

Lenten Devotional March 11, 2023

Scripture

John 7:1-13

After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him. ²Now the Jewish festival of Booths was near. ³So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing; ⁴for no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵(For not even his brothers believed in him.) ⁶Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. ⁷The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil. ⁸Go to the festival yourselves. I am not going to this festival, for my time has not yet fully come." ⁹After saying this, he remained in Galilee.

¹⁰But after his brothers had gone to the festival, then he also went, not publicly but as it were in secret. ¹¹The Jews were looking for him at the festival and saying, "Where is he?" ¹²And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, "He is a good man," others were saying, "No, he is deceiving the crowd." ¹³Yet no one would speak openly about him for fear of the Jews.

Devotional

The Rev. Kristen Renee Barner '97

Eleanor Roosevelt famously said: "What other people think of me is none of my business."

Even Jesus can't help himself. He *is* a tiny bit curious. Jesus *is* human, right? He's got siblings who don't quite believe in him and push him to prove himself. He has no interest in going to a place where people want to kill him. He knows himself well enough to know when it is and isn't "his time"—except for that time his mom made him help the wedding host in Cana.

Imagine him standing there, after his brothers left for Judea, pacing around in the dust, muttering to himself, and finally deciding, "Fine. I'll go. But I'm sneaking in. Thank you, God, that social media hasn't been invented yet."

He goes. He listens. He hears what people think of him and people only mutter because they are afraid of one another. His goal was to go unnoticed.

Do yourself a favor and read where the story goes from there. God calls us. God is calling to us. Jesus tried to be stealth. We find ourselves there. Doubted and pushed, threatened or praised, challenged or flattered. Dig deep this Lent and listen for the call of God. Oftentimes, it is in these deep, dark, difficult, and dangerous places that we will be compelled to spring forth and be the very people we are called to be. It's possible. Pace around in the dust and mutter to yourself if it helps. *(I think it helps.)*

Prayer

O God, we try to go unnoticed, but you see us. You know us. Jesus says that our time is always here. Is it, God? If it is, and you say it is, help us to know, to see, to be. As we pace in the dust and mutter to ourselves, let us hear you. Thanks. We need you more than ever. Amen.