

John 7:14-16 "My Teaching is Not My Own"

JOH 7:14-16 Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. 15 The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?". 16 Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me."

As we have examined this section of Scripture over the last couple of weeks the setting takes place at the time of the feast of Tabernacles or the feast of Booths, which was a time when Israel was commanded by God to celebrate the Lord's protection and provision for them when their father's wandered the desert for some 40 years, together with how God provides a harvest for them.

And so, this was a festive occasion in Jerusalem where Jews from all over Israel were descending on the place where the temple was located, where family and friends would gather together to reestablish ties and honor the God who loved them.

Unfortunately, most of Israel was not honoring God and not loving God. They were busy being religious as they had long since abandoned the relationship that God wanted with them by faith.

Even Jesus' brothers didn't realize that the Messiah, whom God had promised to send them, to redeem them from their sin, was in their midst. A spiritual veil covered the eyes of Israel and yet Jesus continued to love His people with the truth.

Now, as we come to our text Jesus' brothers were already at the feast and the leaders in Jerusalem were seeking Jesus to put Him to death. They were asking where He was, but no one knew at that time since our Lord quietly entered into the city.

However, it was not because Jesus was afraid of the leaders that He didn't reveal Himself, but because His time had not yet come to do so. But as we come to our text this morning we'll see that His time was now at hand to show Himself and at the same time teach the people concerning the Kingdom of God.

JOH 7:14 Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach.

It was the custom for those Jewish men who were able to expound God's word and encourage the Jews from the Scriptures to do so in the temple courts. These were the courts outside of the main part of

the temple which would have included the inner court and the Holy of holies.

In most cases these teachers would have been the educated scribes and Pharisees, but occasionally there were lay people who would take their turn in reading and expounding the Scriptures.

But again, notice that the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem begins with what was most important to Him; teaching the word of God. He went up into the temple courts and began to teach.

In fact, the word for teach in the Greek here in our text is *didasko*, which is where we get our English word didactic which is the kind of discourse which is specifically designed to instruct. And so, Jesus was taking passages of Scripture and then instructing these people as to not only what they meant, but how they were to affect the thinking and the actions of these people.

Unlike how many preachers approach the Scriptures today, where they pick a topic and sermonize on it, Jesus stuck with the passage and taught on the particular text of Scripture and then expected his listeners to respond to the passage.

Sometimes His teaching was lengthy as we see when He taught on the hillsides near the Sea of Galilee, where He taught most of the day. Other times His teaching was relatively short as we see when He first started His public ministry.

LUK 4:16-21 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.. 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:. 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,. 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.". 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him,. 21 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

He then went on to say to them that though they were receptive of His teachings now, they would eventually reject Him as He said that a prophet receives no honor in His hometown. He then intimated that He would go to those outside of Israel to preach the

good news. They then immediately drove Him out of town and tried to kill Him. Some teaching style, huh?

But our Lord didn't stop teaching and instructing concerning the things of God. And yet, despite how most of Israel would reject His teaching it was undeniable that He knew what He was talking about.

JOH 7:15 The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?"

Now, there's a number of things we can glean from this little passage which reveals the hearts of these people. As A.W. Pink puts it in his commentary on John, "it was not their consciences that were exercised, but their curiosity that was aroused. It was not the claims of God they were occupied with, but the schools of men. It was not the discourse itself they were pondering, but the manner of its delivery that engaged their attention."

In other words, these people were so busy being amazed that a common man could articulate the word of God with such authority that they missed what Jesus was teaching concerning the word of God.

In their minds only those who went through years of school would be capable of having such a command of the Scriptures. And even today, unless someone has the letters Ph.D., or a Masters of Divinity, attached to their title, they are often viewed as incapable of putting a coherent biblical thought together.

But some of the greatest teachers of the word of God were men who had never had any formal biblical training. I mean, just look at the apostles of Jesus Christ. Most of those men were unlearned fishermen. But they learned at the feet of their Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

They spent time with Jesus and they learned from Him. And when given the opportunity they spoke with people and instructed people concerning the salvation that we can have in Christ.

In fact, on one occasion both Peter and John were expounding the Scriptures and explaining who the Messiah was when the leaders in Jerusalem approached them because of a miracle they participated in.

ACT 4:1-2 The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to

the people. 2 They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

And by the way, the word for teaching here in Acts is the exact same word we have in our text as Jesus was teaching the crowds; *didasko*. They were explaining the very words of God as found in the written word. They were using the same approach Jesus used.

When the leaders confronted Peter and John, as to why they were teaching these things regarding Christ and His resurrection, Peter does something amazing. He stands up to these learned men and begins to teach them.

ACT 4:8-13 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! 9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, 10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11 He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.' 12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." 13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Just like the crowds of people in our text were amazed that Jesus could teach the way He did, even though He was unschooled in the Scriptures, these elders and leaders of Israel who confronted Peter and John were just as amazed that they were unschooled in the Scriptures. And yet, their amazement was just that. They weren't interested in what was being taught, only that these unschooled men could teach.

But notice what conclusion the leaders, in Peter and John's case, came to after hearing what they said regarding the Messiah and His resurrection.

"When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."

Peter and John were fisherman, not theologians in the classical sense. They did not spend years in the halls of higher learning to defend the faith.

There is a tendency today to think that what makes a good bible teacher, or one who can instruct the church, is a person who has spent years in Seminary or Bible College. Now, there may be people who attend such institutions of higher learning and are quite capable of navigating the Scriptures as a result of this learning, but this does not guarantee their ability to handle accurately the word of God.

Having said that, it would be unfair to say that a formal biblical training under any circumstance, in any number of institutions, cannot be helpful in better understanding the disciplines to accurately handle word of God, the most obvious, learning the original languages of the bible. The same would be true of having a formal training in apologetics, hermeneutics, exegesis, and so on.

But, the fact remains that even in learning a biblical discipline, related to one's ability to effectively teach the word of God, it still depends on the presuppositions and world view of the professor who is teaching, as well as the student, as to how those disciplines will be applied to the honor and glory of God.

With all of the learning tools available to Christians today it is not out of the question that one can become proficient in many of the disciplines of studying and then teaching the whole counsel of God's word if one is apt to diligently study to show oneself approved.

This may not be as easy in learning the original languages where a formal educational atmosphere may be more helpful in that case, but the fact remains that what really makes a believer capable of being able to expound the word of God is that he or she has been with Jesus, whether or not they have years of formal biblical training.

In fact, most Seminary institutions these days can actually deter people from the truth of God's word as they raise more doubt than trust in what the Scriptures teach.

It's no coincidence that when Pastors of major denominational churches are polled today about such things as, whether or not Jesus was born of a virgin, many admit He wasn't. When they are polled about His divinity an alarming amount of Pastors say He is

not fully God. When polled about the miracles of Jesus a great number of leaders of churches say most of the miracles never really happened; they were made up to embellish the story.

In almost every major Seminary in this country evolution in some form is taught as the standard way in which this world came into existence. Yale, Princeton, Harvard were all schools started in this country to train men in the Scriptures and to prepare them for ministry.

These schools still have curriculum to train people in the Scriptures, but if you're interested in having a man prepared to defend and teach the word of God, you probably wouldn't want any of these graduates for your church. The enemy has infiltrated these schools of higher learning.

I've had people over the years ask me which Seminary I was trained in to teach the word of God. And my answer is always the same. I went to the same school that Peter, John and the rest of those boys went to. I spent time with Jesus and continue to spend time with Him as I diligently seek to hone the biblical disciplines of being able to handle accurately the word of God.

But, I can't do what I do unless our Lord has, number one, gifted me in this area, but also as I depend on Him and His grace and knowledge to be able to feed His sheep. Early on in my Christian walk the Lord impressed upon me to seek Him in His word, to study His word and to share what I've learned with people with the express purpose of encouraging them in their faith so that they might be better servants for Christ.

A.W. Pink points out that, "the man most used of God in the [19th Century] -- Mr. C.H. Spurgeon -- was a graduate of no Bible Institute."

Again, this doesn't mean that there may not be individual bible schools somewhere in this world that teach the truth and turn out people who love the Lord and desire to feed Christ's sheep, but they are few and far between. The point is that the same bible that Martin Luther had, the same bible that D.L. Moody had, the same bible that Billy Graham has, is the same bible you and I have.

We as Christians can certainly be blessed by teachers whom God has gifted, but we still have the responsibility to long for the pure milk of the word of God as we individually dig and study and learn of our great God and Savior.

We need to spend time with Jesus as we spend time in His word and prayer and seek the Spirit of God for guidance, and then act on what we've learned, being doers of the word and not mere hearers.

As David says in PSA 25:9 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

If you want to be taught of God from His word then humble yourself under His mighty right hand and He will personally teach you His way.

But when the Jews asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?," Jesus doesn't take offense. He doesn't point out that He is not only able to expound the word, or that He is the word, but He actually humbles Himself as He explains the source of His truth.

As a side-note, it should be pointed out that Jesus did in fact attain to such learning precisely by studying or being educated. And we see this process as He grew from a boy into a man, using the means we discussed.

**Luke 2:40** <sup>40</sup> The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

**Luke 2:52** <sup>52</sup> And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

To increase in wisdom does not preclude the means for such growth for every human being, including Jesus.

How was Jesus educated in the Scriptures? His parents taught him along with the local Rabbis of his particular congregation, but ultimately it was the Father who sent Him.

JOH 7:16 Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me."

Our Lord's response here is interesting. The word He uses for teaching is similar to the word used for the act of teaching we saw earlier. Here in verse 16 the word teaching is *didache*, meaning that which is taught, or doctrine.

In fact, if you have the KJV or the NKJV the word doctrine is used where Jesus says, "My doctrine is not my own."

Unfortunately, the word doctrine is almost seen as a dirty word among some Christians today as though it translates into some sort

of stuffy dogma which is designed to divide and stifle the body of Christ with positions that don't allow for growth.

Well, that type of doctrine certainly exists, but those are man made doctrines, not biblical doctrine. The word doctrine means teaching, which is why the NIV, the NASB and others use the word teaching in this passage.

Doctrine is essential in the body of Christ because it is doctrine or teaching which either comes from God or from man. If our doctrine is made up by man then it is to be rejected, but if our doctrine or teaching comes from God then we must embrace it as truth.

This is why many churches, including this one, has a doctrinal statement relating to the major themes of the bible as to where we stand on such issues as: who we believe God to be; who we believe Jesus Christ to be; who we believe the Holy Spirit to be; what we believe about the sinfulness of men and the salvation of God found only in Christ, and so on.

If doctrine doesn't matter then I suppose one can feel just as comfortable in a bible believing church as they do in the Mormon church. But I can tell you that the doctrines of the Mormons didn't come from God. At best they came from the fertile imagination of Joseph Smith, or at worst from him being influenced by the doctrines of demons.

And by the way, this raises another interesting point. Jesus makes it clear where His teaching or doctrine comes from, and that is from the very God who sent Him to redeem a people for Himself. But you'll notice that the word for teaching or doctrine is in the singular.

Jesus doesn't say, My *teachings* are from God, but rather My *teaching* is from God. And there is a reason for this distinction. What Jesus means by this is that the body of teaching He gives, (all of His *teachings*), is tied together and unified. Yes, there are certainly individual and distinct subjects in His teaching, but they all support one another and all point to One person. In other words, they don't contradict each other.

On the other hand the teachings of man do not support each other. If a teaching suits the needs of men today, there may be a new and contradictory teaching of man tomorrow depending on how the wind is blowing.



Notice how the word of God addresses this by pointing out the plurality of teachings of men as opposed to the unity or body of teaching of God.

JOH 14:24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching [singular]. These words [plural] you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

JOH 17:8 For I gave them the words [plural] you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.

JOH 17:14 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

The many words which make up the teaching Jesus gives results in one word, or one body of teaching that directs all men to One God.

In contrast to this we find that the many words of men's teachings doesn't result in a unified doctrine but rather are varied teachings which go in every direction but God's.

COL 2:20-22 Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 21 "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? 22 These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings.

HEB 13:9 Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.

1TI 4:1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons... (NASB)

We do not promote the doctrines of men to enable us to grow in Christ. That would be counterproductive. We spend our time teaching the full counsel of God's word, that body of belief in the word of God that supports every other part of our faith, what Jesus calls His teaching.

It is consistent, indivisible, unchanging and reliable. Why? Because no mere man gave it to us. It was given to men by the Holy Spirit as He inspired it. And though men wrote it in their own language with their own styles, it was the Holy Spirit who used such people to convey eternal truths.

For example when we read the epistles of Paul and compare them to John or James, their styles and usage of particular words and phrases are entirely different. But as to what God desired to convey through them their words are unmistakably from God.

This is what is referred to as plenary inspiration which means that not only the thoughts of these men are inspired but the very words they use are also inspired. Thus John uses the word teaching instead of teachings of Jesus to convey the unity of the entire word of God from Genesis to Revelation.

And the teaching which Jesus gives to these people comes from the very throne of God. This is what He means in verse 16 when He says, "It comes from him who sent me."

Here, once again, Jesus makes an eternal connection to the Father. He is saying that He does not bring His own teaching but the teaching of the One they claim as their God, which is an indictment against these people who say they only want to do God's will according to His law.

Jesus comes along and says, 'God is trying to get your attention by bringing you the truth. I am coming from Him directly and I am speaking His words.'

This doesn't mean that the Father's words are different from the words of Jesus. It simply means that Jesus can say with confidence that both He and the Father are on the same page when it comes to the truth.

In fact, we know this to be the case since Jesus is referred to as the Word in this very gospel of John. And it is this Word who came as a light to the world to draw all men to the Christ so that they may be delivered from the darkness of sin to the life only God can offer. Jesus points this out a little later in this gospel.

JOH 12:49-50 For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.  
50 I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

Jesus came to speak of eternal life as the Word sent from the Father, and then to die for us so that we may have eternal life if we would but believe in the doctrine of salvation which is found in Him alone. What this means is that we don't place our salvation in words alone, or teachings alone, but in the Word Himself whom those words address.

Lots of people will take the words of Jesus and say they follow those words and the teaching of the bible. And yet, many of those same people don't know the living Word sent from the Father, just as these Jews, who are amazed at the words of Jesus and how He can articulate these words.

Only as we know the Word Jesus, sent from the Father, can we have the word written on our hearts that we would desire to live that word in the power of the Spirit. It is then when the word of God becomes more than words on a page to us. It translates into a body of teaching that directs our lives Godward as we live them unto the honor and glory of our God and Savior.

The writer of Hebrews points out how this word of God can be used by the Holy Spirit to direct us and guide us and motivate us to love and good deeds.

HEB 4:12 "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

When our attitudes are not right, when our hearts are not right, may we seek the One who gives His word which is living and active and who animates our spirits to seek Him and love Him above all.

May we say with Isaiah....

ISA 49:2-3 He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver. 3 He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."

Be that sword in the Lord's hand and that arrow that He shoots into the hearts of those He makes alive by the Spirit. And use the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, to accomplish His will as we take forth the gospel into all the world starting right here in our own back yards.

And remember, when we take this word of God out into the world, let them know that our teaching is not our own, but comes from Him who sent us.