

Now is Not the Right Time (John 7:1-13)

By David Soper

Jesus replied, "Now is not the right time for me to go.." John 7:6

Timing is everything. William Shakespeare said, *"There is a tide in the affairs of men which when taken at the flood leads on to fortune."* This is certainly true in business. Bill Gates wouldn't have become one of the world's most successful businessmen if he hadn't picked up a January 1975 issue of Popular Mechanics that featured a new microcomputer, the Altair 8800, and also had the vision and skills to turn what was a hobbyist's toy into a valuable machine. His good timing quickly led to the founding of Microsoft and the explosion of the personal computer industry. Shakespeare's quote could also be reworded to say, *there is a tide in the affairs of men which when caught in the flood leads on to misfortune.* Bad timing is just as potent as good timing and fortunes can rise or fall because of either.

While timing is everything in business, the same is true in the Christian life. As believers, we pray to discern God's timing for our lives. When should we make that move? Is now the right time to start that ministry? Etc... We know the importance of God's timing and we sincerely want His timing, but how long should we wait on God before we take matters into our own hands? It's not easy to wait on God, even though we know that nothing good happens when we try to force something before it's time. The brothers of Jesus were trying to persuade him to go to Judea now, but Jesus said, *"now is not the right time for me to go"*.

Jesus was not persuaded by pressure from others to get ahead of God's timing. Despite his brother's questionable motives (v4), their logic made some sense. Jesus had a lot to offer the world, so why not go right now to where the people are? However, it was not yet God's timing and Jesus knew it, because He was listening to the Father's voice before all the other voices. How often do we let the voices of others drive us to a hasty decision that is not led by God? We need other people, especially godly counsel, but ultimately we must decide for ourselves, and we must follow God's timing even if in the short term not everyone will understand.

When the time was right, Jesus took action (v10). God's timing in our lives does not work like some kind of cosmic benevolence, where all we do is sit around and wait for the stars to align and things will happen when they're supposed to. Waiting on God is not a passive activity. Waiting on God means that when the time is right, we will act. In Christian circles, waiting on God can sometimes become a convenient excuse for laziness or lack of courage. God's timing is perfect, but you must be willing to do your part when the time is right.

What is it that you have set your mind to do? The question is – is it God's timing? When we ask God if we should do something there are three possible answers – yes, no, and wait. It may very well be God's will for you to do it, but perhaps the time is not right. Discerning God's timing may seem difficult, but He is a loving Father and He is eager to show you if you are eager to know it. If God wants you to do something, then there is a right time to do it, and timing is everything!