

“Living in the Open”

John 7:1-13

Hello friend and welcome to *Hope for Today*. My name is J. Mark Horst; I'm your friend and Bible teacher. The program you're listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope, an international Gospel radio and literature ministry. Each week the Bible teaching broadcasts of *Heralds of Hope* circle the globe in English and 21 other major languages. And thousands tune in each week to hear those broadcasts.

If you're tuning in for the first time today, we are currently being led through the Gospel of John by the teaching of the late, Dr. J. Otis Yoder. He was the founder, first president, and Bible teacher for *Hope for Today*. He went home to be with the Lord in the year 2003.

But his method of teaching the Bible was such that it never goes out of date. And so, we are rebroadcasting his teaching from John's Gospel. We are confident that, if you tune in each week, you will be blessed by the clear, simple presentation of biblical truth.

In just a few moments, Dr. Yoder will come to share his teaching, “Living in the Open.” But before he does that, let's pray.

Gracious God our Heavenly Father, we come to you in the precious name of Jesus. It is alone through Him that we have access into your holy presence. His blood, shed on the cross at Calvary, is the only sacrifice that is acceptable to you to wash away our sin.

And now, Father, as Dr. Yoder comes to teach us from the Word, open our hearts to receive your truth. Help us to learn how to confront fear in our lives, and how to conquer it. This I ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

We like people who have nothing to hide. We don't like those people who are always living in the darkness. We like people whom we can trust. It seems every community and every family responds the same way. When someone unknown comes around we wait to see what will happen. We are never quite sure until we have tested them out.

Jesus of Nazareth seemed to be a stranger even to his brothers at home. The reason was His calling was so utterly different from what they could conceive of Him. They could not think of Him being whom He said He was. They thought He should live out in the open. In their response in John 7:1-13 you will understand why I'm saying that.

- 1 *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.*
- 2 *Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.*
- 3 *His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.*
- 4 *For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.*
- 5 *For neither did his brethren believe in him.*
- 6 *Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: But your time is always ready.*
- 7 *The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.*
- 8 *Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.*
- 9 *When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.*
- 10 *But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.*
- 11 *Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?*
- 12 *And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.*
- 13 *Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.*

In these conversations I will lift out several RESPONSES to the challenge Jesus faced to LIVE IN THE OPEN which ought to lead us, I trust, to faith.

The First Response is,

The Brothers of Jesus Urged Him.

His brothers said, "Show yourself to the world." Now let us get the setting of this conversation. The Jewish feast of tabernacles was at hand and that feast would bring a great many people to Jerusalem. It was one of the feasts from the time of Moses which every man was to attend. They were to go to Jerusalem for the feast. This would be a wonderful opportunity to meet the crowds and His brothers urged Him to go.

I think how readily men today would jump at such an opportunity. Such an occasion would be a wonderful opportunity to be in the limelight, to be in the forefront, to be where people could see you. But not Jesus. These brothers' unbelief left them without hope. Jesus said, "You go up to the feast, but I will not go up just now." The Bible tells us His brothers did not believe on Him.

Some people, it seems, ask for more and more evidence. No matter how much evidence they already have seen, they keep asking for more and more. They said to Him, "Show yourself to the world, so that your disciples might also believe on you." They said that not because they believed but because they wanted to make it difficult for Jesus.

The second response I note in this conversation:

Jesus Answered His Brothers.

"You go up to the feast. My time is not yet," He said. I see in that statement a very clear indication that Jesus had His life very carefully ordered. He lived on a schedule. He sensed timing with care. He said, "My time is not yet come". He told them their time is always, but His time had not yet fully come.

I am not sure what all Jesus implied by that statement, but I am quite sure that He understood that His life was lived according to the divine plan of God. He sensed this. He realized that His life was planned beforehand. He said, "Your time is always near." In many respects that meant they had nothing to lose and nothing to gain. It wasn't as important for them as it was for Him so they could go and He urged His brothers to go to the feast. The Bible tells us they went.

I think some people do not know the value of timing. The importance of the moment gets away from them. It was not so with Jesus. As He lived in the open everything was very, very important with Him. So He told His brothers to go up to the feast and they went up. Later Jesus also went up. I read that there was a great discussion among the people who had gathered at the feast when they could not find Him.

I have the third response for you:

The People Argued About Him.

Some said, "No, but he deceives the people." There were those who saw in Him a good man and they said, "Where is he. He's a good man". Others said, "No, he deceives the people."

They saw Him as a deceiver, but they failed to understand Him. The conclusion was that no one spoke of Him openly for fear of the Jews.

I have learned as I get around that people still wonder and argue about Jesus. During His lifetime they puzzled about Him, and they still do. Even some of the most brilliant minds in the world stumble and wonder about Him. Let me tell you, He is the Christ. He is not only a good man, but He is the Messiah. Jesus had nothing to hide. He arranged the timing so that He would be there at exactly the right moment. He understood human nature; He understands you. As you think of Jesus, how do you respond to Him? What do you think of Him?

Thank you, Dr. Yoder for teaching us from this portion of Holy Scripture. My friend, are you living in the open? Do people really know who you are? Or are you hiding the fact that you are a follower of Jesus? I realize that for some of you, where you live, it is dangerous to be known as a follower of Jesus. You may need to be careful about whom you confide in, but you need to tell someone about your relationship with Jesus.

Now, were you blessed by this teaching by Dr. Yoder? If so, you can request an audio CD or a printed copy of this complete teaching, just request it by its title, "Living in the Open."

The quickest way for you to contact me is to send an e-mail to mail@heraldsofhope.org. That email address again is, m-a-i-l@heraldsofhope.org. Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember, you can request a printed manuscript or an audio CD of this teaching, "Living in the Open." I'd be happy to send one to you.

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Now friend, I urge you to tune in next week as we continue our study in John's Gospel. And until then, keep looking for that blessed HOPE.