

**SLIDE** Children's Moment

March 2, 2014

**Theme:** Thankfulness

**Object:** Thank You Note

**Scripture:** "Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting." (Psalm 118:29 NASB)

Last week I received this beautiful Thank You Card. Inside of the card it said, "Your ministry is such a blessing because you have a wonderful way of bringing others into Jesus' presence. Thank you for your teaching of the scriptures.

It really made me feel good that someone took the time to go and buy a card and send it to me to say, "Thank You." Sometimes people forget to say "Thank You" when someone does something nice for them.

This reminds me of the time that there were 10 people who were very sick with a terrible disease called Leprosy. When Jesus saw them, He touched them and they were healed. They were so happy that they ran up and down the streets singing and dancing. **SLIDE** One of them stopped and went back to tell Jesus, "Thank You."

**SLIDE** "Then Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed (*healed*)? But the nine—where are they?' " (Luke 17:17 NASB) You see, only 1 out of the 10 said, "Thank You" to Jesus. WE need to make sure we say thank you to God.

God does so much for us! In the Psalm 118 the writer wrote these wonderful words,

**SLIDE** "Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting."

Everyday God provides everything we need: food, clothing, a place to live and the air we breathe. Do we ever forget to say, "Thank You?" Let's stop right now and say

“Thank You” to God and ask Jesus to help us remember to say “Thank You” everyday.

Dear Lord Jesus, You give us everything we need, but we often forget to say “Thank You.” We thank you now, and ask that You help us to remember to give thanks everyday for all that You give us. Amen and Amen!

**Slide** Time and Timing

The time and the timing of life events are important. If time is wasted it then becomes unimportant. If time is spent on efforts that have no eternal meaning then this time may be wasted. When ones life is empty, then time drags on.

Shakespeare's Macbeth, King of Scotland, knew this for he cried, **Slide** "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day." On the other hand if life is full, then time flies. Ovid, the Roman poet of the first century BC declared, **Slide** "The stream of time glides smoothly on and is past before we know." Time eats away at life, what will outlast time? For in our present state we are bound by time. This being true, then how can our lives have meaning beyond time? Well, I believe we can find the answer in our study passage this morning of John chapter 7 verses 1 to 9 for it deals with the difference between God's and man's time and timing. **Blank**

Now let us turn our focus and time to our study passage, observing Jesus. He had spent a good amount of time in Galilee and initially met with great success. Jesus performed miracles and fed the people, the crowds grew and so did their excitement. However, over time as it was revealed who Jesus is and what His mission here on earth was - the people left and we now find Jesus with His brothers and a small group. The timing for Jesus to leave Galilee was not yet at hand, He had spent about six months there. This time in Galilee was between the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths. Chapter six of John is dated by the Passover and now the timing of chapter seven is the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles or Booths.

The beginning of chapter seven is divided into the **Slide** “wrong time” and the “right time” - the first 9 verses deal with the “wrong time”. Let me begin by reading verses one and two of John chapter 7, <sup>1</sup>“After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. <sup>2</sup> Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near.” So after Jesus’ time of miracles and teaching in Galilee He it was not yet His time to travel to Judea. The Jews wanted Him dead for He was upsetting the power structure of Israel. The Feast of Booths or Tabernacles was near in time and this feast was one of three feasts that all Jews were to take part in. I believe it was probably the most popular feast. The timing of its celebration was in the early fall, following the harvest and after all the crops were gathered and stored in the barns. It was a time of festivity and rejoicing and giving thanks to the Lord for His provision. People lived for seven days in booths made of branches and we know from Leviticus chapter 23 that it was a time of joy and singing. Before we move on in our study passage I want to spend a little time examining the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths for this will show an important relationship between Christ and the Old Testament and God’s timing.

On the seventh and final day of the feast of Tabernacles or Booths men would carry in their right hand a **Slide** *lulabha* (*lu-lab-ha*). This was made from branches of a myrtle, willow and palm trees tied together. Some of these branches may have come from the booths that the people had been living in for 6 days. With this they carried the **Slide** *ethrog* (*eth-rog*), which is citrus fruit. The priests would bring the crowd waving their *lulabha* and *ethrog* to the pool of **Slide** Σιλωάμ *Silōam* where the chief priest would fill a gold pitcher with water. The priests and the people would then return to the temple in a great parade waving the *lulabha* (*lu-lab-ha*). The chief priest would proceed to the Alter of Sacrifice and pour out the water. People would chant Psalms 113 to 118. They ended the ceremony of water by public

speaking together, **Slide**<sup>24</sup> “This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. <sup>25</sup> O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity! <sup>26</sup> Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; we have blessed you from the house of the LORD. **Slide**<sup>27</sup> The LORD is God, and He has given us light; bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. <sup>28</sup> You are my God, and I give thanks to You; *You are* my God, I extol You. <sup>29</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.” (Psalm 118:24-29<sub>NASB</sub>)

**Blank** The purpose of this water ritual, which was the climax of the Feast of Tabernacle or Booths, was designed to remind people of God’s giving water during the time of Israel’s wandering in the desert wilderness and that it is God who brings the rain that showers the earth - bringing life to the crops. Let me jump ahead of our study this morning to verses 37 and 38 of John chapter 7. Here with the high point of the Feast of Booths and with the water ritual still fresh in the minds of the people and the priests, the time was ripe, for we read, **Slide** “Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, **‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.** He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” **Slide** As Sam Storms wrote of this verse, “Jesus was saying: ‘This feast is all about **me!** The water that flowed from the rock in the wilderness symbolized **me!** The sacrifice on the alter is about **me!** The water in the golden pitcher points to **me!** The promise of refreshing waters of salvation refers to **me!** The water that I offer is better than that which flowed from the rock, better than that just taken from the pool of Siloam. I am the water the gives eternal life, eternal refreshment, and eternal joy! No longer do you need the temple. No longer do you need to celebrate the feast. Celebrate **me!** Come and drink of **me!**’ ” (Kingdom Come, page 22) So, my beloved, when we celebrate Christ, when we live for Christ we are continually celebrating the Passover and the feasts that were to be

observed forever, for Jesus is the complete fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, law and ceremonies. **Blank**

In our time we have the perspective of both history and the scriptures. Both clearly show when Christ came that He came to fulfill the Old Testament. The temple is no longer needed, because Jesus is the spiritual temple of our worship, the temple of God, and my beloved, we the redeemed, are the living spiritual temples of God for we are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. Since Jesus was the final and last sacrifice there is no need for an Alter of Sacrifice. Jesus is the Alter of Sacrifice; Jesus is the fulfillment and the continuation of the festivals and feasts. **Slide** The Old Testament the sacrifices, festivals and feasts were used to teach and foreshadow Christ – who He is and the time of His coming. Jesus has come and He has arisen from the dead! For the children of God to return to the Old Testament ways is an insult to Christ and God the Father. Liturgy and ritual are not bad, when they bring our focus to Christ, God's redeemer and God's holy Word they reinforce godly thought and behavior and this is good. However, anything that distracts us from who Christ is and what He accomplished for mankind is not only a distraction, but it is also wrong for it replaces the centrality of Christ. To require observance of rituals, and to warp scripture so that it takes our focus off of Christ is serious indeed. As Paul wrote to the Galatians, **Slide**<sup>8</sup> "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! **Slide**<sup>10</sup> For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant (*slave*) of Christ." (Galatians 1:8 & 10 NASB) For those who teach, that as Christians, we must still keep the feasts and festivals of Old Testament time and who look forward to the rebuilding of the temple in future time – they are teaching falsehoods that attempt to distract, misdirect and take the focus off of Christ. Jesus came to bring the people out of the

Old Testament or old covenant into the New Testament or new covenant – a time of living in fellowship with God through Christ, not through ritual that foreshowed Him – for we now have Christ. **Blank** This brings us squarely to the timing and importance of time of verse 3 in John chapter 7.

Reading beginning in verse 3, “Therefore His brothers said to Him (*Jesus*), ‘Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. Here in this verse “Your disciples” is not referring to the twelve, but to the many people who have now left and are no longer following Jesus. Now Jesus’ brothers continue by saying to Him in verse 4, “For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be *known* publicly.” This made perfect sense if Jesus had been the political Messiah that most in Judea was seeking. They desired a Messiah that would kick out Rome and bring a time in which Israel would once again be a strong nation. This was the reason in chapter 6 the crowds wanted to make Jesus king. Again, this shows Jesus’ brothers misunderstood whom Jesus was and what His mission on earth was. The second half of verse 4 continues “If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” This shows Jesus’ brothers unbelief. **Slide** The word “If” foreshadows the mocking unbelief that Jesus would face from the crowds and on the cross as we find in Matthew chapter 27 and is similar to Satan’s mocking challenge in the same gospel of Matthew found in chapter 4 during Christ’s temptation. Verse 5 makes clear the state of mind of Jesus’ brothers, “For not even His brothers were believing in Him.” Nothing Jesus had done up to this time had changed the hard hearts of His brothers. In fact it would take Jesus’ death and resurrection to finally show His brothers that He was the Son of God, the Messiah as we read, **Slide** “These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the* women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.” (Acts 1:14 NASB) **Blank**

In verse 6 it is written, “So Jesus said to them, ‘My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune.’” Here in this exchange of verses 3 to 5 Jesus ends it by saying, “My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune.” If I want to understand what Jesus meant by this declaration I must begin by understanding that God’s time is different from Jesus’ brothers time and is different from our time. I have to question if the use of the word “time” is appropriate in referring to God at all. Time is a word that began at creation for God has always existed and He is before time, God is outside of time and God will be after time; for God is eternal. The **Westminster Shorter Catechism** attempts to deal with God being eternal and outside of time. Question 4 asks, **Slide** “What is God?” **Slide** The answer reads, “God is a Spirit, <sup>(1)</sup> infinite, <sup>(2)</sup> eternal, <sup>(3)</sup> and unchangeable, <sup>(4)</sup> in his being, <sup>(5)</sup> wisdom, <sup>(6)</sup> power, <sup>(7)</sup> holiness, <sup>(8)</sup> justice, goodness, and truth. <sup>(9)</sup>” (1) John 4:24, (2) Job 11:7-9, (3) Ps. 90:2, (4) James 1:17, (5) Exod. 3:14, (6) Ps. 147:5, (7) Rev. 4:8, (8) Rev. 15:4, (9) Exod. 34:6-7. Question 7 asks, **Slide** “What are the decrees of God?” The answer reads, **Slide** “The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. (Eph. 1:4, 11; Rom. 9:22-23) God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, and His decrees are His eternal purpose that foreordains what has happened and what will happen in history and time, but God is outside of history and time. What we know from the scriptures is: **Slide** (1) The death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was the most important event in His earthly life and it was the most important event in all of history and time, and it was eternally planned and determined by God the Father. **Slide** (2) The details of Jesus’ life; conception, birth, life of ministry, death and resurrection were also the very will of God. **Slide** (3) When Jesus descended to earth He knew that God had predetermined the events of His life and He would fulfill God’s plan for the salvation of God’s chosen. **Slide** (4) What God the Father had determined for the



mortal life of God the Son was fully completed. **Slide** (5) Even the time and the timing at which these events of Jesus' life occurred were determined and set by God.

**Slide** (6) Jesus' second coming is set by God - and nothing will change the timing of God. **Blank**

At the time of Jesus the Jewish culture was one in which daily life worked to avoid shame and to seek honor for ones self and family. Both of these were strong motivators of Jewish life and were extremely important. Jesus had lost some of His standing and possibly honor in Galilee with the exodus of so many people. Does this mean He brought shame on Himself, His brothers and His followers? Did Jesus' brothers want His position as a prominent prophet restored by going to Jerusalem and performing miracles in the capitol? Did Jesus' brothers view Him as a country prophet hiding out in the backwaters of Galilee and did they want Him to step into the lime light of Jerusalem? Did they believe that if Jesus became famous that they could ride on His coat tails of fame and reap the benefits of this fame for themselves? Whatever the reasoning of James, Joseph, Simon and Jude (*Judas*) was, we know from verse 5, "not even His brothers were believing in Him (*Jesus*)."<sup>6</sup> Two of Jesus' half-brothers, James and Jude, would later write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit epistles bearing their names. James would become the head of the Jerusalem church. But at this time, what we do know is that **Slide** Jesus' brothers were **NOT** motivated by their belief that Jesus was the Messiah. **Blank**

Verses 6 to 9 is also about timing, we read, <sup>6</sup> "So Jesus said to them, 'My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. <sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. Jesus had responded in a similar way in John chapter 2 to His mother at the wedding in Cana, "My hour has not yet come." (John 2:4 NASB) Likewise here Jesus is unwilling to travel with His

brothers to Judea - possibly because of their skepticism and surely because the Jewish leadership hated Him and sought to kill Him; simply put it was not yet His time for the confrontation that would bring His death. We know the intention of the Jewish leaders by what is recorded in John chapter 5 where after Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath verse 18 states, **Slide** “For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” God set Jesus’ path and the timing of His ministry, death and resurrection, and Jesus would not waver. As John Calvin wrote, **Slide** “Although Christ avoided dangers, he did not turn aside a hair’s breadth from the course of his duty.” Jesus’ decision was a matter of timing not of fear. **Blank**

Jesus’ statement to His brothers that **Slide** “your time is always opportune” shows that they were not concerned about God’s plan or timing. At this point in time they knew nothing of God purpose for Jesus. They were living fully in the world’s time and thinking of their own desires. We see, from our perspective in history and time, that Satan influences the world’s affairs of men and the activities and the priorities of men are by their very nature sinful. This teaches believers of all ages and times, including our time, that when we, like our Lord Jesus, “testify of (the world) it, that its deeds are evil” **Slide** we will arouse the hatred of the world against Jesus’ church and His chosen. To see whether this is true or not, one just has to look around us – look at our community, look at New Mexico, America and the world. **Blank**

Jesus now tells His brothers to, <sup>8</sup> “Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.’ <sup>9</sup> Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.” As we have already alluded to Jesus had no desire to travel with a group of people bringing public attention to Himself for this would have

tempted the people to try and make Him king and spurred the Jewish leaders to confront Him earlier than God's plan had set for the time of Jesus' death. Jesus stayed behind and His brothers and others went on ahead to Jerusalem.

What this passage, the beginning of chapter 7, teaches is simple. It teaches that

**Slide** our time can either be like the world's time, which was the time of Jesus' brothers or our time can be like Jesus' time and Jesus' time was that of God's time. If we live our lives like the world's time, then our time has little to no meaning. On the other hand if we live like Jesus, then our time will be filled with meaning and in truth will have eternal implications. Your life can be part of God's eternal plan of good verses evil, of sharing the good news of our Lord Jesus with the lost and needy world; the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only hope for mankind and the world. If one lives life centered on the world - then their lives pass quickly as a vapor and vanish into eternal torment. Jesus' brother James who became the leader of the Jerusalem church wrote of those who did not understand their time in God's plan when he said,

**Slide** "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." (James 4:14 NASB) Our lives pass as quickly as the unsaved, but a life lived for Jesus with passion and determination of God's holy purpose never truly vanishes away, but spends eternity with God. If you do not see God's purpose in your life, do not be discouraged, it only means at this present time you do not see God's plan for your life. But, know this, my beloved, **Slide** God's sees and knows His purpose for your life, for He created you. Take time and listen to God and He will begin to reveal who He has made you to be in Him.

The great heroes of our faith who have lived in history and time, at times struggled with their purpose in God's great plan of salvation for His chosen. But, because they

trusted in God they were able to rejoice as God made the perspective of their lives come into focus with His eternal plan. As David wrote, wonderful advice for those of God for all time until Christ's return, "Do not fret because of evildoers, be not envious toward wrongdoers. For they will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb. Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday." (Psalm 37:1-6 NASB) As David understood it all is based on trusting in God.

**Slide** Time is precious and a finite commodity. How will you live and use your God appointed time? My prayer for you, my beloved, is that you remain faithful and as you travel through time and history may you be able to look back and see how your life served the purpose and plan of God. Hindsight is always much clearer than looking into the future. **Slide** My beloved, my brothers and sisters - live by faith; live in Jesus' time, not the worlds.