

John 7:15-24  
Christ the teacher!

**Preamble:**

Recommend some books from the bookstore.  
Why Trust the Bible?  
Etc...

**Sermon introduction:**

By every objective criteria Jesus of Nazareth is the most influential person to ever live!!!

Consider these facts-

Jesus currently has more followers than any other person in world history (2.3 billion).

Jesus continues to be the center piece of the world's yearly calendar. We live in the year 2022, which means that it is 2022 years after Christ's birth.

Over 98 nations in world history have officially called themselves "Christian nations." No other person has directly influenced this many nations.

Jesus has more cities named after him or his followers than any other person in world history (over 20,000 cities in Europe alone).

Jesus has more buildings named after him than any other person in world history.

There have been more books, songs, and poems written about Jesus than any other person in world history.

Jesus's followers are responsible for the scientific revolution, the creation of universities, the creation of hospitals, the abolition of slavery, and the liberation of woman. (Jesus Skeptic)

Renowned Yale historian Jaroslav Pelikan wrote,

**"Regardless of what anyone may personally think or believe about him, Jesus of Nazareth has been the dominant figure in the history of Western culture for almost twenty centuries."** (Wellum, 25)

Why? Why was Jesus the most influential person to ever live? There are many reasons, but one of the primary reasons why he was so influential was his brilliant teaching.

This brings us to John 7:14-24. This is one of the longest blocks of Christ's teaching in John's gospel.

In this block of teaching, we learn three things about Christ. We learn about...

*Christ's authority*  
*Christ's hermeneutics*  
*Christ's verdict*

**First, Christ's authority**

## Where did Christ's authority come from? God!

**John 7:14 (ESV) — 14** About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching.

It is the middle of the feast of booths. Jerusalem would have been teeming with pilgrims from all over the Roman empire. Fearlessly, Jesus went up into the temple to teach the masses.

The masses were impressed...

**15** The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?"

During this time, it was considered essential for a rabbi to receive formal training under a famous rabbi.

One passage from the Talmud (b. Sotah 22b) says "that a person who studies Torah without formal rabbinic training is no better than a common person who knows nothing." (Osborne)

Essentially, the crowds wondered, how in the world this guy knew so much and taught so well without an M.Div., Th.M., D.Min., or Ph.D., from Cambridge, Oxford, or Harvard?

Jesus tells them. Back to our text...

**16** So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.

Rabbis, like most scholars today, anchored everything they said in the opinions of scholars who came before them. But Jesus was different. His teaching was not rooted in the authority of previous scholars or the authority of famous rabbis. His teaching came directly from God the father.

God the father was his teacher. This requires some explanation. Christ had two natures. His divine nature omniscient and did not need to be taught, but his human nature was not omniscient and needed to be taught.

Here is the point!!! Christ's teaching was authoritative and powerful because it came directly from God the father.

We no longer have Christ physically with us, but we have the 66 books of the Bible, which also come directly from God himself. In other words, they carry the very authority of the triune God.

**2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV) — 16** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

### Illustration:

The year was 1521. The place was the Imperial Diet of Worms. A diet was a counsel, Worms was the town in Germany.

Martin Luther was on trial before the most powerful man in Europe, the HRE, Charles the 5<sup>th</sup>. He was accused of heresy. If he was found guilty, he would die a slow and painful death.

When Luther was brought before the diet he was asked,

“Will you recant your writings?” Luther said, “I came here to debate.”

He was instantly silenced and then told, “you must recant.”

He knew that if he did not recant, he would be burned to death, so he asked for a day to think about it.

The next day he was brought back before the counsel and asked again if he would recant his writings.

**Then Luther uttered his famous reply-**

*“Unless I can be instructed and convinced with evidence from the Holy Scriptures or with open, clear, and distinct grounds of reasoning... then I cannot and will not recant, because it is neither safe nor wise to act against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me! Amen.”* (CH1, 16)

Why was Luther so bold?

Why was he willing to take a stand before powerful emperors, church leaders, and armed guards? Why was he willing to die?

Because he was convinced that his theology came straight from the Bible. Therefore, his theology came straight from God!

Christ’s authority was God’s word, and our authority is God’s Word.

**Application:**

Which means we can have the same confidence and boldness as Martin Luther and the same confidence and boldness of Jesus Christ himself. Why? We are looking to the same authority—God’s Word.

The words of the Bible are not man’s words, they are God’s words.

When the Bible speaks God speaks.

The Bible has supreme authority in our lives.

Whenever the Bible addresses a topic, God addresses a topic.

When the Bible says that marriage is... God says...

When the Bible says that Jesus is the only way to God... God says...

When the Bible says...

This will become increasingly important as our culture unravels...

If the Bible is the very word of God to us, we would be crazy not to read it again and again and again...

**Objection...**

The Bible is full of contradictions and errors! Show me...

The Bible has all the marks of divine authorship.

It was written by 40 authors, over a period of 1600 years, in three languages, from different cultures, yet it contains no contradictions.

Its truthfulness is verified again and again by the findings of archaeology

It contains hundreds of fulfilled prophecies

Its message has transformed billions

But it has changed... not so fast!

There is a massive amount of manuscript evidence that what we have today, is nearly identical to what was written by the apostles 2000 years ago.

Recommend the book “Why trust the Bible?”

*I understand that the Bible contains Christ’s authority, but how do I know what the Bible means? This brings us to the next point...*

*First, Christ’s authority*

## **Second, Christ’s hermeneutic**

Hermeneutics is the art of Bible interpretation. It comes from the Greek God named Hermes. Hermes was the messenger God. In other words, he brought God’s message to the people.

### **What was Christ’s hermeneutic? Obedience fosters understanding!**

**John 7:17 (ESV) — 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.**

According to Christ, what is the key to hermeneutics (i.e., interpreting the Bible)? The answer may surprise you. It starts with a willingness to do whatever the Bible says.

Jesus says, “**If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God...**”

Jesus is saying, “If you are willing to do God’s will, or if you are willing to obey God, no matter what it costs, you will be able to discern the voice of God in the Scriptures.”

Jesus does not say, “to understand God’s voice, you need to have advanced degrees, knowledge of the Greek, and Hebrew, or access to twenty scholarly commentaries.”

Rather, he says, “step one is simply this, you need to be willing to do whatever the Bible says.”

One scholar writes,

**“You can study Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic; you can memorize all the notes in your favorite study Bible; but until you submit to the will of God, it won’t make sense.”** (Carter)

Another scholar writes,

**“If there be a readiness to *do* the will of God, the capacity for discerning God’s message will follow.”** (F.F. Bruce)

### **Illustration:**

I grew up on the south hill. We lived two blocks from a large private pond surrounded by thirty houses. Every winter the pond turned to ice. After a few weeks of sub-freezing temperatures, we would inch our way out onto the ice to see if it was strong enough to support us. When we know it was safe, we would strap on our skates and play hockey for hours.

The pond was not very deep so you could often see stuff on the bottom. Imagine seeing a shiny object through the ice. You wonder what it is. Is it a shovel, a hockey stick, a hammer, or a bag of silver? You don't know, you can't tell, the ice is too thick to know for sure. Plus, the thick ice has a way of distorting the image. Day after day, you walk over that spot in the ice and wonder what it is. Your curiosity is now in overdrive.

The only way to know for sure what it is, is to take a hammer and a chisel and start pounding on the ice (which I did one winter). Once you break the ice, you can reach down through the cold water and grab the shiny object.

The ice represents our will. We will only understand what is buried in the Scriptures when and only when we break our wills. In other words, we must be willing to let the Scriptures cross our wills, alter our wills, and change our wills. If we are not willing to break our own wills, we will never break the ice and we will never understand God's will for us in the Scriptures.

### **Application:**

This raises the obvious question...

Are you willing to submit to whatever the Bible teaches, even though you may not fully understand it? If not, you will never fully grasp its meaning.

We may not fully understand the doctrine of the trinity... but we can submit to it.

We may not fully understand how God rules over all things, yet he is not the author of evil... but we can submit to it.

We may not fully understand why God chooses some and passes over others... but we can submit to it.

We may not fully understand authority and submission in marriage... but we can submit to it.

You may not understand why God wants you to break up with your boyfriend, give money away, or forgive your friend who really wounded you... but will you?

The more we submit to the Bible's teaching, the more we will be able to hear God's voice in the Scriptures. The opposite is also true. The less we obey God, the less we will be able to understand his voice in the Scriptures.

Is there anything in the Bible that you are not willing to obey? If so, you will be kept from understanding the rest of God's Word.

You must decide to obey God's Word no matter what.

St. Augustine lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. He was one of the most brilliant minds in church history. He established a rule for himself that went like this, whenever he found that he disagreed with the Bible, he concluded that he was the one who was wrong, and he submitted to the teaching of God's Word. (Phillips, 463)

This is what Christ means when he says we must, "will to do the will of God" in order to discern his voice in the Scriptures.

*We don't always do this well, do we? Which brings us to the next point...*

*Christ's authority*

*Christ's hermeneutics*

### Third, Christ's verdict

**What was Christ's verdict? No one keeps the law!**

**John 7:19 (ESV) — 19** Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?"

Jesus says in effect, "you honor, and revere Moses since Moses gave you the law. But doesn't the law of Moses say do not murder? Yet you want to kill me. Therefore, you are breaking the very law that you say you esteem so highly."

**John 7:20–24 (ESV) — 20** The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?"

In other words, "Jesus, you are totally nuts."

**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."

What is going on here???

Jesus is still talking about the law.

He says in effect, "you are accusing me of breaking God's law by healing a man on the sabbath. But in the OT law it is legal to circumcise a child on the Sabbath. If it is legal to circumcise a child on the sabbath, how much more legal is it to heal a man's whole body on the sabbath."

Christ is arguing from the lesser to the greater.

One scholar writes,

"If a baby's flesh may be cut away on the sabbath, then surely a grown man may have his whole body healed without violating the law." (Phillips, 467)

Here is the point!

Christ tells the Jewish leaders that they are guilty of breaking God's law, and he is not!

**John 7:19 (ESV) — 19** Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?"

#### **Application:**

Jesus said to them, "None of you keeps the law." Jesus says this to all of us.

Many people think that they are pretty good, because they compare themselves to others. But God's law is the standard and God's law is summarized in the Ten Commandments.

Let's review...

1. You shall have no other Gods before me (do you always put God first?)

2. You shall not make idols (Is there anything you love more than God?)
3. You shall not take God's name in vain (have you ever said OMG?)
4. You must honor the sabbath (do you find all your rest in Christ?)
5. You must honor your father and mother (do you always honor your parents?)
6. You must not murder (anger is considered murder)
7. You must not commit adultery (lust is considered adultery)
8. You must not steal (have you ever stolen ideas, credit, or glory from others?)
9. You must not bear false witness (have you ever mislead someone?)
10. You must not covet (have you ever coveted your neighbor's talents, spouse, money, success, body, car, or income?)

Hopefully it is obvious—none of us keep God's law perfectly. None of meets God's standards.

**Illustration:**

“Imagine that an airplane flies over the South Atlantic and crashes a thousand miles from any coast. In the plane there are three individuals: a great Olympic swimmer, an average swimmer, and someone who cannot swim at all. The Olympic star calls out, “Follow me — I'll get you out of this!” and takes off with an impressive crawl, heading for the tip of South America a thousand miles away. The other two jump after him.

In about thirty seconds the non-swimmer goes down starts sinking to the bottom of the ocean.

It takes about thirty minutes for the average swimmer to be deep-sixed.

But the champion swimmer churns away for twenty-five hours, covering an impressive fifty miles. Terrific! Only 475 more hours to go! He'll be there in nineteen days if he doesn't slow down.” (K. Hughes)

Even the best swimmer can't save himself. It is impossible.

No matter how many good things we do, we can never do enough. The law was never meant to save. Rather, the law was meant to point us to Christ.

**Illustration:**

The law can be compared to a mirror.

The function of a mirror is to show you your face and, if your face is dirty, to show you that it is dirty. The purpose of a mirror is not to wash your face. Imagine a person coming into the house after a hard day's work, looking in a mirror, and discovering that his face is dirty. Then imagine him taking the mirror off the wall and attempting to wash his face with it. How ridiculous! Yes, but it is no more ridiculous than the folly of a man who thinks that he can be made righteous by the law's righteous standards. The purpose of the mirror is to drive one to the soap and water. Similarly, the function of the law is to drive the one who discovers his sin by means of the law to Christ. (Boice, 568)

Application:

Explain Christ's active and passive obedience.

Not the labors of my hands  
 Can fulfill thy law's demands;  
 Could my zeal no respite know,  
 Could my tears forever flow,  
 All for sin could not atone;

Thou must save, and thou alone.  
Rock of ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in thee.

We all must hide ourselves in Christ by faith!

### **Conclusion:**

George Whitefield lived during the eighteenth century and was one of the human catalysts of the Great Awakening. God used Whitefield powerfully in both England and America as he preached the gospel in open fields to thousands.

Whitefield was a man of incredible spiritual power, and he possessed remarkable physical gifts. One biographer wrote,

“[Whitefield] recounts that in Philadelphia that same year on Wednesday, April 6, he preached on Society Hill twice in the morning to about 6,000, and in the evening to near 8,000. On Thursday, he spoke to “upwards of ten thousand,” and it was reported at one of these events the words, ““He opened his mouth and taught them saying, were distinctly heard at Gloucester point, a distance of two miles by water down the Delaware River. . . . And there were times when the crowds reached 20,000 or more.” (Cited in Piper, “Velvet-Mouthed Preacher”)

Two miles! Twenty thousand people! Outdoors! No microphones! I would have loved to hear George Whitefield preach. (Carter, 237)

George Whitfield was a great teacher/preacher. Thousands walked for miles to hear him preach and teach in the wind, cold, and rain. But no one taught like Jesus. As a result, no one has influenced the world like Jesus.

But he was more than a great teacher. He was also the savior of the world!!!

Let's pray...