

Gospel of John VII - "Come Away to the River"

Theme of John: Jesus is the Son of God who reveals the Father and provides eternal life to all who believe in Him.

Theme Verse: John 1:14

Jesus is revealed through His miracles and His bold, identity-defining statements.

Pattern of Encounters in John:

1. Jesus makes a profound statement
2. The audience misunderstands
3. Jesus explains
4. Jesus is revealed

Recap from Last Week (John 6)

With Jose, we saw Jesus feed the 5,000 and declare, "I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:48-51).

He wasn't just bringing bread-He was the bread. He established Himself as the greater Moses, the prophet foretold.

Then came one of His most controversial statements:

"Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood..."

The crowd misunderstood. They thought He was talking about cannibalism. But Jesus wasn't being literal-He was calling people to make Him their daily sustenance.

And what did the crowd do? Thousands walked away. Why?

Because they wanted a miracle-worker, not a Messiah.

A quick fix, not a real relationship.

Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked:

"Do you want to leave too?"

But Peter boldly responded:

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God." - John 6:68-69

I hope each and every one of us feels that way today. Amen?

John 7:1-13 - What Time Is It?

Once again, the Jewish leaders want Jesus gone.

John tells us the Feast of Tabernacles was near-a joyful week-long celebration where people lived in tents to remember Israel's journey through the wilderness.

Think: family camp + Thanksgiving + revival service.

It also celebrated the harvest with a daily water ritual-symbolizing dependence on God for rain and life.

We'll come back to this.

Jesus' brothers urge Him to go to Jerusalem and show off His miracles.

They say:

"Why are you doing miracles in Galilee? If you want a following, go to the big stage-go to Jerusalem!"

They're basically saying:

"Jesus, you're going viral in Indiana, but this belongs in L.A.!"

But here's the thing-they didn't believe in Him. Maybe they were jealous, maybe they just didn't get it.

But they were trying to push their timing. Jesus says:

"My time is not yet here... for you, any time will do."

The Greek word used for "time" here is *kairos*-meaning the right, appointed time.

Romans 5:6: "At just the right time, Christ died for the ungodly."

Jesus moves in sync with God's time-not public pressure.

Q: Whose time are we on-ours or God's?

We're often like Jesus' brothers-going off our own understanding of what the "right time" is.

Big decisions: who you date, where you live, what job you take.

But James-one of those brothers-eventually got it.

James 4:13-15 reminds us that we're just a mist... we ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will."

Jesus shows us what it looks like to live in tune with *kairos*.

John 7:14-24 - Glory Seeking

On the fourth day of the feast, Jesus does go to Jerusalem-but in secret. Then He begins to teach.

And people are like:

"Where did this guy come from? He never went to rabbinical school!"

It'd be like me suddenly dropping PhD-level chemistry knowledge. They're stunned.

Jesus clarifies:

"My teaching isn't my own. It comes from the One who sent me."

Then He drops this:

John 7:17 - "Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God."

Jesus invites us: Test it. Try it. Follow Me, and you'll know.

Thought experiment:

What if everyone in the world followed just one command from Jesus?

Take His teaching on lust-how many marriages, families, and futures would be saved?

Following Jesus just works.

Then Jesus calls out the Pharisees:

John 7:18 - "Whoever speaks on their own seeks personal glory... but he who seeks the glory of the One who sent him is true."

He's challenging their motives.

Q: Whose glory are we seeking?

Are we okay being unseen if it means God gets the glory?

Jesus exposes their hypocrisy:

"Moses gave you the law, but not one of you keeps it. Why are you trying to kill me?"

The crowd replies:

"You're demon-possessed. Who's trying to kill you?"

Jesus points out their inconsistency:

"You're fine circumcising on the Sabbath... but I heal someone and now I've broken the law?"

He says:

John 7:24 - "Stop judging by appearances. Judge correctly."

It's a heart issue. As 1 Samuel says, "People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

John 7:37-40 - The Invitation of Living Water

It's the final and greatest day of the Feast. The priests perform a climactic water-pouring ritual-symbolizing prayers for rain and spiritual renewal.

In the middle of this, Jesus interrupts with a loud voice:

"Let anyone who is thirsty come to Me and drink."

He's saying: What you're doing symbolically-I offer in reality.

He is the source of Living Water.

Connect this to Ezekiel 47:

Ezekiel sees a vision of water flowing from the temple, turning into a mighty river bringing life wherever it flows.

Jesus now says: That's Me.

He is the new Temple (John 2:21). The water now flows from a Person-not a building.

"Whoever believes in Me, rivers of living water will flow from within them." - John 7:38

It's not just about being filled. It's about being transformed.

- Whoever believes - This is for everyone.
- From within them (koilia) - Your inner being.
- Will flow rivers - Abundant, overflowing, Spirit-powered life.

Back to Ezekiel:

"Where the river flows, everything will live." (Ezekiel 47:9)

That's the Spirit working through you.

There are dry places in Merced.

Dry places in our families.

But if you're a baptized disciple of Jesus-you have rivers of living water flowing from within you. You are the river.

John 7:39 explains Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit, given after His glorification-fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2).

The river is now flowing through His people.

Ezekiel closes with a powerful image:

"Fruit trees will grow... every month they will bear fruit... their leaves for healing." (Ezekiel 47:12)

That's you. That's us. A Spirit-filled people, bearing fruit and bringing healing.

Conclusion & Application

- Wait on God's timing - Trust in kairos, not your calendar.
- Seek God's glory - Not applause or attention.
- Drink from Jesus daily - And become a river to others.

"Wherever the river flows, everything will live." - Ezekiel 47:9

May that be true of us.

Amen.