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My Time Has Not Yet Come

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Series: Let God Be God

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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The world in which we live is running scared! But, believe it or not, what we are running from is not a visible enemy. We are running from the enemy of time! We live in absolute fear that we'll miss an appointment, be either late or early for a social engagement, be late to work, or be late with a payment. We race through life as though our wristwatches were in the car behind us daring us to slow down.

We live and breathe as though the hands of time were in fact a watchman standing over us with a death sentence, should we fail to meet its exacting standards. Most of us have detailed schedules for each day, complicated calendars for each month, and are so rigidly glued thereto, that it is only on a rare day, or a rare evening, that we can do something that is not in the plan book, or not on the schedule.

Social engagements are often planned months in advance so the people invited can all be free to come. And in the fall, such eternally vital things as football games dominate our lives, and we reschedule our schedules according to the schedules of the NFL (National Football League). But still the clock controls us. Probably no other society in history has ever had such accurate timepieces and such a fear of time as ours. While we now have \$20 wristwatches that keep perfect time for a year without rewinding, we also have a generation of young people so tightly wound themselves, and so overly scheduled, that ulcers and high blood pressure are now common ailments among high school students.

The church often doesn't help. So much of the time, in an effort to plan a myriad of useful activities for both young and old alike, it schedules just enough things to keep a charter bus going from every house in town to the church house, seven days a week. In some cases, the church even becomes a competitor in the race for the family's time. And in an effort to see that our young people are equipped to cope with this pressurized world, the schools are scrambling for all the minutes they can get. What once was a relaxed but steady curriculum, with adequate time for a child to be himself, has been replaced by a time-bomb that ticks

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away in the heart of every child, just daring him not to measure up, and thus be left behind in the race to the moon or the race to the top or the race to oblivion, whichever comes first. Our whole society exists in a pressure cooker, living fast, and living frustrated, because it is constantly living under the watchful eye of the sternest taskmaster of all, the taskmaster of time.

There is, of course, a partial solution. It is to slow down, to carefully choose our priorities, and to learn when and how to say “no”. But even that does not relieve the pressures that our jobs and society have placed upon us.

Jesus understood time. For one thing, His Father invented it. From a human perspective, though, it would seem that time would have frustrated the Son of Man. He never had to live within its parameters until He took upon Himself the cloak of our humanity. Now suddenly, the King of Glory had deadlines to meet. The sun went down each day and canceled His outdoor meeting. There was the constant pressure of the crowds who literally sought to control His time. Even when He planned certain activities, someone always interrupted with a genuine need, but a need that placed added pressures on His already crowded agenda.

Add to that the fact that the Living Son of God had only three years to initiate the greatest work that would ever touch planet earth, call and train those who would lead it, and deal with the consistent opposition that this world decided to offer Him. So Jesus understood the constraints of time and the pressure those constraints place upon man.

So it is an amazing experience to watch how Jesus handled the hours and the days assigned to Him by the Father. And that experience we will continue to explore in the next phase of the Master’s walk on planet earth.

When last we left the Lord, He was in Capernaum, teaching in the synagogue. Surrounded by pushing, shoving, noisy people who desperately wanted to control His every move and His every moment, Jesus stopped what He was doing to answer their questions, and to acknowledge them. He had, you remember, walked on the water to where the disciples were, and this left unanswered clues that frustrated them no end.

At any rate, Jesus was, as always, relaxed, and certain that the Father had everything under His control. So when the multitudes pressed Him, He lovingly told it like it was...and is.

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He told them that He was the Bread of Life. In other words, He is I AM. He had come to die for the sins of the world, and unless they were willing, as it were, to eat His flesh, (that is, appropriate His character), and drink His blood, (that is, acknowledge His death and resurrection), they could have no part in Him. To put it bluntly, the party was over. The King of Glory was through entertaining an ungrateful following with signs and wonders. It had become obvious that all those signs and wonders were doing was generating a desire for more signs and wonders. The crowd was after another horse and pony show. They loved that catering performance, for instance, where Jesus took a handful of food and used it to feed five thousand men and their families. That was neat. They loved the meal, but they missed the message.

So Jesus told it like it was. And they all went home. All of them. Every last one of them. Jesus, you see, had decided enough was enough. He wasn't about to play the numbers game. He didn't care how many were following. He wanted to know how many were followers. It was then that He turned to His bewildered disciples, who were watching in dismay as the crowds disappeared, and He asked them, "What about you? Do you want to leave, too?" Peter, of course, answered for the group, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!" We take up reading now as the next incident in Jesus' life flows out of this one. It is found in John.

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.
(John 7:1 NKJV)

Even this brief passage illustrates two very vital principles about the Life of Christ.

Principle 1 - The life of Christ was not a series of unrelated incidents; nor is yours. The life of Christ was a perfect flowing fountain of life that began in heaven and did not stop until it had entered the lives of men and was returned to the Father in the form of praise and worship. Nothing that happened to Jesus was incidental, and nothing that happened to Jesus was unrelated to the other things that happened to Him. His life was not a series of parts, but a whole, made up of the parts we seize upon and study. After these things, Jesus walked in Galilee. Three of the most momentous experiences in His life on earth had just occurred back to back. He had fed the five thousand, walked on water to the disciples, and had given His "Bread of Life" discourse;

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that literally exposed, once and for all, those followers that were shouting His name, but not naming His name. Oh, that we could see our own lives as one continuous process where not even the most menial or the most traumatic experience is unrelated to the whole of what God is trying to do to us and through us. It all fits together. The pieces often don't make sense, but leave God alone! The picture will one day emerge; and the picture will be beautiful. (That's the only kind of picture God paints!)

His ministry had apparently just collapsed, but Jesus simply continued His walk. Nothing spectacular. He didn't call a meeting in the city square to defend His position, or buy time on Jerusalem television to tell His side of the story, or lure back the crowds who had fled in shock. Rumors were everywhere, and His enemies were now staked under every olive tree, poised for the kill. Jesus just kept walking. His life continued to flow. After all, it wasn't His life; it belonged to the Father, and as long as He did the Father's will, what difference did it make where He was or what he was doing or how big the crowds were? So it reads: "He walked in Galilee." There, open hearts awaited Him. His life continued its natural flow.

Principle #2 - Notice that Jesus was not afraid of death, nor did He rush it. He wasn't avoiding Judea because He might be killed. He was avoiding Judea because the Jews there sought to kill Him, and His time had not yet come. More about that as we go. But the King of kings was not afraid of anything man could do to Him. For anything the Father let man do was for the Father's glory, and nothing touched the Son unless the Father approved. Oh, that we could let the life of God flow through us as Jesus did. He was always at peace, because His Father owned the clock, and even the hand of death could not intervene before His time had come.

SHOW YOURSELF TO THE WORLD

From that long-distance statement of fact, "Jesus walked in Galilee," the Holy Spirit now zooms in with a telephoto lens and looks at the everyday pressures and problems that Jesus encountered during that walk. It wasn't just a stroll in the country. Let's see what those pressures were:

Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that

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You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If you really can do these things, show Yourself to the world.” For even His brothers did not believe in Him
(John 7:2-5 NKJV)

What a comforting passage. You say comforting? Yes, comforting. How often have you had a problem with your immediate family, and thought, “Jesus doesn’t understand”? How often have you had a problem with others trying to manipulate you into succumbing to the world’s ways and the world’s plans and thought, “Jesus doesn’t understand”? Well, think again, Beloved. Jesus understands. He’s been here on planet earth in the body of a man, and suddenly His brothers form a corporation to promote His ability to do the supernatural. “Jesus, Inc.” was about to come into being. They reasoned, “What’s the use of having a brother who can feed thousands with a sack lunch or jog on the ocean or turn water into wine, if nobody knows about it?” Let’s face it. If you had a relative who could predict the future or defy gravity or see through walls, chances are someone in your family would want to patent him and sell him to Madison Ave. Right? Well, that’s what Jesus had to contend with next.

It was time for the Feast of the Tabernacles, and Jesus’ brothers reasoned among themselves that they had a good thing right in their own backyard; but for some reason or other, He was avoiding the mainstream of Jewish activity and was wasting His time on the dusty backroads of life where He couldn’t really be appreciated. They had a dandy idea. They said, “Brother, why not pack up and head for the feast where the action is. You do miracles! Why not go where they can be seen? No one in his right mind who has something the world wants hides it. If you are a miracle worker, Jesus, then *show yourself to the world.*”

They really missed it, didn’t they? It seemed reasonable to them to make a production of His miracles, so that more people would marvel and become followers of His miracles. They wanted to turn the life of the Son of God into a sideshow and sell tickets. They would have been right at home on Christian television in our day. Sad. Like so many in this twentieth century, they believed that demonstrating the uniqueness of God’s powers was more important than demonstrating the uniqueness of God’s person.

The crowd is still screaming at Jesus today. “Show yourself to the world!” They organize and they advertise and they agonize in hopes that Jesus will do something overtly supernatural, so that

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they can take up an offering and say “I told you so”. God wasn’t and isn’t in the business of magnifying what He can do. He doesn’t need to. He is in the business of magnifying who He is. And He doesn’t do it through blaring horns or glossy programs. He does it through changed lives. His brothers didn’t understand. Verse 5 tells us why. “For even his brothers did not believe in him.” Oh, they believed he could do miracles. They did not yet, however, understand who he was, or they never would have dared to make such a flagrant show of the Holy One of God.

Beware, Beloved, of the showmanship that surrounds the gospel, particularly the evangelical gospel, in this day of ours. It looks so good. It sounds so good. It attracts such crowds. It raises so much money. But it makes a mockery of the nature of Almighty God. The real show will come! One day, perhaps soon, God will once again enter the amphitheater of human history on that white horse and make mincemeat of the nations who have defiled Him. No one will have to sell tickets, Beloved. And no one will have to send off for free pins or books to get to see it. Every eye will see it. But until then, the Lamb of God is reaching out into this lost world of ours, not by cleverly devised promotions, but by deeply transformed lives.

Learn the difference. Humbly go forth as a servant into the world into which you’ve been called, not bragging about what He can do, but rather tenderly demonstrating Who He is, instead. He is I AM.

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Jesus, of course, didn’t do what they were asking Him to do. And, as always, He gave them a plausible reason. They didn’t understand. The world cannot grasp the way the Mind of God works. Nonetheless, He gave the reason to them, so we could have it 2,000 years later, to marvel at His wisdom. Listen:

Then Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. You go up to this feast. I am (is) not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come.” When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee. (John 7:6-9 NKJV)

“His time had not yet come...”. So Jesus, knowing that, stayed behind. The pressure was great upon Him to yield to His peers, to demonstrate a considerate heart for His family, and to assume,

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“what difference would it make, if it will make them happy?” It would have made the difference between whether or not Jesus remained in the perfect will of the Father.

Jesus was always so tender toward the Spirit that never at any time did he chafe at either the will of God or the timing of God. So many are so willing to do what God wants, as long as it can be done today. Beloved, slow down! Man’s timetable almost always preempts God’s and runs ahead of Him and misses the process of transformation that only time can accomplish. You read the Scriptures. It is Satan who is always in a hurry. It is Satan who always offers “here and now” deals. He would have made a great used car salesman. He would have had Moses bump off Pharaoh and head for the river months ahead of God’s schedule. He would have yanked Joseph from that well and saved him that horrible trip and that unpleasant stay in that dingy dungeon. He would have killed off a nation by famine. He would have rescued Job from that hillside hospital bed and saved him the agony and grief of being scorned and rejected. Only Job never would have known the heart of God.

He would have sold Jesus a quick fix by giving Him a kingdom on earth, and you and I would be dead in our sins. My friend, don’t be impatient with the timing of God. It is horrendously slow by man’s standards, but it is always on time. One thing age teaches a man or woman is that you cannot rush God. When we’re young we tend to chide God for His slowness and apparent inability to act. We want action. We want the problem solved now. We want the job to appear now. If God is God, why can’t He do it now? And if we insist, He may. But don’t do it! The short-cut bypasses Character Canyon and Transformation Trail.

Commit your way (wait on) to the Lord, Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass. (Psalm 37:5 NKJV)

His time had not come. He was not ready to force a confrontation with His enemies, so instead of heading into town with trumpets and miracles, He quietly eased into town and did what He had been sent to do. More about that another time. He did go to the feast; quietly, He went. Our passage concludes:

But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up
to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.
(John 7:10 NKJV)

God, living in man, had a decision to make. He made it based

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on the will of God, rather than on the prompting of man. He withdrew from an opportunity to flaunt the works of God and quietly, instead, He slipped into the synagogue and began to teach the Word of God. That is what He had been called by the Father to do.

The key, however, to the whole passage is that Jesus waited for the Father's time before He moved...always. Sometimes that seemed like an eternity. Sometimes it seemed as though He were missing perfect opportunities as the hands on the clock moved slowly around again and again, and impatient man wondered, if in fact, He would ever move at all. Had they known that He had but three short years in which to accomplish the Father's work, they would have been in utter shock. For while He seemed consistently about the Father's business, there never seemed about Him that aura of panic that so typifies man when the vice of time has man in its grip.

Jesus always waited until the time was right. And whenever He was tempted to move ahead of the Father's plan and rush His will, He simply replied, "My time has not yet come."

You and I, with Jesus in control of our lives, will behave in exactly the same way. We will not panic when life's storm clouds appear on the horizon, and it appears to be time for action. Until God says move, we remain in place. The world around us will respond with frenzy. We are to respond in peace.

Some of you have been waiting a long time for the heavens to clear, and a word from heaven to say: "The time has come." The longer you wait, the more those about you taunt you for your inactivity. Let them. Don't move. When God is ready to move into your situation and clear the heavens, He will. Until then, He has packaged enough grace for you to keep you firmly in place and secure. Rest.

You may be anxious about going home to be with Him. It may seem an eternity since you decided that your work on earth was done. Be careful. You do not know when your work on earth is done. Only God knows. Often when man considers himself no longer useful, no one can be glorified but Jesus, as He takes the quiet maturity He has wrought in you through the years and uses it to touch another life. Don't rush the work of God. Not even the final work of God. When His time has come, you'll know it.

That is the word for you and I who are so caught up in life's

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expressways and traffic jams. That is the word for those of us who live life not only by the clock, but by the second hand on the clock. That is the word for those of us whose schedules control us, instead of our controlling them. Should we not ask ourselves a few serious questions??

What are we running from? What are we running to? What are we afraid of missing? What's the rush? Oh, I know, the world might pass us by, but so what? I wonder if some of us don't need to take a week...this coming week...and s-l-o-w down a bit, take a deep breath and rest. Take a walk through the fields and smell the flowers and worship the God who made them. Take a day and hike up a hillside, and spend an afternoon of praise. Take an evening and just spend it together singing, and praying, and rejoicing with those we love. Take a weekend and go apart before we come apart, and take a fresh inventory of how much of what we are doing we are doing because we haven't stopped to ask ourselves why we've gotten too busy to be with God?

Our God, when He demonstrated His life through man in the form of Jesus Christ, got more done in three years than anyone else would have in three thousand years. Yet He was never rushed. Never panicked. Never frantic. Never distraught. He just took His time, and when the pressure began to build, instead of trying to do more, He spent more time in the Father's presence, so He could be sure that He did what He did in the Father's strength.

If the world pressed Him to do what it was not yet time to do, He simply, tenderly responded, "My time has not yet come". When the heat reached a fevered pitch in Judea, He walked in Galilee. Not ran, walked. When His brothers pressed Him to go to Judea before the time was right, He just waited. That's right; God waited. And when the time was right, He went. Not a minute before, not a minute late.

And praise God, when the Cross loomed upon the horizon of history and the clock of eternity struck eleven fifty-nine, the Living Son of God, having communed in the garden with his Father, set His face to Calvary and lovingly proclaimed, "My time has come." So that at the split second in time prophesied by the prophets of old, the sins of the world came down upon the Savior of the world, and you and I were reconciled to God.

If you have never received Him as your personal Savior, your time has come. Ask Him to come into your heart. He will cleanse

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you of your sin; He will fill you with His love, and He will inhabit your spirit with His, so that from this moment on you and I and all of the other saints in this world, can take a deep breath, and begin to possess the time that's been possessing us. Our time has come to do that!

For Application

1- Use a concordance and do a study of every time Jesus said, "My time has not come" or "My time has come". List what would have happened had Jesus ignored the Father's prompting on each of those occasions.

2- Look in the Scriptures for key principles concerning God's concepts of time versus man's. Why do you think God created time? Why do you think Jesus limited Himself to the constraints of time while He lived on earth? How has Satan taken what God created for His glory (time) and used it to defeat man?

3- Chart out the key events in your life. Do they seem, when seen individually, to be unrelated to the rest of your life? As you grow older, how does it become evident that God has woven the parts together into a plan? How can you develop a plan to teach that principle to young people?

4- Why was Jesus never in a hurry? Do you have any responsibilities that are as great as He had? How would you have dealt with His interruptions and the brief time span He had to accomplish His task? What key principles emerge from observing His relaxed spirit?

5- If you had been Jesus, would you have gone back to Judea to prove you were invincible before your time had come? Would you have gone back to please your family? Make a modern parallel.

6- What comfort can you derive from the family pressures Jesus had to endure? Do you think it deepens His understanding of your hurts and pressures?

7- Ask God to make you more conscious of His timing.

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