

Why we do not believe Him

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Let us turn to **John 7: 14-17**.

John 7: 14-17

- 14 But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and *began to* teach.
- 15 The Jews then were astonished, saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?"
- 16 So Jesus answered them and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.
- 17 If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself.

We know that this incident took place when the Jews came together for a time to celebrate a festival, a festival commanded by God, a festival to honour God and to worship God. So it would seem that the Jews were concerned about worshipping God; they wanted to worship God.

God came into this world to reveal Himself to them. Why then did they not appreciate the Lord Jesus whom God sent from heaven to come into this world to help men know who God is and how they should live? Instead, they were astonished and they said, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?"

They did not recognize God speaking to them.

So Jesus sought to help them. He said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. You look at Me as a man speaking to you but My teaching is not Mine. My teaching comes from God, the God whom you say you worship. Do you know the God that you are worshipping? Do you recognize Him? Can you hear His voice?" The Lord Jesus said, "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether I speak from Myself.*"

There is an underlying principle here that is important for us to think about. The Lord Jesus said, "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching". The underlying principle is that if we truly want to know God, if we truly want to know what is from God so that we can obey Him, we can walk with Him, then this is something very important that we must ensure: that we are truly willing to do His will.

Here, if the Jews were truly willing to do the will of God, the meaning therefore would be they would know that the Lord Jesus came from God - this is from God, it is of God - He was not speaking from Himself.

So what then is the issue for us to think about? The Lord Jesus here is not referring to knowing God or knowing principles, in recognition of what is and what ought to be. He is going beyond that.

Satan knows who God is; so too the evil spirits. They recognize, they believe, but they tremble. They are afraid of God, they will not come to God; they will not worship God. But they know who He is; they recognize Him. The evil spirits confessed the Lord Jesus but the Lord Jesus did not want their confession. It was not a confession of worship, of obedience, of submission.

Here, the Lord Jesus is telling us if we truly want to know God in the right way – the right kind of knowledge and understanding – then we must first make sure that we come to God with the right desire in our hearts, with the right preparedness to live for God.

There is a corresponding passage in the **gospel of John** itself, where the Lord Jesus helps us to appreciate the relationship between true understanding that comes from God that will help us in our lives and a kind of understanding that may seem to be right but will not benefit us. This is particularly clear when He spoke to the Jews to teach them the right way to approach life.

John 5: 39-47

- 39 "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;
40 and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.
41 "I do not receive glory from men;
42 but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.
43 "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.
44 "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and* only God?
45 "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.
46 "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.
47 "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

This passage is very, very meaningful and very interesting and it helps us understand some of the major fundamental principles of the spiritual realm and how God relates with us and how we develop our lives.

The Lord Jesus told the Jews, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life". It appears to be good. They are searching the Scriptures to find eternal life. It is a good thing. But something is wrong.

He says, "You are searching the Scriptures. It is these that testify about Me. You are seeking for life but you are in reality rejecting life. You are seeking for what God has to say to you but when God speaks to you, you reject it. You are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life."

Isn't it strange that the Lord Jesus would say that? They were reading the Scriptures to find life and yet He said, "You are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life."

The reason is that they were looking for the wrong kind of life.

The Lord Jesus would give them the right kind of life but they did not want this. They wanted their own kind of life. They were seeking for life but in their own way, in their own terms.

This is the same today: Many people come to God, they want forgiveness, they want a rich and meaningful life but it is their own idea, based on natural inclinations, based on what the world can give to us, based on what you like and prefer and enjoy. You want eternal life in that form. You want life from God in the way that you think is more beneficial to you.

So in reality, many people are demanding from God the life that they want that God must give to them and if God does not do that, they complain, they grumble, they blame God; they accuse God of being unfair.

The Lord Jesus said, "you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have true, meaningful, eternal, real quality life. This is the life that you should be seeking for, but you are seeking for the wrong thing."

So too for us: We need to be careful.

We come to God, yes, that is good. We want life – that is good, but do we know what are we seeking for? What kind of life do we want?

The Lord Jesus wants to give us the most meaningful life, a life of quality, a life of eternal meaning but this is costly. It is a life that requires your life. You must give your life in exchange.

Many people are prepared to go through sufferings, difficulties, in order to gain many things for themselves. But if you want the true life, the truly meaningful life, then you must be prepared to give up your life, give up all that you may treasure, all that you may long for at the personal, natural level in order to pursue the life that truly counts – the life that God wants to give to us.

If we are not prepared for that cost, then we will not find that life.

The rich young man wanted eternal life but that life was to be lived out in the context of his riches. The Lord Jesus sought to free him from that bondage. He told him to sell all that he had so that he could concentrate on the true eternal life. He was not prepared.

So it is also: We want eternal life but we are holding on to so many things that we think are valuable, but these are the things that will bind us and hinder us from truly receiving that life.

The Lord Jesus said, "I do not receive glory from men". He said, "I do not receive glory from men; but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves."

There is a big contrast between the life of the Lord Jesus and the life of the Jewish people who were supposedly seeking God. They were seeking for life from God but in reality, they did not truly love God.

He said, "you do not have the love of God in yourselves. The quality of divine love, the kind of love that is present in your heart is not really of God, is not really like the character of God. You are selfish; you are seeking for things that are of no real value: the love for the world and the things of the world."

This is the reason why they could not recognize the Lord Jesus. He did not fit in with their idea of what God ought to be and of what they wanted in life. That is why they wanted to make Him a king. They wanted more of the things that He could give to them – not just bread but all the material things in this world, the power, the glory of this world. And that was what Satan offered to the Lord Jesus but He rejected them.

"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him."

Why? Why is there this difference? Why is it the Lord Jesus came in His Father's name – the true God – and yet He was rejected; but if others came in their own name, they could be received?

That is basically because these other people could more readily give to them what they wanted, what they liked. They could share some of these glories of the world with them.

"How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and* only God?"

The underlying reason was that they were receiving glory from one another. They were not truly seeking God, not truly seeking the glory that comes from God.

And so, ultimately, He says, "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope."

Is this not a shock to them? Moses is the one that they trusted. Their hope was set in him, that Moses would lead them to God – they would follow him, they would trust him.

But the Lord Jesus said, “Moses is the one who will accuse you. He will show to you that you are not in reality following him, you are not following his instructions that came from God” – because ultimately, the instructions from Moses came from God.

And so the Lord Jesus said, "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me. This is inevitable. If you truly believed Moses, you would believe Me". Why?

It is because it is the same voice, it is the same source, it is the same direction; it is the same meaning. Moses spoke on behalf of God – God commanded him, he obeyed.

“I come from God to declare to you from the heart of God but you reject Me and yet you say you believe Moses. It cannot be true, for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

So this is a very interesting passage that we can think about. What does it actually mean to believe in the Lord Jesus?

Do we understand whom we believe in? Are we truly seeking the One who came from God, the One who truly loves us, the One who will show us the way, who will point us to the right direction?

Is there a cost to our belief? Is our belief based on things that will benefit us in the things that we naturally may like or is it the path of the cross that we need to follow: our Master who went before us?

You can also consider: What do we want to get out of our belief?

When we believe in something, generally, there is a motive. We believe in something in the sense that we are prepared to act based on that belief and there is an outcome, there is a cost. So what do you want to get out of that belief? That will affect what you will ultimately believe.

People are selective in what they believe. They believe the things that they would like to believe.

And so those who do not truly want to follow God would not want to believe in the Lord Jesus because the words that come from the Lord Jesus are hard to bear.

But those who truly want to follow God will find the words of the Lord Jesus so very attractive, so very meaningful. And when He says, "Take up your cross", we understand that that is a path of freedom; that is a path of life; that is a path of meaning. Those who truly want what is good, they will recognize who the Lord Jesus is.

And how far are we prepared to go to seek for Him to find Him when we search for Him with all our hearts?

Throughout the world, God is prepared to help anyone to come to Him. If we truly want to do His will, if we truly desire what is good, then God will help us. Whoever you are, wherever you are, God can reach your heart. He can speak to you, He can teach you.

Yes, the magi may have come from a long distance to look for the Lord Jesus. In their hearts, they may have longed for something meaningful. But you do not have to be magi in order to find God. God wants to help each one of us.

If we recognize true moral goodness, what it means, and we want it, then like the magi, if we are prepared to seek for Him, God will show us the way. He will teach us, He will lead us.

But the sad thing is that there are many people who do seek for God, who do want what is good and who do find Him but after that, are not prepared to live by what He shows to them.

Of course, there are those who are hypocritical, who pretend.

But even for those who really want to follow the Lord, we must understand that it is a long journey, it is a difficult path and unless we are prepared to persevere, to live by what we believe, along the way, we may slacken, we may give up, we may find alternatives, we may become artificial in our faith.

So it is important for us to think through carefully what it is that we believe in and why do we believe.

What do you want out of your belief? If you truly want what is good and you are prepared for this path, yes, you can expect that God will help you all the way. You will receive the greatest blessing that you can ever long for.

If you are prepared for the path that He leads you in, then you will find: though the path may be painful and difficult, it will be a path of joy, a path of meaning, a path of fruitfulness in the eternal and spiritual realm.

It is because the Lord Jesus took this path that now it is possible for us to find forgiveness, to find life, to be transformed, to partake of His life, to become like Him and to help others likewise.

So then, as we come before the Lord, as we seek to appreciate Him and what He has done for us, let us ask Him to search our hearts, so that we can see more deeply who is the One that we believe in and why.

Are we believing the right things about Him? Or are we choosing what we want to believe?

Will we allow, welcome, ask the Lord Jesus to speak to us so that we can know Him as He truly is and we will follow Him on His terms and not our own?

Let us then ask the Lord to help us to ponder over our lives and to learn to respond to Him deeply, so that we can benefit from all that He wants to give to us out of His deep love and His kindness toward us.