

“A LIFE LIVED WITH PURPOSE”

John 7:1-13

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

Going through the motions—doing what is expected of us—doing what others are doing—living to amass as much of this world’s goods as we can—seeking satisfying experiences to fill our time—entertaining ourselves—climbing the ladder of success—winning and getting ahead of others—keeping healthy so as to live as long as possible: **Are these your motives in life?**

Jesus lived a purposeful life. His life was not driven by the demands of this world, by the expectations of others, by self-satisfaction, by the pursuit of popularity, or by the gain of wealth. His one purpose in life was to do the will of His Father and to fulfill His heavenly mission. He would do whatever it took to complete His task.

I suggest to you that you will never be truly happy, and will never be genuinely fulfilled in life until you find His purpose for your life and live it that way.

Yes, it is important to live the Purpose-Filled Life!

In this passage we see Jesus confronted by friends, foes, fame, family, and feast. How does He handle such challenges? How should we?

I. THE ATTACK OF HIS FOES

A. His Foes Hated Him (7)

B. His foes were pursuing Him (11)

C. His foes intimidated people who liked Jesus (13)

D. His foes wanted to kill Him (1).

- 1) He would not take any presumptuous steps to unnecessarily aggravate His enemies. They were angry enough, and He did not need to unnecessarily confront them and intimidate them.
- 2) He had many tasks to perform that were part of His Father’s will for Him; those tasks primarily involved making many disciples in Galilee where the response was more favorable, and also providing intensive training for His apostles.

How do you handle your foes? Do you really have it that bad?

II. THE ALLUREMENT OF FAME

A. Galilee was not an important nor popular destination (3)

Why stay on “Broadway Avenue” in Buffalo when you could be on Broadway in “The City”?

B. He Could get more attention in Judea

1. He could perform His “works” (miracles) before a wider audience of disciples (3)—including those from Galilee, Judea, and from the entire dispersion.
2. The Feast of Tabernacles was the most popular of Jewish feasts, and was widely attended.
3. Jesus could earn “public” attention.
4. By doing this He could gain “worldwide acknowledgment” (v. 4).

Many a person has lost his way, forsaken his values, corrupted his morals, abdicated his purpose, and ruined his life due to the pursuit of FAME. JESUS WOULD NOT BECOME ONE OF THEM!

The focus of Jesus’ brothers was on the popular but mistaken view of the Messiah—power, wealth, conquest, preeminence. They missed the Biblical teaching that showed initial suffering, death, and atonement for sins. He would not reign until He had suffered.

III. THE OPPOSITION OF FAMILY (3, 5, 6, 7, 8)

A. They urged Jesus to violate His conscience, His standards, and His life’s purpose by publicly displaying Himself in order to gain notoriety (3-4).

No one does it like you are doing! Does that sound like a familiar argument?

1. You need to impress your disciples (v. 3)
2. You need to manifest yourself openly to the world (v. 4).

B. They were “in tune” with this “world” system under satanic control (7).

C. They were able to manifest themselves to society, because they were in tune with society (6). They did not “buck the system.” They “went along with the flow.” Thus, their “time”—opportune moment—was always ready. Nothing held them back. Note in v. 8: **YOU** go up to the feast; **I** do not go up.”

D. They did not **believe in Him” (5).**

Notice, *even* His brothers.

This was a continuous unbelief.

IV. THE ATTRACTION OF THE FEAST (2, 6a, 8b, 9, 10)

A. His Rejection of Worldly Pleasure (2)

Although Tabernacles was a religious feast described and commanded for observance by all Israelite males each year in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, it was also a very important **SOCIAL** occasion and it many ways could be compared to a large picnic.

Everyone would live in tents (“booths”) for one full week. These tents would be placed on the housetops (flat!) or in the courtyards of homes. For pilgrims coming from outside Jerusalem, many tents would be placed in and about the Temple’s courtyards. During this feast, the distinctions between the rich and the poor were practically obliterated.

Most people really enjoyed coming to this feast, and for many it lost much of its religious significance and became more of a “party time” (remind anyone of our Christmas and Easter?)

It was not wrong for Jews to come to the feast; but proper observance was essential. **However, Jesus avoided the feast.** He had other reasons—such as safety and lack of desire for self acclaim—but He also made clear that He would not be caught up in worldliness and in the *pleasure seeking madness* of this world!

B. His Acceptance of His Life Purpose (6)

He said, “My time is not yet at hand.”

C. His Determination to complete His task (8)

He said, “My time has not been fulfilled.” He has not yet accomplished everything necessary for His ultimate act of redemption—the cross, tomb, and resurrection. He would not precipitate the cross until His work was finished.

D. His Remaining in Galilee (v. 9)—away from the commotion, excitement, unenlightened confusion, and unnecessary attention of the crowds of pilgrims going up to Jerusalem. The brothers could “go up” with these. But He would not. He would go up on His terms and at His time. He did not lie in v. 8 when He had said that He would not go up to “this feast.” *In reality, He did not observe the feast; He came about halfway through (v. 14) and not as a pilgrim observer.* Moreover, he did not go up in the way suggested by His brothers—for display in a public way.

E. His Going Up to Jerusalem to Fulfill the Father’s Plan (10)

Jesus went up “secretly”, not “openly” as His brothers had urged Him to do.

V. THE LACK OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS FRIENDS AND HIS DETRACTORS (12-13)

A. His Detractors believed that He had ulterior motives for personal aggrandizement.

He was using the people for His own selfish purposes; He was “leading them astray.” Note, that in their opinion, he was taking advantage of the ignorant masses—the “crowd.” He was deceiving them with His “good” teaching and His “good” miracles, signs, and wonders.

B. His Proponents believed Him to be “**A GOOD MAN.**”

Quite flattering, but their view was inadequate. He was more than a good man!

C. No one was “speaking openly of Him.”

They feared the Jews—the religious leaders who had not yet taken an open and solid position concerning this Man. The verdict might go either way.

CONCLUSION

So there you have it. Jesus was **attacked by His foes, allured by fame, opposed by His family, attracted by “worldly” pleasures, and unacknowledged by His friends.**

Granted, many believers face such issues in their lives. We have enemies, we are allured by fame, we sometimes are opposed by family, we face the attraction of worldly pleasure, and we sometimes suffer the lack of acknowledgment of our friends.

Jesus never lost sight of His purpose; He pushed everything else into the background.

What is your life-purpose? Are you following Jesus' example?

YOU MUST LIVE A PURPOSE-FILLED LIFE.