



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### John 7:19-29: The Lord Teaches in the Temple Area

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*"Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?" 20 The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?" 21 Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. 22 Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? 24 Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." 25 Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill? 26 But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? 27 However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from." 28 Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. 29 But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."*

#### Background notes

The Lord's remarks were made to the people and the Jewish leaders as they gathered in the temple area during the weeklong Feast of Tabernacles, about 6 months before the Lord was crucified. *"Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand"*(v2). The Lord was addressing the crowd in the temple courts. *"Now about the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught."* This was a common practice of the Jewish rabbis of that day. They would pick a spot in the large outer courts of the temple area, and begin to teach. Soon a crowd would gather around to listen and discuss with the rabbi what he was teaching.

The Lord probably began to teach something about the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles, and then He moved on to the question of His authority to teach, and in verse 19 He began to talk about the Law of Moses. *"Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"* The people were so proud of the Law and they made a practice of always appealing to it, but the Lord told them that they were not keeping the law – **not one** of them! The Lord gave one example. The Law said, "Thou shall not kill" -- and yet they were seeking to kill Him. It was at this point that the people said, *"You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"* (v20). In other words, "You're crazy -- no one is seeking to kill you!" Remember, the crowd the Lord was addressing consisted of Jews from all over the Roman world that had come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. Many of them did not know of the plot to kill Jesus, so they are the ones who asked, "Who is seeking to kill you?" However, some in the crowd certainly did know that the Jewish religious leaders were out to kill Jesus.

Look at verse 25: *"Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill?"*

Furthermore, some of the Jewish leaders themselves were in the crowd, and it was particularly these self-righteous religious leaders that the Lord had in mind when He began to talk about the Sabbath and circumcision. In verse 21, the one work that the Lord referred to was the healing of the paralyzed man in John 5: *"Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel."* The healing in John 5 had taken place during the Lord's previous visit to Jerusalem, and this miracle was done on the Sabbath. The Lord said, "I did one work, and you all marvel" -- marvel, not in the sense of admiration, but in the sense of shock and astonishment because it was done on the Sabbath. The religious leaders found fault with the Lord for this act of mercy because they claimed He was "doing work" on the Sabbath and thus He was "breaking" the Sabbath laws. If we look back at John 5, we find that it was after the healing of the paralytic that the plot to kill Jesus "thickened." John 5:18: *"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."*

Verses 25-27 tell us, "Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill? But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from"(v25-27). The Jews who knew about the plans to arrest the Lord couldn't figure out why the religious leaders were letting Him continue to speak boldly, right in the temple courts! "Could it be," they reasoned, "that the leaders suspect that He really is the Messiah? But no, He can't be the Messiah because we know where He is from -- He's from Nazareth! He's Jesus of Nazareth, the son of a carpenter, Joseph." These comments show that the people were following a traditional misconception, the idea that the Messiah would remain hidden and then suddenly and mysteriously appear. So they reasoned among themselves in this way: "Jesus can't be the Messiah! This man Jesus is well known. He grew up in Nazareth -- He's well known in the Galilee area. He's only a man, the son of Joseph the carpenter!"

## **1. Righteous judgment sees beneath surface appearances.**

In verse 24 the Lord said, *"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."* The Jewish leaders found fault with Jesus because He healed a man on the Sabbath. That was doing "work" -- that was "breaking the Sabbath laws"!

I'll paraphrase what the Lord was saying to the Jewish leaders: "Why, that's ridiculous! When you circumcise a male baby, you do it on the eighth day according to the Law of Moses, right? [Leviticus 12] And if the eighth day falls on a Sabbath, you still circumcise the baby, right? Sabbath or no Sabbath, you circumcise. Well then, why do you find fault with me for making a man who has been paralyzed for 38 years completely well on the Sabbath? You're judging with unrighteous judgment!"

Then our Lord made a very emphatic statement, "*Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.*" Do we ever commit this sin? Do we ever judge according to appearance without seeing what's beneath the surface? That is unrighteous judgment!

I recall one summer when I was speaking at a teen camp, and one of the teens who was not a Christian was really giving the staff a hard time. He was disruptive in all the services, he ran away from the camp, and as I remember the situation, the police had to become involved. On the last night of camp we were having the traditional testimony campfire, and as the other kids were giving their testimonies, I noticed that once again Randy seemed to be causing a disturbance. He was sitting with a group of kids, his head was down, and his shoulders were shaking. It looked to me like he was laughing at the testimonies of the other kids. I was just about to take him back to his cabin and talk to him when I noticed that Randy wasn't laughing – he was crying. He had become convicted of the sin in his life. Randy became a Christian that night! I almost made a terrible mistake, because I had made an unrighteous judgment. I had judged by surface appearances only.

That's just one of many illustrations I could give, and I'm sure you could give many as well. So we must be very careful! "*Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.*" Righteous judgment sees beneath surface appearances.

## **2. God is not known by those who refuse to hear Jesus.**

"*Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know"(v28).* As the crowd was questioning whether Jesus was the Messiah or not, the Lord essentially shouted out to them that He was indeed the Messiah! "*Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple...*" I think the Lord was saying, in no uncertain terms, "I **am** the Messiah! You know that I have come from heaven, but you won't believe, therefore, you don't know or believe God. I know Him -- He is my heavenly Father! He sent me, but you don't know Him. If you knew Him, you would automatically receive Me, but because you refuse to hear what I have to say on this subject I'm telling you that you don't know God!"

The same is true today. People who refuse to hear Jesus do not know God. Jesus claimed to be God. In John 14:6, He said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" Do you believe that? If you don't, you don't know God! You don't know the God of the Bible! You may say you believe in God, but if you don't believe what Jesus taught, that "God" you claim to believe in is a "god" of your own making.

Many people who go to church every Sunday don't really know God because they refuse to hear and believe Jesus in these critical areas: His Messiahship, and His deity. What about you? Do you know God? Remember, those who refuse to hear Jesus do not know God.

## **Practical Application**

### **Let's not judge superficially!**

*"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."*

This statement is not in contradiction to what our Lord said in Matthew 7:1 *"Judge not, that you be not judged."* In Matthew 7 the Lord was talking about judging **motives**. We are not to judge motives -- but sometime we are called upon to judge **behavior**. Parents have to judge behavior. Church leaders have to judge behavior.

When we do have to judge behavior, let's be very careful not judge quickly and **superficially**. Don't judge people too quickly by the clothes they wear. Don't judge a person's spirituality by the translation of the Bible that he or she reads, or the kind of Christian music that he or she listens to. (Hey, if I told you I like Christian Country music, would I go up or down in your "How spiritual is he?" scale?)

I almost wrote off one of my students during the first semester of the academic year. He often cut classes and when he did come, he fell asleep! But second semester was totally different -- he didn't cut classes, and he was alert in class. You know what? It was not a spiritual problem -- he had a medical problem! It was diagnosed and taken care of. I judged him superficially. I didn't have all the facts.

### **Let's not judge superficially!**