

WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

The Glory of Christ's Wisdom

Scripture Text: [John 7:14–24 \(ESV\)](#)

Do Not Judge

The passage we just read contains an imperative (a command). It is best we go there and then see how the story illustrates the command. Notice John 7:24 (ESV),

“Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

What does judge mean? Our culture seems to equate “judgment” with “condemnation”. That’s not the way the New Testament uses the word. Judgment could be equated to discernment, evaluation, making an assessment. Nowhere in the Bible does God tell us not to judge. We are to make judgments, but we are to make judgments properly – with right judgment (the Greek word means “righteous” judgment). Matthew 7:1 forbids hypocritical judgment. Here, Jesus is warning against superficial judgment. Another word for superficial judgment is prejudice (pre-judgment); making a conclusion before knowing the facts.

Two facts that the Jews had a wrong judgement on were:

- a. Where Christ got His authority; and
- b. Had He broken the Law of Moses? They misjudged His obedience.

The Authority of Christ

[Verses 14-18](#) describe this interaction between Jesus and the crowd. We read that Jesus began teaching in the temple. What was the response of the Jews? “*How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?*” (John 7:15, ESV). That verse needs explanation. The context helps us understand the accusation. In the Jewish tradition potential teachers would join themselves to recognized rabbis. At the time of Christ there were two prominent schools: The School of Hillel and the School of Shammai. You will remember that Paul was schooled at the School of Gamaliel.

If you placed yourself under a rabbi, your teaching would carry the reputation and the authority of that school. Everyone knew that Jesus had not joined himself to a rabbinic school, so they question his right to teach.

Jesus answers them, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.”¹ Jesus taught what His Father taught. His authority is from His Father. Jesus had already communicated this in John 5:19 (ESV),
¹⁹ *So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”*

Jesus acknowledges that he is trustworthy. His motives are right. Why does He make that claim? Because He said that He seeks glory for the Father, not self-glory. His motives are pure, and his teaching is true. Then Jesus makes an important, practical and relevant statement:

“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.” (John 7:17, ESV)

That is an amazing statement. It is both a condemnation on the Jews, but it is also an important instruction for you and I as believers. Our world answers the question, “How do you know what you know,” in many ways. But the foundational Christian approach to “knowing what you know” starts in the heart. Jesus says, “If you really want **to do** God’s will, you will know that what I say is from God and is pure and true.”

When a non-Christians struggles to accept the Christian faith, they want to amass the data hoping that will confirm that this is the right path to follow. The Bible reverses that philosophy. The Bible teaches that when you express faith and obedience in God then you will know. Here’s the point:

If a person wants to prove that Christ is God and what Jesus says is from God, true and pure, he or she must WANT to do what God wants – or they will never know.

So the Jews move on by attacking the moral character of Jesus.

The Obedience of Christ

The Jews accuse him of breaking Moses’ Law. That accusation follows the assertion of Jesus that they are trying to kill him. Why would they do that? Apparently when Jesus healed the man by the Pool of Bethesda (John 5) it was on the Sabbath. He was a Sabbath-breaker. Not only that he told the man to carry his mat, thus working on the Sabbath. To break the Sabbath was a capital offense in Judaism.

The Law commanded circumcision to occur on the eighth day after birth. Therefore, some children were circumcised on the Sabbath – lawfully. So, what was Jesus’ argument? He is saying, “If it is true that circumcision is good and right to perform on the Sabbath, and it affects only a small part of the body, then how much more is it right and good to heal a lame man on the Sabbath?”

Jesus is making a very clever argument. They were saying that He had no credentials and was a lawbreaker. They were seeking to kill him. Jesus responded by showing them that they lacked

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 7:16). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

understanding of the Law and only had a superficial view of the Law. They professed to be disciples of Moses but had a murderous heart. Jesus showed themselves to be hypocrites.

Main Point

Here's what we learn in this story: **A disobedient heart and a divided heart will not know God.**

This fundamental need in the life of every person is an act of saving grace. It is the sovereign and free work of the Spirit bringing to pass the New Birth. According to Jeremiah² the New Birth the Law of God will be internalized rather than on a tablet of stone. Jeremiah³ says that by God's Spirit in the New Birth he will create a heart that unified – a heart that fears God (which is the beginning of wisdom⁴). According to Ezekiel⁵, this act of God's mercy will give a person a new heart, a heart of flesh, a heart that wants to obey God.

Application

There are at least two points of application that I draw your attention to.

#1. This gives to us, Christ's Church, some insight as we seek to share the Gospel with our friends and neighbors. It reminds us that you cannot argue a person into belief. It reminds us that facts and data alone will never convince a person to come to faith in Christ. For someone to move to a place where they long to do God's will and become assured of Christ's truthfulness and purity, they need to be born from above.

#2. Second, as Christians we have this new heart, but we also find a strange dilemma. Paul wrote about it in Romans 7. He said, "*For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.*" (Romans 7:22–23, ESV). If we are in this process of sanctification this new heart, this pure heart will be at war with the fallenness that still exists in our lives. From now until eternity we are in a battle.

There's Good News if you're in that battle this morning. The same Paul that wrote, "*Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death*" (Romans 7:24, ESV) also wrote, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord."⁶ That is precisely what Jesus' death and resurrection accomplished, even though the final redemption is not yet completely fulfilled. It is because of the Gospel that we can be assured that sin rendered powerless. And by living by faith in the promises of God, Peter said that we can escape "the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."⁷

² Jeremiah 31:33ff

³ Jeremiah 32:38ff

⁴ Proverbs 1:7

⁵ Ezekiel 36:26ff

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ro 7:25). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Pe 1:4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

For every battle of sin, you face, God has given you a promise. Believe that promise and live by it in faith.