

# The True Jesus

Through the centuries people have thought of Jesus in many different ways. We usually imagine Him somewhat in our own image: He usually comes out as “a little better version of ourselves!” The Bible, however, presents to us the true Jesus, and our text today is a very important reminder of Who He is, and, therefore, how we must relate to Him.

## John 7:14-24

**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.”

### I. Jesus is our teacher (v. 14)

In all the gospel accounts, Jesus is presented as an amazing teacher, and here we see that the crowds (v. 15) also marvel at His teaching. If we receive Jesus as Savior and Lord, we must receive Him as our Teacher. He teaches us doctrinally (who God is, who we are, how we can be reconciled to God, etc.) and ethically (how we handle our money, our relationships, our sexual and romantic lives, etc.).

### II. Jesus is an authoritative teacher (vv. 15-18)

In the gospel accounts, the people are amazed at His teaching for a number of reasons: sometimes they marvel at the spiritual power of His teaching, sometimes they wonder at the piercing truth of His teaching. Here, however, the crowds are amazed because they discern that Jesus has great learning but no formal education. They can discern this because Jesus, unlike the rabbis of His own day, does not quote historic rabbinical authorities for His opinions. He has no footnotes! We learn here three things about Jesus' authority as a teacher.

#### A. His teaching is divinely inspired (v. 16)

We only hear Jesus rightly if we hear Him speaking the very Word of God to us. If we seek to understand Him by standing outside of obedience to His word, we shall never understand Him and we shall never believe in Him. Because Jesus' Word is the highest authority in the universe, there is no higher standard by which to measure His Word. His Word is self-attesting as the divinely inspired Word of God.

#### B. His teaching is spiritually validated (v. 17)

The only ones who can validate that Jesus is speaking on the authority of God are those who desire to do God's will. Without an aspiration to know God, no one will ever know Him.

#### C. His teaching is perfectly true (v. 18)

Notice that Jesus says not only that His teaching is true, but that “there is no falsehood” in His teaching. Jesus teaches us in Matthew 5 that His view of the Old Testament is similarly one of complete devotion and submission. Jesus authorized His apostles to speak on His behalf, and, therefore, the entire New Testament is perfectly true. This enables us as believers to make ethical decisions with certainty when we faithfully consult the Scriptures as our guide.

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**III. Jesus' authoritative teaching challenges our pride (vv.19-24)**

Jesus focuses like a laser beam on our pride as we see in these verses. He makes two overarching statements about us as sinners:

**A. We are lawbreakers (v. 19)**

The Jews had accused Him of breaking the law in John 5:1-17, but Jesus here states that they are the ones who actually have broken the law; in fact, He says "none of you keeps the law." This universal statement of human disobedience is, of course, confirmed in Romans 3:10-20. We often think of ourselves as not so bad or as better than somebody else, but the sad fact is that we are all miserable sinners in need of God's forgiveness and salvation. Our attempts to keep the law can never save us; only the blood of Jesus Christ can wash away our sins. The crowd obviously does not appreciate Jesus' perfectly true statement about their character, and they accuse Him of having a demon. Jesus then responds with a second tragic description of our character.

**B. We are hypocrites (vv. 21-24)**

Jesus very logically explains their hypocrisy in accusing Him of displeasing God by healing a man on the Sabbath, while they obviously make exceptions to the Sabbath through their adherence to the requirement to circumcise their sons on the eighth day. The tragedy of self-righteousness and of falsely defending ourselves against the law of God is that we can no longer see clearly to make proper moral judgments. We must stop trying to defend ourselves and to establish ourselves apart from the love and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What does it mean for Jesus to be our teacher?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is unique about Jesus' teaching?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What happens to a person who chooses to come under the authority of Jesus' teaching?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Why can a person not validate Jesus' teaching without desiring to do God's will?

5. What does Jesus teach us in verses 19-24? Why do His listeners take such offense?

### **Going Deeper**

1. In what areas of your life do you need to come under Jesus' teaching?
2. In what ways do you typically try to defend yourself from the judgments God's Word?  
How do you benefit from allowing His Word to search your life and lead you to change?