and see: No prophet ever comes from Galilee!”

- John 7.35, 36

Reflect

1. Why do you think John brought Nicodemus back into the story at this point? What is he saying to us? Complete the following brief prayer: *Lord, You have delivered me out of the kingdom of darkness into Your own Kingdom of light. Let me live as...*
2. Nicodemus is both bold and shrewd here, and we can learn from him about being better witnesses for the Lord. First, how does his boldness appear? How can Christians encourage one another to such boldness? *Give me boldness, Lord, so that I fear no human being, but only...*
3. Nicodemus is shrewd, too, because he intended to hoist his colleagues on their own petard. They were all about the Law and them being the keepers of the Law, and about ignorant, accursed people not knowing the Law, and blah, blah, blah. How does Nicodemus turn this table over on top of them here? *From Nicodemus' example here, Lord, I think You want me to learn...*
4. The religious leaders are astonished that one of their own would stand forth to challenge them. Rather than answer Nicodemus' question, what do they do? *People can be really good at deflecting the truth, Lord, so help me to be just as good at...*
5. What do you suppose was the effect of this incident on Nicodemus (cf. Jn. 19.37, 38)? Why? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“He shows that they neither know the law nor do the law, for if the law commands to kill no one without first hearing him, and they before hearing were eager to do this, they were transgressors of the law. And because they said, ‘None of the rulers has believed on him,’ therefore the Evangelist informs us that Nicodemus was ‘one of them, to show that even rulers believed on him. For although they were not all that bold yet, still they were becoming attached to Christ.” *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

Nicodemus shows us that the power of the Gospel to grip a person's soul can sometimes come

gradually. But even as it comes gradually, it comes *truly*. The more we sow the Gospel into our Personal Mission Field, the greater the likelihood that some of the people to whom God sends us each day will begin to come under its power. To whom will you sow something today?

Closing Prayer

The LORD reigns;
Let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad!
Clouds and darkness surround Him;
Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of His throne.
A fire goes before Him,
And burns up His enemies round about.
His lightnings light the world;
The earth sees and trembles.
The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
The heavens declare His righteousness,
And all the peoples see His glory.
Let all be put to shame who serve carved images,
Who boast of idols.
Worship Him, all *you* gods.
Zion hears and is glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoice
Because of Your judgments, O LORD.
For You, LORD, *are* most high above all the earth;
You are exalted far above all gods.

Psalm 97.1-9

Psalm 97.1, 6, 9 (*Darwall: Rejoice, the Lord is King!*)

Rejoice, the Lord is King! O earth, lift up your voice;
Be glad, you islands, shout and sing: Rejoice! Rejoice!
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

The heav'ns above declare His glorious righteousness;
And tribes and peoples everywhere His Name confess.
Beyond, above all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

7 Heating Up

Read and meditate on John 7.37-52.

We could say that things are really heating up around Jesus, but that's only because He's managing the thermostat. Jesus Himself is turning up the heat, as everything moves perfectly in His hand toward His hour of glory.

³⁷Then,
the great day of the feast, Jesus began to cry out, saying, "Anyone who thirsts should come to Me and drink. ³⁸If in your hearts you trust in Me, then as the Scriptures say, out from your heart will flow this very day the living water, like a river." ³⁹He was speaking of the Spirit, Who would be bestowed on those who would believe in Him; because the Holy Spirit was not given as yet, since Jesus was not glorified.

⁴⁰Then many from the crowd heard this, and cried, "For sure, this is the Prophet!" Others said, "This is the Christ!" ⁴¹But some replied instead, "Will Christ come out of Galilee? ⁴²Do not the Scriptures say the seed of David ought to come from Bethlehem, where David was?" ⁴³Division rose among them then, because of Him. ⁴⁴And none laid hands on Him, although some wanted to arrest Him, even so.

⁴⁵Then came the officers unto the priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "What's this? Why have you failed to bring Him in?" ⁴⁶They said, "No man has ever spoken like this Man!" ⁴⁷The Pharisees replied to them, "So then, you also are deceived? ⁴⁸Who has believed in Him among the rulers, or received Him from among the Pharisees? ⁴⁹But you are like this stupid crowd. Like them, you too are cursed, for you are ignorant, and do not know the Law." ⁵⁰Then Nicodemus to them answered (he who came to Jesus in the night), ⁵¹"Does our Law, brethren, judge a man before it hears him, and discerns what he is doing?" ⁵²They replied, "Then you must be from Galilee as well! Go search and see: No prophet ever comes from Galilee!"

- John 7.37-52

Reflect

1. Jesus' ability to use the circumstances of His day as backdrop and reinforcement for the Gospel was powerful. Can we learn to do the same? How? Complete this prayer: *Because You know all people, Lord, You knew how to use their surroundings to make them focus on You. I want to learn how to do this. Help me today to...*

2. Many people were developing ideas about Jesus, and their ideas were not entirely inaccurate. What ideas do people have about Jesus today? Is there some truth in any of these views? How could you build on these views to help people have a more complete view of Jesus? *Teach me, Lord, how to begin with people where they are, and to lead them to...*

3. Coming to faith in Jesus can take time for some people. Throughout the course of Jesus' ministry, some people who had heard Him and seen His good works came to believe in Him, but not always or even usually right away. Should you expect the same of people in your Personal Mission Field? Explain. *Lord, give me patience and love so that...*

4. Jesus is the Wellspring of salvation, and His Spirit is the Living Water of eternal life. Salvation is like water to a thirsty person. In what ways? How do you experience this Living Water? *There are thirsty people all around me, Lord. Help me to see them and...*

5. We continue moving steadily toward the hour of Jesus' glory, and we can feel the tension building in each subsequent chapter. Jesus still provokes mixed responses, and creates a certain amount of tension in our world today. How should we prepare each day to deal with these responses and this tension? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“Those who did not know the law believed on the one who had sent the law, and those men who were teaching the law despised him. ... For the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, were made blind, and the people who did not know the law and yet believed on the author of the law were enlightened.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

We need not fear the upheaval and unsettling the Gospel can create, nor those who oppose Jesus and His Gospel. We must rather be like Jesus, pressing on, fulfilling our calling, seeking the Kingdom and glory of God, and welcoming all who come to faith in Him. How does this translate into a daily strategy in your life?

Closing Prayer

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
For He has done marvelous things;
His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.
The LORD has made known His salvation;
His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel;

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth;
Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.
Sing to the Lord with the harp,
With the harp and the sound of a psalm,
With trumpets and the sound of a horn;
Shout joyfully before the LORD, the King.
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell in it;
Let the rivers clap *their* hands;
Let the hills be joyful together before the LORD,
For He is coming to judge the earth.
With righteousness He shall judge the world,
And the peoples with equity.

Psalm 98.1-9

Psalm 98 (*Duke Street: Come, Let Us Sing unto the Lord*)

Come, let us sing unto the Lord new songs of praise with one accord!
Wonderful things our God has done: Jesus has our salvation won!

Now is God's saving mercy known; His glory to the world is shown.
Faithful and kind is God our Lord; earth has the Name of Jesus heard.

Raise to the Lord your loudest voice! Break forth and sing! Rejoice! Rejoice
Praise, praise to You our God and King, with all our hearts and strength we bring!

Now let the whole creation 'round burst into song with joyous sound!
Jesus will come to judge the earth; let all proclaim His matchless worth!

The Gospel of John: John 7.37-52

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Why did the religious leaders of the day want to do away with Jesus? Were they afraid of Him, or angry at Him? How did He respond to them?
2. Can we expect people to be thinking about Jesus, wondering Who He might be, or responding to Him in any way if we don't make Jesus more of an issue in our Personal Mission Field? Explain.
3. What are you learning about being a faithful witness to Jesus from John 7?
4. How can believers encourage one another to be more consistent in their witness for the Lord?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from John 7.37-52? 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.