

VBC

Pastor John Johnson

John 7:1-13

June 15-16, 2013

“Are You Living with Costly Convictions?”

At different junctures of life—we ask key questions—

-20 somethings ask—what am I becoming? What will I do with my life?

-30 somethings ask—how do I prioritize these demands made on my life? How can I fulfill my life purpose? WHAT WILL I STAND FOR? (what was I made for?)

-40 somethings ask—why are limitations beginning to outweigh options? What would it take to pick up a whole new calling?

-50 somethings begin asking—why is life moving so fast? How do I deal with my failures and successes? How can I reinvigorate my relationship with my spouse—my work?

-60 somethings ask—when do I stop doing the things that have defined me? Do I have enough time to do all the things I still dream about?

-70 and 80 somethings ask—is anyone aware of what I once achieved? Is my story important to anyone? Can I still contribute? Will I be missed?ⁱ

(90 somethings—have answered all the questions)

APPLICATION—Maybe you are at one of these junctures—be it age—or change in career—or change in outlook

-and it has caused you to do some deep searching—ask some hard questions

-so does God have anything to say—words that center us—in moments like these?

-when we look at Scripture—we find that He does—John 7

SETTING

-at first glance—it would appear Jesus was at a juncture of sorts Himself—read verse 1

-Jesus was an up and comer—chased by the crowds

-and then—His popularity peaked—He called for disciples—not merely decisions—and people began to file out

-the press no longer sought to interview

-Jesus' influence, His capital seemed to have dried up

-even those who were loyal “withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore”—6:66

-what made life even more complicating was a growing list of enemies plotting to destroy Him

-there were Sabbath controversies that had made Him a wanted felon

-His movements were more dangerous, more limiting

-His future seemed more volatile, precarious

-the few remaining followers might have been asking—

-who are we becoming? What will we stand for?

-are limitations beginning to outweigh our options?

- does it matter that we have given ourselves to this mission?
- are we wasting our time?
- what should we do next?

-in this moment—Jesus engaged in a conversation with His brothers—one that also includes us—read verses 2-4

- in terms of what Jesus should do next—His brothers had their advice
- this is the second time Jesus' brothers appear in John
- they first appeared at the wedding feast in Cana—but there was no recorded conversation with them
- but here—they approached Jesus and told Him He should leave, depart, change residence—go visit Jerusalem

1. Your disciples need reassurance

- they need to behold, be impressed, reassured by the same things we have seen here in the north—feeding crowds miraculously, healing people, walking on water
- You may be able to recover your losses—reverse Your fortunes—win back those who were offended by Your bread sermon

2. It's what courage does

- no one who is bold, fearless keeps these sort of things secret
- quit hiding Your light under a bushel—for no one who wants to go big (like You) does things in krypto, secret
- show Yourself (an ongoing temptation that goes back to the wilderness—throw Yourself down—the angels will perform this dramatic rescue)

3. It is an opportune moment

- this is the time to be in Jerusalem
- it was October, after the grape harvest
- a time to celebrate God's provision—observe the Festival of Tabernacles—one of the most popular Jewish gatherings
- a time when devout Jews were expected to be in Jerusalem
- this is an opportunity for Messiah's to come out of the closet and parade their wares—go big
- but even they had their doubts—read verse 5

-like the crowd—they were not convinced Jesus was the Son of God, this Bread from heaven, this I AM of the OT

- they were not even sure He was sane, stable—at one point earlier they had stepped in to do an intervention—Mark 3:21
- there had to be tension—they may have even felt betrayed—earlier when they came to see their brother at a festival—He responded with—“Who are My brothers?”—Mark 3:33

-maybe they felt some shame, embarrassment from being associated with Jesus

- He had alienated a lot of people in His home town such they wanted to push Him over the cliff (Luke 4)
- there were the scandals in the press—He sometimes hung out and partied with the wrong crowd, the prostitutes and the mafia
- maybe Jesus had become too uncomfortable to live with
- maybe there were too many memories of living with a brother who never did anything wrong
- whatever the reasons—they felt it best He leave
- note how Jesus responds—read verses 6-9

-it's here—if we are listening hard—we may find the centering words everyone needs when they come to those crossings of life—

1. EVERY MAN MUST HAVE A SENSE OF TIME

- a sense of its pace, its movement
- a realization that we only have so much—what is squandered cannot be recovered

- but Jesus speaks to something else here—those divine moments
- those times (that moment) in which we realize—this is what I was made for, summoned to do
- behind these words—“my time has not arrived” Jesus was making it clear He was well aware of His time
- He lived according to an intentional, purposeful plan, an itinerary that was not His own alone
- meaning—He had an inner ear to the Father's time frame, a sense of the Spirit's movement, the direction the Spirit was blowing (3:8)
- and the time—the purpose for which He had come—was not yet

- it may not have seemed this way on the surface
- as one put it—“*He veered and strayed from one interruption to the next, with no apparent plan in hand other than His single, overarching one: get to Jerusalem and die. Otherwise, His days were a series of zigzags and detours, apparent whims and second thoughts, interruptions and delays, off the cuff plans, spur of the moment decisions, leisurely meals, and serendipitous rounds of storytelling.*”ⁱⁱ—*Buchanan*

- but listen to these words—and you hear Jesus saying that His steps were calculated, measured, ordained, precise—headed to an end point—*there's a right time and a wrong time*

- but since these brothers had no concept of divine moments
- were not attentive to the fact they were made by God, for God, and called to live for Him
- Jesus made perhaps His severest criticism of His brothers

- your time is always ready—any time will do
- for your lives have no definition

APPLICATION—would Jesus say the same to us?

-are we aware of our divine moment? Aware of our time?

- aware of God's itinerary?
- “a wise heart knows the right time”—Ecc 8:5
- “pay attention to how you walk, making the most of time—Eph 5:16
- otherwise it will be squandered, vulnerable to the expectations, the wills of others
- and our lives will not really much matter

-but Jesus had something equally centering to say—

2. EVERY MAN MUST HAVE A SENSE OF MISSION

- a purpose that matters—that transcends all earthly purposes
- that's bigger than ourselves
- what Jesus' family did not get was that Jesus lived to align Himself with His Father's purpose
- .-to carry out a major rescue effort
- to change the world by changing the heart
- to serve notice on evil—call the world out
- I John 3:8—He came to destroy the works of the devil
- so wherever He went—He exposed this alternative kingdom
- drew it out of its shadows where it hides in secret
- disrupted establishment protocols—told the religious leaders that little children understand more than they do
- mocked the Pharisees as blind guides—likened political leaders to destructive wild animals
- confronted prejudice, greed, hated, injustice, sexual misbehavior

- and so—it put Him on a collision course—to go to Jerusalem would cost Him His life

- but not so for His brothers
- it cannot hate you—it has no reason to hate you
- for you do not call it out—you play it safe—you pursue what it pursues
- what convictions you have, if any, you keep to yourself
- it's far more important to be accepted, liked

- and hence—having no real mission—you are not a factor in the world's destiny
- you make no ultimate difference—YOU CHANGE NOTHING!
- you merely shamle through life

APPLICATION—are you aware of your divine mission?

-aligned with His purpose—not yours?

-are you convinced —“God didn’t create any extras meant to stand on the sidelines and watch the story unfold. He created all of us to be on center stage?”ⁱⁱⁱ (Stearns)

-called to build His kingdom—reconcile people to God?

-join in overthrowing the prevailing world system

-willing to challenge injustice—proclaim truth, even if it doesn’t follow politically correct ways?

-get so close to Jesus that your light exposes the darkness—such that it “jolts people out of their stupor”, gets people mad?

CONCLUSION

Recently, I was asked to write out Heather’s dad’s obituary

-birth, training, marriage, accomplishments

-and it made me think about those junctures of life

-made me think about what it would be like to write my own

-what would I say?

-would it be about titles or possessions or accomplishments—or hobbies pursued—or places I traveled?

-or would it be about what Jesus is talking about here?

-deeper things, sacred things, lasting things

-he had a sense of his divine moments—he lived by God’s itinerary

-he had a sense of his divine mission—was not afraid to be hated for living truth, declaring truth

-Rich Stearns—“We don’t get to write our obituary—but we get to live the life that will be written about”—are you living it?

ⁱ MacDonald, Resilient Life, chap 7

ⁱⁱ Buchanan, The Rest of God, 78

ⁱⁱⁱ Richard Stearns, Unfinished, xix