

37 John 7:14-24

Seeking God's Will Leads to Wisdom

REVIEW / INTRODUCTION

Last week we preached through verse 13. In that passage we read about Jesus going to His hometown to retreat. He moved about freely in His hometown but He was careful about going into Jerusalem where the Religious Leaders were plentiful. These religious leaders appeared super spiritual on the outside but they had vicious intentions toward anyone who threatened their power and pride.

Jesus usually traveled with his disciples and a number of others who tagged along. But on this feast He traveled alone to Jerusalem so as not to attract attention. We will get into why that was important at this specific season of ministry. Let's read the text.

READING THE TEXT

14 About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. 15 The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" 16 So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. 17 If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. 18 The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. 19 Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?" 20 The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" 21 Jesus answered

them, “I did one work, and you all marvel at it. 22 Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? 24 Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

PREACHING THE TEXT

¹⁴ About **the middle of the feast** Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching.

TEACHING AT THE MIDDLE OF FEAST

This feast is called Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths. The emphasis of this feast was that God Himself made His dwelling with His people as their provider and protector. Families would each make a tent or shack that had no roof with the idea that God Himself was with you to protect you and cover you just like He did when Israel came out of slavery in Egypt and traveled through the desert. Jesus waited to speak until the festival was well under way. He had a crowd dynamic to deal with.

Remember when Jesus fed the 5000 and the crowd wanted to pressure Him into taking the throne of Israel by force.

The brothers of Jesus told Him; **(vs4)If you do these things, show yourself to the world.**” That is the way many of His followers thought. If you are The Son of God then show it to everyone openly and take the throne of Israel. Be our political leader. Rule from the Throne.

Jesus had people pressuring Him to publically take the throne of Israel and on the other hand Jesus knew that The Jealous Religious Leaders would try to kill Him before He had finished all that He needed to accomplish before His death. He would declare Himself King after He accomplished everything He needed to do on this earth. Then He would die for our sins.

So Jesus came out of the crowds when the dynamics were right and He began to teach. He taught with the power of The Spirit and authority that came with being God's Son come in the flesh.

¹⁵ The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?"

THE JEWS MARVELED

The Jews marveled at His teaching. Jesus spoke with authority and certainty. People's hearts were stirred deeply when He taught the word of God. Why was that such a surprise?

HE NEVER STUDIED

Jesus had never attended one of their seminaries and did not teach in their style. Those who went to the major theological schools of the day taught the scriptures more like lawyers than preachers. They spoke with no spiritual authority. The religious leaders would cite case studies and the opinions of other teachers from the past to prove their point.

So if I used that style it would sound like this; *"about 250 years ago Whitefield taught about holiness. Then Jonathan Edwards taught about holiness. And later Dwight Moody also emphasized Holiness. AW Tozer*

spoke often of holiness. Therefore we should be very concerned with holiness.”

What’s missing from this presentation? I was not basing my teaching on The Word of God taught under the power of The Holy Spirit. Jesus on the other hand quoted scripture and then under the power of the Spirit explained that scripture.

That is why...

¹⁶ ... Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.

MY TEACHING IS NOT MINE

The goal of Jesus was to reveal the Father in His teaching. Jesus was in constant contact with the Father and as He got something from the Father He would communicate that truth or principle to people. He was not here to gain popularity so He could get a half million dollars for a speech or a million facebook hits. Jesus wanted to reveal the Father to those who had the humility and desire to live for God.

If you are trying to do a good talk that will impress people you speak with your own authority. But if you are trying to reveal the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God will power up your teaching and preaching. That is because your teaching and preaching is not your own but it belongs to Him who sent you and who guides you as you introduce people to the revelation of God’s Son in the word. Who is it that will receive Godly teaching and preaching?

¹⁷ If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.

YOUR WILL SUBMITTED TO GOD'S = DISCERNING TEACHING SOURCE

If you gravitate toward the weak and non-transforming message of liberals you will not be able to receive the challenge of Jesus to die to yourself and live for Him.

And if you submit to a **simplistic message of legalism and moralism without radical transforming grace you will never receive the message of Jesus**. You would be the older brother of the prodigal son.

People pleasing is either super liberal with no right and wrong... or it is super legalistic in which enemies are shamed and kept out of the kingdom while we feel self righteous as we mock sinners and keep them out of the fellowship.

Either of these messages will sell and be popular with many people. But preach the transforming grace of Jesus and you will lose the liberals and those who love rules more than people. Transforming grace transforms sinners into saints and brings a new desire for holiness.

If your focus is self effort or having no standards at all, then Jesus is not really for you. He is not what you are looking for and you will not be able to receive His words.

¹⁸ **The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory;**
TEACHING ON ONE'S OWN AUTHORITY SPEAKING ON YOUR OWN AUTHORITY (examples)

There are people who claim to have a great anointing and who use that so called great anointing to live in 20 million dollar houses and fly jets around the world. Their message is to build up their own glory and bank account. Don't trust anyone who sells tickets to hear the gospel on Sunday

morning. Then there are the cults who give you rules with no transforming power. The transforming power of The Holy Spirit is exactly how God glorifies Himself in our lives.

John 7:18 cnt'd but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.

SEEKING THE GLORY OF HIM WHO SENT HIM =NO FALSEHOOD

Jesus is not coming to bring glory to Himself when He speaks. All of the teaching of Jesus has to do with revealing the Father and showing people how to live their lives by the power of The Spirit to the glory of God.

LIVING FOR HIS GLORY

What does it look like to live to the glory of God? Living for God's glory means that you give your life and your lifestyle to Jesus. You are here to do His will and give Him the credit. Living for His glory means counting your blessings and cherishing Jesus. It means finding that Jesus is that great treasure and life becomes like a slow dance with Jesus. And then with hearts overflowing we tell others where we found this great joy.

And when we feel dry and are going through painful things, we glorify Jesus by trusting Him to fix our problems and give us hope rather than figuring out everything for ourselves.

Some of the Religious Leaders in the crowd turned against Jesus when He healed a man on the Sabbath. Instead of seeing the miracle and treasuring Jesus - they saw the rule and assumed the worst.

CHERISHING THE RULES AND ASSUMING THE WORST

Kind of like Alice who attended one of the churches I pastored. She dared to park in front of a bar to wait for her drunk husband. Her membership was removed for being parked in front of a bar.

And it's kind of like another Alice who was denied membership because her children were wild, but that was 20 years ago when Alice knew nothing of the Lord.

Kind of like when Shelly served as a designated driver for a few of her friends with whom she was sharing the gospel. But more than a year later someone outside the church who feels morally superior tries to turn people against her. Never once did the person spreading slander ask about the person to whom Shelly was trying to share the faith or offer to pray for the people.

But people who worship the law and feel morally superior by fault finding don't care if someone comes to faith in Christ. It's all one big political game where we seek to have one more thing to exaggerate so we feel morally superior.

When we worship the law and make up rules that are not in the bible we never see what God is actually doing to transform lives. What a shame. And if we love the law so much we might actually be trusting the law to save us when ***it is by grace that we have been saved and not by works so that no one can boast.***

So Jesus confronts those who worship the law and who heap extra rules on others so that we don't ever see God's grace. He confronts their hypocrisy.

¹⁹ Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?”

MOSES GAVE LAW YOU DON'T KEEP IT

Many religious leaders in the crowd tried to find a legal reason to trip up Jesus. If He breaks some aspect of the law we can dismiss Him and turn people against Him. But the Religious Leaders were scheming for a good excuse to not only dismiss Jesus but to kill Him. Killing is against the law of Moses. So while they are trying to find some small way that Jesus broke an ordinance they were seeking to break a clear point of the law; ***You shall not murder.*** So He said; *“you are so worried about the law of Moses but you are seeking to break one of the highest commands.”* You are trying to kill me. How did the crowds respond to the rebuke of Jesus?

²⁰ The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?”

YOU HAVE A DEMON

They are accusing Him of being paranoid. *“Jesus you must be getting messages from demons who are making you paranoid and seeing things that are not really there.”* The crowds included religious leaders who were saying these type of things. They are being dismissive of Him. So Jesus brings up an incident from a while back that put Him on the hit list of the Religious Leaders and experts at fault finding.

²¹ Jesus answered them, “I did one work, and you all marvel at it. ²²

Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.

YOU ALL MARVELED

DA Carson: ...The one miracle (lit. 'one work') to which he refers is doubtless the healing of the man paralysed for thirty-eight years (John 5:1). That one work evoked astonishment - not the astonishment that leads to praise, but the astonishment that someone would actually tell another to carry his mat on the Sabbath day, openly flouting the accepted norms for Sabbath conduct.

YOU CIRCUMCISE ON THE SABBATH

It was the custom of Jewish people that they do not work on the sabbath. So no one opened their shop or sold anything. They received the Sabbath as a day of rest in which they regrouped and focused on God and on corporate worship.

But that was not good enough. In order to feel super spiritual they began adding rule after rule to the bible. And when no one could follow their added rules they added escape clauses to get out of the extra rules they were making up.

So one of the rules was that a person could not walk more than a half mile on the sabbath without considering it work. But if you rested for a few minutes and then continued walking you would not be breaking the contrived "no walking rule."

One of these extra rules they added to the bible was that if you have a sleeping bag or mattress, you can not pick it up and clean it or carry it to another place. So In John 5 Jesus does not go by the extra rules that are contrived. He told a crippled guy to pick up His mat that he had been laying on for decades and walk with it to show that he was healed. But did anyone celebrate the healing?

No, we broke one of the stupid rules that we added to the word of God. So we can't celebrate when a crippled guy gets healed. We can not focus on God's glory and God's mercy on the cripple guy. Instead we play a game of "gotcha" with the rule we added.

So Jesus shows them that He can play that game too. The Jews always circumcised their children on the 8th day after their birth. It was a law actually in the bible given through Moses. And they circumcised their children on the sabbath even if it happened to be the 8th day. Jesus said;
²³ **If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well?**

In other words, there is a hierarchy of rules that takes some discernment to sort out. Don't work on the sabbath but if you see someone break their leg, don't leave them on the ground because picking them up would be working on the sabbath thus breaking the law. God will understand when there are exception to the lesser laws and social norms.

And yes God will understand if the doctor works on the sabbath in order to follow the law of Moses. So also, let's rejoice when someone gets healed and carries their mat even if it is on the sabbath.

The bar life can lead one easily back to the bottle. The bar life can lead one into ungodly relationships. But if someone has a ministry to people in the bars and they are winning people to Christ then let's rejoice rather than fighting against what the Spirit of God is actually doing.

²⁴ **Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."**

JUDGE WITH RIGHT JUDGMENT

Jesus finishes this section by telling those who listened to judge with the right judgment. So what does that look like? What does judging with the right judgment look like?

THE RIGHT JUDGMENT / TAKING IT HOME

1. Assume the best of one another
2. See what God is doing even if it is outside the box you created for God and His people
3. Celebrate when you see God at work no matter when you see it happening
4. Don't add rules to the bible. There are enough of them already
5. Then a word of caution is this; don't use God's Grace as an excuse to do whatever you want if it will lead you into sin. Be honest with yourself and avoid situations that will feed slavery to addiction.
6. Stand up to religious bullies so that the gospel of grace does not get lost.