

Lent Devotional March 23, 2019

SCRIPTURE

John 7:1-13

¹ After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him. ² Now the Jewish festival of Booths was near. ³ So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing; ⁴ for no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵ (For not even his brothers believed in him.) ⁶ Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. ⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil. ⁸ Go to the festival yourselves. I am not going to this festival, for my time has not yet fully come." ⁹ After saying this, he remained in Galilee. ¹⁰ But after his brothers had gone to the festival, then he also went, not publicly but as it were in secret. ¹¹ The Jews were looking for him at the festival and saying, "Where is he?" ¹² And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, "He is a good man," others were saying, "No, he is deceiving the crowd." ¹³ Yet no one would speak openly about him for fear of the Jews.

DEVOTIONAL

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"... for my time has not yet fully come." Jesus had little doubt he would be arrested if he attended the Festival of Booths, a harvest-time event. He also knew the Jewish leaders wished to have him killed. If he had been arrested then, would the leaders' wish have been fulfilled? Or instead, would his "infractions" have been seen as "misdemeanors," with his arrest a mere annoyance to the Roman courts? His arrest for many "minor" incidents could have weakened the impact of the final drama in Jerusalem. And instead of the people's transition from acclaiming him "Hosanna!" to calling out "Crucify!" their last response might have been "Ho-hum—this again?"

Jesus knew his crucifixion could only occur with the backing of Rome. Pontius Pilot had to be put in a position to order Jesus' death. Without the additional crowds journeying to the Temple for Passover, would that necessity have transpired?

Jesus perhaps understood that his death, and therefore also his resurrection, had to take place in the time of planting and renewal. Spring is that time. Would the ultimate joy be as overwhelming in another season? Jesus understood that "right-timing" his death on the cross was essential. Easter had to come when his Father had planned it. Jesus' death could not be rushed, nor could it be avoided. In the end, Christ knew when his time had come.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, help us to remember the importance of not rushing to a goal. In our life with you, help us to recognize our need to step back and ponder the journey. As you did, so also help us to understand when the time has fully come to accomplish your purposes in our lives. Amen.