

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF JESUS

John 7:1-13

And after these things Jesus was walking in Galilee; for He was unwilling to walk in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.

Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was at hand. ³ His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here, and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may behold Your works which You are doing. ⁴ For no one does anything in secret, when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." ⁵ For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

Jesus therefore said to them, "My time is not yet at hand, but your time is always opportune. ⁷ The world cannot hate you; but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. ⁸ Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come." ⁹ And having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.

But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as it were, in secret.

The Jews therefore were seeking Him at the feast, and were saying, "Where is He?" ¹² And there was much grumbling among the multitudes concerning Him; some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He leads the multitude astray." ¹³ Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews. (John 7:1-13).

Today I would like to look at the methodology of Jesus. What made Him so effective? This presupposes that Jesus WAS effective. Was He?

How do you define effectiveness? Effectiveness is defined by your goals. If you have no goals, then it is impossible to measure your effectiveness. If your goal is suicide, then your effectiveness will be determined by how many pills you can swallow before anyone finds you. If you die, then you are effective.

If your goal is material wealth, then your effectiveness will be determined by your buying power (Like the pumper sticker that read, "He who has the most toys wins").

If your goal is to win friends and influence people, then your effectiveness will be determined by how many friends you win and how many people you influence.

In order to measure the effectiveness of Jesus, you have to measure it by His stated goal. In John 4:34, Jesus said that His objective was to be obedient to the will of the Father. This ought to be the Christian's goal, too. Given the fact that...

- In a hundred years from now we will all be pushing up daisies,
 - Hearses don't pull U-hauls,
 - In eternity everything you have gained will be lost and everything you have lost will be gained,
 - God is the ultimate reality,
- Our goal should be to do what God tells us to do.

Jesus was effective in six ways:

JESUS WAS EFFECTIVE BECAUSE HE WAS PRACTICAL

And after these things Jesus was walking in Galilee; for He was unwilling to walk in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. (John 7:1).

If we were there, we might have said to Jesus, “Aren’t you committed enough? Don’t you love God enough to put it all on the line and go down publicly to Jerusalem? Don’t you know that the Lord will protect you?”

Jesus spent 6 months in Galilee because His enemies were trying to kill Him and those enemies were based in Jerusalem. That decision was a practical decision and was made in the face of practical circumstances in order to accomplish a practical end.

There is a lesson here. It is that there is a difference between commitment and stupidity. Billy Sunday once said, “A sinner can repent a thousand times, but stupid is forever.” There is a difference between commitment and foolishness.

I had a Christian friend one time who was going to be speaking in front of a group of people about Christ. I went to my friend and suggested, “You had better prepare what you are going to say.” My friend replied, “I am going to let the Holy Spirit give me the words to say.” That sounded pretty spiritual until it came time to speak and, frankly, it wasn’t too good. What happened? Did the Holy Spirit fail to do His part? No. Shouldn’t my friend have depended upon the Holy Spirit? Yes, but perhaps that dependency should have taken part amidst the preparation.

Jesus left us an example of practicality and we, as Christians, ought to follow that example.

JESUS WAS EFFECTIVE BECAUSE HE KNEW THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME

Jesus therefore said to them, "My time is not yet at hand, but your time is always opportune" (John 7:6).

In a number of places (John 2:4; 7:30 ;8:20; 12:27) Jesus says, "My hour has not yet come." In each of these instances, Jesus uses a Greek word that indicates an appointed or destined hour.

However, the word used here in John 7:6 (*kairos*) means what you ordinarily mean when you use the word time - "I don't have time." What does this tell us? It tells us that Jesus was sensitive to time and its passing.

Time doesn't just happen to you. It is given to you as a gift, so don't waste it. That doesn't mean that you should never relax. God gave one day out of seven for the purpose of relaxation and refreshment. But don't use that as an excuse to waste time.

Here is the principle. Time will be important to you in direct proportion to how important God is to you. Jesus says, "I have to be careful with My time." But speaking to His unbelieving brothers, He says, "You don't have to be careful at all with your time because time doesn't mean the same to you."

Henry Thoreau said, "You cannot kill time without injuring eternity." I think that Thoreau was more correct than he realized because what we do in time counts for eternity.

Does this mean that you are killing time when you are playing with your children? No, because God calls us to play with our children and when we don't take time out for our children we are not using our time in the way that God has called us to use it.

Husbands, does this mean that you are killing time when you take your wife out to dinner and romance her? No, because God calls us to love our wives as Christ loved the church and that involves spending time with them and cultivating that loving relationship.

Does that mean that you are being wasteful when you spend a day doing nothing? No, because there are times when God calls you to do nothing and to wait on Him. A surgeon once said to his interns, "Gentlemen, let us not hurry because we have no time to lose."

On the other hand, if you sit around doing nothing when God has called you to activity, then you are wasting time that can never be reclaimed.

JESUS WAS EFFECTIVE BECAUSE HE KNEW THE IMPORTANCE OF TIMING

“Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.” (John 7:8).

Sometimes we are inclined to do the right thing at the wrong time. There is a right time to give instruction and exhortation and teaching, but there is also a wrong time. You remember the story of Job. He was a man who had his entire world cave in on him. His possessions were stolen, the stock market crashed and his children were all killed. Then to add insult to injury, Job himself was stricken with a frightful disease that left him covered with painful sores. In the midst of his grief, he had three friends who came to be with him. For a week, they did nothing but sit with him in silence. But then they ruined it all by giving right advice for the wrong time. We know that it was the wrong time because at the end of the book the Lord tells those friends that they are in deep trouble and it takes the prayers of Job to intercede for them. There are a lot of lessons we can learn from Job, but one of them is that we need to ask the Lord to make us sensitive to His timing.

JESUS WAS EFFECTIVE BECAUSE HE COULD NOT BE MANIPULATED

His brothers therefore said to Him, “Depart from here, and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may behold Your works which You are doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret, when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” (John 7:3-4).

These brothers of Jesus gave what sounded like some very pious advice in order to try to manipulate the actions of Jesus. There are people who would use religious means to try to manipulate you into jumping at their command. Guilt is a great manipulator.

The next time that someone asks you to do something that you don't believe that you should (even it is a good thing like to serve on a committee), just say “no” and don't explain yourself. That isn't easy to do.

JESUS WAS EFFECTIVE BECAUSE HE DID NOT MANIPULATE OTHER PEOPLE

Jesus therefore said to them, “My time is not yet at hand, but your time is always opportune. 7 The world cannot hate you; but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. (John 7:6-7).

We Christians sometimes get a bit carried away in our desire to win people to Christ. We present the gospel as if coming to Christ means the end of all your troubles and as if it will turn you into a nice person so that everyone will like you. Nothing could be further from the truth. You are called to carry a cross and it isn't a small, dainty ornament. It is a sign of the world's disdain.

Jesus did not try to manipulate people with a pleasant message. He told the truth and He told it without holding anything back. When you tell people about Christ, you don't have to try to sugarcoat the gospel. Just tell it like it is and let the Holy Spirit determine what the reception to that message will be. You don't have to try to force people to Christ. You simply have to try to be faithful.

JESUS WAS EFFECTIVE BECAUSE HE WAS NOT NAIVE ABOUT HIS EFFECTIVENESS

“The world cannot hate you; but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.” (John 7:7).

Jesus did not expect everyone to love Him. Hatred is the price you pay for the truth you present.

Religion says that everyone is good and that God is a nice fellow who accepts everybody. Christianity says that everybody is bad. Religion says it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere in your faith. Christianity says that the object of your faith is crucial to your eternal destiny.

Religion says, “Don't make waves.” God says, “That's why I'm leaving you around; to make some waves.” Religion says that morality is relative to its culture. Christianity says that God has given 10 commandments and they aren't merely 10 suggestions and they don't change. Jesus knew this truth and it made Him a success.