

## The Gospel of John - #28 - 04/18/2021 - "Plans Haven't Changed!" John 7: 10-31

**Introduction: IL-** Today, April 18th is day 108 in 2021. That is significant for Gloria and me because we are at day 73 of living in other places while our water-damaged house is repaired. That means we have spent 67% of 2021 not living in our home. We could ask God "Why?" but a better question is, "God, what is Your plan in all of this?" God **does** have a plan for your life and mine and it is *perfect* for accomplishing His will in and through us. We'll see, in today's text...

### ***God's perfect plan for His Son involved...***

**...going up to Jerusalem during the Feast** (verses 10-13) Based on the timeline of Jesus' earthly ministry spelled out in the four Gospels, Jesus is about six months away from going to the Cross. The Jewish leaders at that time hated Jesus and didn't want Him as their Messiah. They loved their system of religion instead of loving God! The crowd reacted with some interest and some argument. Many didn't realize the evil intentions of the Sanhedrin, Pharisees and scribes. Among the common people there was either fear or some level of belief. Some saw Jesus as a good man, others as a man bent on leading people astray. Some thought of Him as a person of great courage (v. 26) while others referred to Him as a madman, demon-possessed and bent on drawing a following. Jesus travelled alone to Jerusalem- no fanfare, no need to hide in the shadows around the Temple, not doing His own thing, but doing the will of His Father in Heaven! How could He be so calm and collected? He knew His time was not yet (v.8). Why did He go to the Feast? Deuteronomy 16: 16 says, "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God at the place He will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths." He went to fulfill God's law and to be a bearer of truth. We learn from these opening verses in this section of John 7 that doing God's will isn't always easy. The crowds found it unsafe to talk about Him openly with many of their religious leaders standing around listening. Fear of man often re-directs our walk with God and our journey on the pathway of doing God's will. Proverbs 29: 25 says- "The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe!" Jesus knew exactly what the Father wanted Him to accomplish at the Feast among the crowds. So often we are aware of the fact that in our humanness we will never understand all of God's plans, but our Savior, who did know God's plans, can and will guide us on the right path! He came there to communicate truth to anyone with a heart to hear! Where there is no heart for truth there will always be a heart against it- there is no middle ground! Jesus didn't arrive in a caravan and openly promote Himself. He arrived privately and waited several days, up to the middle of the eight-day Feast, to walk up those steps along the Southern Wall and begin teaching. His goal, following the divine plan, was to avoid publicity and yet teach powerfully. Then as now Jesus divides. Some respond in faith, others run in fear or they attack out of ignorance! He remained calm, unruffled and committed to His mission while many in the crowd were disbelieving, debating, and dividing. God's timing for Jesus was perfect, and His timing is a critical factor in His will for you and me. In verse 30 we read- "So they were seeking to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him because His hour had not yet come!" In about six months His hour would come, but now that was not in the divine plan for Jesus! He could freely and authoritatively teach truth to the crowd and know that He

was in the center of God's will. How wonderful it is to live a life devoted to being in the center of God's will for your life too!

**...teaching authoritative truth** (verses 14-18) Midway through the eight-day celebration of Jewish people from all over the Middle East, Jesus takes His place on the Temple steps and begins teaching. The crowd was astonished- they "marveled" about his doctrine and His powerful delivery, astonished that He even showed up for this special occasion. They couldn't believe that someone untrained in a rabbinical school could communicate so profoundly and passionately. Rabbis of that day had a saying that went like this- "Those who study the Scriptures but do not go to rabbinical school are cursed!" But Jesus operated, as we should, with humble dependence on the Father, with or without earned degrees. **IL-** Charles Spurgeon once said, "I am not the inventor of what I say, I am only a messenger, delivering the message of Him that sent me!" Both the mission and the message originated in Heaven in the Father's plan. Young Jewish boys were challenged regularly to follow a rabbi, go to rabbinical school and there to memorize the first five books of the Old Testament- yes, all 5,888 verses, by the time they turned 13. If they did, they would experience a "bar-Mitzvah" which means that they had become "THE student" of a given rabbi and could someday become a rabbi themselves. Jesus never went to a rabbinical school, but then- He knew all those verses by heart! In His Father's perfect timing he taught the crowd that day with boldness, fearlessness. They couldn't fault His doctrine or His level of understanding, so some attacked His teaching credentials. Jesus wanted them to know that He was God-taught! For us, spiritual understanding is produced and enhanced by obedience to what we learn along the way, while living out God's plan for our lives! The simple challenge of God's Word is to pass on what you learn! Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2: 2- "What you have learned from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also!" There was a qualitative difference in what Jesus taught that, if overheard by the Jewish leaders, would have troubled them even more! The crowd that day struggled with the source of Jesus' words, but Jesus gave all the credit to His Father in Heaven! His was a life of complete obedience to the Father's will. That CAN be true of us too if we determine to honor God with the time we spend poring over our Bibles! The false claim that Jesus was "uneducated" was said also of Peter and John in Acts 4: 13- "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished, and they recognized that they had been with Jesus!" The people that day probably didn't hear a quotation from a respected rabbi from the school of Hillel or Shammai, and therefore felt they couldn't trust what Jesus was telling them. But one thing they couldn't attack was His personal integrity and His authoritative words. Education is fine and there is nothing wrong with earning a degree in a given field of study, but humble devotion to God is what is most important- the knowledge that we are right in line with His plans and purposes for our lives. **IL-** 7 of the 8 Ivy League schools in the east were founded as divinity schools or seminaries. Princeton, as an example, still has on their coat of arms, in Latin the phrase- "Under God she flourished" much like our Pledge of Allegiance, "one nation under God!" Jesus had perfect knowledge of any subject, but most of all He knew the Author of Scripture, He IS the Author of Scripture. How well do WE know the Author? The answer to that

question will reveal a lot about your level of interest in God's plan for your life- the life God has for YOU because He highly values you!

**...setting the record straight about the value of human life** (verses 19-24) Here is a partial summary of what Jesus taught the crowd, especially directing His words to the leaders who made their way among the people. "You wound (circumcision)- I heal (the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda)." "I keep the Law perfectly- you don't!" "The Law says- 'Don't murder!' (the Sixth Commandment) and yet you want to murder Me!" "How can you possibly believe that you honor the Law of Moses?" The laws about male circumcision have their roots in God's word to Abraham, the father of the Jewish race. Genesis 17: 10- "This is My covenant which you shall keep between Me and you and your offspring after you: 'Every male among you shall be circumcised.'" The Jews of Jesus' day believed it was wrong for Jesus to heal on the Sabbath because that was equated to working on the Sabbath. Yet they could and did override Sabbath laws when it came to circumcising a baby boy eight days old. Jesus is simply making this key point- "How can you condemn Me for healing the whole man?" **IL-** Our bodies have 78 organs, 206 bones and over 600 muscles. The whole person is important to the very God who created each person. You, your body and your mind are important to Him and He has a plan for you that involves the whole person! Jesus wanted the crowd that day to know one more thing about Him that set Him apart- He had a personal relationship with the Father- they did NOT. It takes eyes of faith to see how God is at work in anyone- that is why Jesus said, in verse 24- "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgement." Seeing someone or being someone with purity of heart and clarity of vision, is worth much more than judging whether they wear the right fashions or groom themselves like everyone else or speak with correct English grammar! Those Jewish leaders stepped way beyond the intent of the Law with their added rules. One example that is almost laughable- you could not, by the Law, chew a piece of watermelon and then spit out the seed on the Sabbath because that seed could then sprout, and you would be guilty of planting a seed- i.e., working on the Sabbath! Jesus could rightfully confront and judge because He was and is the Messiah- the Sent One, God in the flesh!

**...revealing His true nature as Messiah** (25-31) Questions about His role as Messiah began to rise, but there were many errors of thought and assumptions being made about who Jesus really is and where He came from! One thing history has shown us is that evil always organizes against truth and righteousness. Our country needs prayer about that very issue! For those who are not on the side of evil, what we choose to know about God is far more important than struggling over what we don't know about Him! Only because Satan had blinded the minds of many in that crowd that day could they possibly not have known what Micah 5: 2 says about Jesus' birth- "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me One who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days." That promise reveals His birth in Bethlehem but also His eternal nature as Son of God! The crowd pondered this issue- is He the Messiah or not? So, there were different responses to His person and work. Charlie has dealt with much of that in his Wednesday night study and has much more to go! Some believed that the Messiah would just

"appear" one day, no one would know where He came from and, for many "educated" Jews the belief was rampant that even the Messiah wouldn't know who He actually was! But they did believe that He would dazzle crowds and win a huge following and be their Conqueror over the Roman Empire. They were clearly unaware of His heavenly origin. The final question, "Will He do more signs than this man has done?", sets the table for the basic issue for many of that crowd- they were looking for signs and miracles, pure and simple, not looking for a Savior from sin!

We could add to their question something more appropriate to the issue of simple faith:

Would he do more miracles? Would he teach with more authority? Would he love sinful people more? Would he suffer more? Would He pay for more sins than Jesus at Calvary? Would he change more lives? And the obvious answer this morning is, "NO!" But some of those Jewish leaders were set on eliminating Jesus from the picture! But they wouldn't be able to kill Jesus until Jesus was ready, in line with the Father's plan, to GIVE His life for mankind! Much like King Saul tried more than once to kill David, and like Daniel and his three friends who outlived a bunch of hungry lions and survived a blazing furnace without even the smell of smoke on them, no one would be able to end Jesus' life until HE was ready, right in line with God's eternal plan! In Matthew 26: 53 we find Jesus asking, "Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father and He will at once send Me more than twelve legions of angels (72,000!)" All the suffering Christ went through in that final week of His earthly existence He went through voluntarily. That was the Father's plan and He fulfilled it to the letter. How about YOU and ME?

**\*God has a detailed plan for YOUR life too!** If I am serious about knowing and doing God's will, living my life in line with His plan for me, then certain things need to be true for me:

I need to know Jesus as my Savior from sin!

I need to be convinced that HIS plans are best for me!

I need to yield to Him in complete obedience, obeying what I already know from my Bible is His will in any given area of my life! **IL-** William Pettingill- "Most people don't want to know God's will in order to DO it- they only want to know it in order to CONSIDER it!"

Best advice I can give you? Develop your walk with Jesus and don't hide it from anyone!!

How do I put all this together day by day? A God-honoring, consistent practice of obedience to what we KNOW is His will is worth it! Philippians 2: 13- "God **is** at work in you both to will and to work for HIS good pleasure!"

**IL-** Quote from WJB- "Don't let your life end by living in between like you never even began!"

Trust me- God's will and plan for your life is worth your total dedication for a lifetime!