The Teaching of Jesus

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Preacher: Rev. Sol Green

[0:00] I especially appreciate Colin's song. I think after the news and the pastoral prayer that I did, Colin's song was helpful and was very connected.

! We can trust God. Why don't you turn with me to the book of John, chapter 7. Gracious Father, help us to understand your teaching, that we would obey it.
In Christ's name, amen. I wonder if you've had a teacher that just made a tremendous impact on your life.
Someone that you just connected with, that taught you the material, but they taught it in such a way that not only did you remember it and understand it, but you also kind of made that information your own.
A teacher that made the subject just kind of come alive. A teacher that when you actually, you took the class and you were just glad, wow, I'm just so happy that I had that teacher and that material.
[1:23] I have to tell you, my granddaughter has just a wonderful teacher that has just made, even so far this year, has just made tremendous inroads with her.

When I look back, I can't remember a single teacher I had in grade school or high school. That probably says more about me than them. I want you to know, but I can't remember a single one.
When I went to OSU, by that time in my life, I already had a wife, two kids, a full-time job. The teachers, even though I was really interested in the material, I just loved physics.
I loved calculus. But still, it was kind of like they were a means to an end. I finally had one of those teachers.
In seminary, I had Dr. Crawford. I know Linda knows him, maybe some of the others. He was at Grand Rapids for many, many years. He's with the Lord now.
[2:29] He taught systematic theology and church history. I can remember going there for summer sessions. Because they would pack the stuff together for summer sessions, you would have four hours of class, four hours of lecture.

Dr. Crawford could use all four hours and then some. When you got done with this class, and if Rich Brown and I used to just talk about Dr. Crawford all the time.
When you got done with that four-hour class, you know what you wanted to do? Go to the dorm room and read your Bible. You couldn't wait to just, I want to know some more.
How does that fit? How does that fit into this? How do these things connect together? You were just so excited about the material. You would stay up until early hours of the morning and then just get up and do it again the next day.
Because Dr. Crawford made God's word come alive. He made you want to know it. As I said, he's with the Lord now. But you know, but I really appreciated him.
[3:44] But Dr. Crawford, or the teacher that you thought of when I asked if you had one of those teachers, can't compare with the great teacher.

In fact, in many ways, the biggest thing, the most significant thing about Jesus Christ was his teaching rather than his miracles. You see, in many ways, the miracles were really less consequence.
People liked the free lunch. The Pharisees and scribes were not concerned about meals on wheels. But what they didn't like was when Jesus Christ said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.
I am the bread of life. And if you don't eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, you are not part of me. And when he said that, what happened?

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Everybody left. Except the twelve. And even with them, he turns to Peter and says, Are you going to go? And what does Peter say? I would, but where else would I go? There's no place I could go because no one else has the words of life.
[4:56] John chapter 7, verses 14 to 24. About the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. The Jews therefore marveled, saying, How is it that this man has learning when he's never studied?

So Jesus answered them, My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I'm speaking on my own authority.
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.
Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me? The crowd answered, You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill you? Jesus answered them, I did one work, and you all marvel at it.
Moses gave you circumcision, not that it came from Moses, but from the fathers. And you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 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?
[6:09] Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment. You'll remember the context with me. Jesus had been in Jerusalem about six months earlier, and at that time he had healed a man by the pool of Bethsaida.

It was on the Sabbath. And he told the man, Get up, take your bed, and go. Them, the religious leaders, seeing Jesus tell this man to carry his bed on a Sabbath day, were just incensed.
And they did try to kill him. So much so that Jesus had to leave there. He went back up to the northern part, and then there's about a six-month period in there, and then we come to right before this, where Jesus' brothers, his earthly human half-brothers, had said to him, Hey, you want to be something special?
Go to Jerusalem during the Feast of the Tabernacle. That's when everybody goes to Jerusalem again, and you can just go in there and teach, and everybody will make a big thing over you. Jesus wasn't concerned about his own glory.
He was about completing the will of the Father. So he said, I'm not going now. And this passage that we're looking at today, then Jesus does go.
[7:31] Someplace in the middle of the feast. And he goes and he starts teaching, and people in Jerusalem, just like people every place that he went, are amazed at his teaching.

See, the teaching of Jesus was unique. First thing I want you to see is that his teaching was with understanding. It was informed.
It made sense. It was attractive to people. It fit together. We might say that it was logical. It made sense. Of course it was biblical. And I'll have more to say about that in just a few minutes.
But notice that his teaching was understandable because it was with understanding. It drew people to him. Yes, people came for the miracles.
But even when there were no miracles, people still flocked to him in such numbers and with such aggressiveness that many times he had to either slip away or he had to get into a boat and go out into the water so people wouldn't crush him.
[8:41] That crowd of people was one of the things his enemies were attracted to. They didn't like the fact that Jesus drew the crowds.

They wanted to be noticed for their elegant talks, for their great-sounding prayers. Since they couldn't refute his teaching, they questioned and attacked his credentials.
They said, in effect, Jesus doesn't know his letters. He doesn't know the alphabet. It could have been a slam, and I think they were not above that.
It could have been saying, Jesus doesn't even know his ABCs. But in fact, Jesus had studied. And all of the children of those days were actually, well, at least all of the boys, maybe the girls.

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That's a little bit unclear. At least some of the girls went to school. All the boys went to school. And we can see, usually they went to the synagogue, and the rabbi of the synagogue would teach them.
[9:42] We can see that Jesus understood how to read. If we look over, I'm going to have you jumping around a little bit. Sorry, that's the way it is. Luke chapter 4. Look at Luke chapter 4, verse 16.

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And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day.
He stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written. I'll just stop there. He goes on to read a very specific passage in the book of Isaiah that talked about the coming Messiah.
It was a passage about him. Now, I want you to understand, just consider for a moment, how difficult that task is. Because it's easy for us to just say, well, so what, you know, Jesus read this part out of Isaiah.
[10:46] We have a scroll, a complete scroll of the book of Isaiah from about the time that Jesus lived. It's from the Dead Sea Scrolls. This scroll is 11 inches high.

It is 24 feet long. It has about 54 columns that are about 6 inches wide each.
Beginning to end. There are no punctuation marks in either Hebrew or Greek. I don't know if it was a Greek text or a Hebrew text.
It could have been either. Both were available at that time and both were read in the synagogues. Okay? But let me just... I know more about Greek, so let me just give you the picture if it were a Greek one.
Okay? If it were a Greek text, there are no capital letters. There are no spaces between the words. Okay? It is simply a 24 foot wide piece of parchment that has letters on like a giant word find.
[12:01] Okay? Jesus opens the text to exactly the place and he reads the message that he wants them to get that he is the coming Messiah.

The closest that we can come to it those of you who still use a printed Bible, I really like using my electronic one. It has lots of advantages. There's only one thing I don't like about it is when I was carrying a paper Bible and after I'd used it for several years, I could say, there's a text I'm looking for.
I have no idea what the reference is, but it's on the left-hand side of the page about halfway down. Okay? That's what Jesus did.
Does that happen with a brand new Bible just out of the box? It does not. It happens from spending time in it. And so, we see that Jesus had a familiarity with God's Word that marked his teaching as being with an understanding of the Father and his perfect will.
What were his enemies actually saying? They might have been this cut that he doesn't even know his ABCs. They were also certainly saying, well, he doesn't know what Rabbi so-and-so said.
[13:22] I bet he has never heard of Rabbi so-and-so. You're right. Jesus didn't know what the John MacArthur's or the John Piper's or the Alistair Beggs or even the Joe Crawford's of his day said, but he knew the Father's will and he did it continuously.

Second thing is Jesus taught with authority. This fact shows up in several places and I want you to look at two of them really briefly with me. The first one is in Matthew chapter 13.
Matthew chapter 13. I'm going to go ahead and read it. You can look at it or you can just listen. 54 and 56. And coming to his hometown, he taught them in the synagogue so that they were astonished and said, where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?
Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? Are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? Are not all his sisters with us? Where did this man get all these things?
In other words, here are the people, his neighbors, his friends from Nazareth, and when he goes there and he teaches, they are just surprised. They're amazed at the teaching that he gives.

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[14:40] Where did he get this ability to teach? John chapter 7. Back to where we were, but just a few verses ahead. The pastor will be talking about this in a few weeks.

Here's what happened.
The scribes and the Pharisees sent their hooligans, their thugs, to go get Jesus. Go get him, bring him here. We'll arrest him quietly. You guys just go get him and kind of kidnap him at night if you have to.
The thugs, the officers, went to find Jesus and they heard him teaching. They come back to the Pharisees who sent them and they said, where is he?
We just stay on a little task. Just go arrest this guy. They come back and they say, but you never heard anybody teach like that before. Jesus taught with authority.
[15:46] It stood out. It made a difference. Interesting, just an aside. Notice the thing that when that happens, what the scribes and Pharisees are really concerned about.

Well, you didn't see any of us there, did you? It's almost like, I hope there wasn't anybody there that we would know. Jesus was different than the scribes and Pharisees because he quoted not men, but God.
His teaching was never marked by references to the great rabbis of his day or the past. He did not have to rely on the understanding of other people because he had perfect understanding of his Father's word.
In fact, when John said, in the beginning was the word, the word was with God, and the word was God, and the word became flesh, he was saying that Jesus Christ is the perfect imprint of the Father.
Jesus was not only different from the scribes and Pharisees in his teachings, but he was also different from the prophets in his teachings. The prophets could say, thus saith the Lord.
[16:51] And throughout the prophets, the minor prophets in particular, you find them over and over saying that this, we are simply the messenger and here's the message. We're going through some of these minor prophets in my small group.

And Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, Micah, every one of them, there's over and over this emphasis, thus saith the Lord, thus saith the Lord.
Jesus' words and deeds are so much different because they're at one with the Father. Not only because of the unqualified obedience that Christ had, but perhaps even more importantly, because he spoke and taught with the authority of the Father.
Jesus doesn't say, thus saith the Lord. He says, I say unto you. You can see it probably the best place, the Sermon on the Mount, where over and over again, Matthew chapter 5 through chapter 7, over and over again, he says, you have heard it said, but I say to you.
A direct instruction authoritative declaration. So Jesus answered them, my teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.
[18:13] As I was studying that over and over this week, I kept thinking of the fact that from his temptation in the wilderness to the cross, Jesus' speech was sprinkled with the written word of God, the Old Testament.

In the wilderness, three times, Satan tempts Jesus from a physical need to the attainment of personal glory.
And each time, Jesus responds with a quotation from the book of Deuteronomy. From the cross, in his dying moments, the majority of the words that he spoke are quotations from either the Psalms or the book of Isaiah.
He taught God's word and he lived it. John chapter 5, verse 19, tells us that Jesus always does what the Father does.
In fact, in the book of John alone, there's over 30 references to the fact that Jesus understood that he was on a mission and with a message from God.
[19:30] He wasn't throwing up new things and throwing out the old. He was fulfilling what God's perfect plan from the beginning, from the garden was. He's not a charlatan.

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He's not some kind of respected leader that inevitably mixed together different motives of, yeah, I want to serve God, but I'd also like to be recognized. In fact, he utterly rejected what might work or what might appear to be successful in favor of his Father's agenda.
It talks about the characteristics of Jesus' teaching. But let me say definitively and clearly that the teaching of Jesus was and is understandable.
It's not filled with lengthy quotations or complex words or distant, complicated, philosophical or theological ideas. Having said that, this passage that we're looking at, Jesus lays out what are the basic principles that are necessary necessary to be able to understand what he said, to be able to evaluate his teaching.
Understanding and a goal. His understanding. What Jesus is saying in this passage in John chapter 7 verse 17, what he's saying is that the question of whether or not his teaching is true cannot be decided by rigorous debate procedures.
[21:13] It can't be decided by human logic. It's not determined by intelligence. There's a moral issue. Let me say it in a sentence.

It'll come up on the screen and then I'll try to explain what I mean. Accepting or rejecting the claims of Jesus Christ is never a purely intellectual decision.
It's a moral and spiritual decision. what is needed first and foremost obviously is the work of the Father in us. But what Jesus is talking about here is the human side of it.
The human side it's necessary in a right assessment of his teaching to choose to do God's will. Then you will find it out. Points not that someone has to attain some level of personal holiness or God approved level of moral perfection and then they can pass judgment on Jesus and his teaching.
Rather the question is that a person must be fundamentally committed to doing God's will. When you think about it that's talking about a faith commitment.
[22:32] John chapter 6 verse 40 for this is the will of my Father that whoever looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

Let's bring that down. Maybe you're here this morning and you're thinking I'm just not sure that I understand everything. I'm not sure that I understand everything that Jesus taught.
I'm not sure I understand anything in the Bible. I'm not even sure that I believe what He said. Not even positive that He existed.
Certainly not that He was who He said He was. Jesus is saying the problem is not your intellectual ability. It's not your formal training.
It's not because you have doubts or questions. The problem is not that you need someone to explain it to you better. The problem is your rebellious nature.
[23:44] You're unwilling to do God's will in God's way. You're unwilling to submit to Him. To turn from your sin to put your trust in Christ.

And until you do that, until you cry out to God to cleanse your heart, to give you repentance and to remove the unbelief, you put your trust in Christ, there's nothing else that really matters.
The goal of this understanding must be much more than just fire insurance, not just to keep us out of hell. it must be more than intellectual accomplishment.
I know more of the Bible verses than anybody else. In fact, I've got three Timothy words. Okay? I don't have any. And I appreciate the kids that do, but that's not going to get you to heaven.
It's only an acceptance of Jesus Christ. It's only desiring and having the goal to bring glory to God. Jesus says, the one who seeks the glory of him who sent me is true, and in him there is no falsehood.
[25:02] And Jesus is clearly speaking about himself here. That there's no falsehood in him, and there's no falsehood in him, because he completely acknowledges and obeys the Father.

But it has to come from us too. The confessions of the early church, which sometimes I think we should pay a little more attention to, have it right.
What's the main goal? What's the chief end of man? Some of you might know the answers to these questions. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.
Perhaps you're here today as a believer, and you feel stuck. You do occasionally read your Bible, but when you do, you don't really get anything out of it.

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You can't really say that you've learned anything about God since you were in children's programs. You have some success, at least for a time, of controlling the sin in your life.
[26:08] But it comes back to the same areas over and over and over again. Jesus tells us how falsehood enters us.

We seek our own glory rather than the glory of the one who sent him. Maybe you want to look good in front of your spouse, in front of your children, children.
Maybe you want to look good in front of your parents, for coworkers, classmates, neighbors. You want people to recognize you as being a pretty good Christian.
Maybe you just want to look good in your own eyes. The way to grow in understanding God and his will is by making it your goal to do his will for his glory.
Psalm 40, verse 8, I delight to do your will, oh my God. Your law is within my heart. You know, that almost always calls for a humbling.
[27:22] We humble ourselves before God and before others. we say to him, it is my own selfish pride, my humility, I need to confess my sin, I need to repent, and I need to change.

Jesus' teaching was unique. It was understandable when we come in obedience and faith. And finally, Jesus' teaching was gospel-focused.
I want to read the passage. I know I'm already in trouble, so hang with me. Has not Moses given you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill me? The crowd answered, you have a demon.
Who is seeking to kill you? Jesus answered them, I did one work and you all marvel at it. Moses gave you circumcision, not that it was from Moses, but the fathers, and you circumcised a man on the Sabbath.
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?
[28:32] Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment. Next week we're going to see the reaction of the people to Jesus' teaching, but the fact is that they do not react with surprise.

They do not react with confusion. They don't say, what in the world is he talking about? Here we are talking about how to know God's will, how to be able to judge Christ's teaching, how to understand all those things, and what does he do?
He goes off talking about Moses. For us, that is what it sounds like, but for them, that's not what it sounds like, because Jesus starts with what I call a duck question.
Okay? Duck questions are questions that you do not need to ask because you already know the answer. Okay? I'll give you the perfect, the best example possible. Moms, your child is there, and you say, would you like an ice cream cone?
And the child says, Mom, you know, I've really been thinking about it. I've kind of had a lot of junk food lately. I really think you probably should give me something that's a little more healthy.
[29:42] Why don't you give me some vegetables, and I'll just pass on the ice cream today. That's probably not what they say, right? Well, Jesus is saying, didn't Moses give you the law?

And they're saying, well, of course he did, you dummy. We know that. And Jesus turns it right around and he said, but you don't obey it. Why was it so significant?
Because Jesus' opponents prided themselves on knowing God's will. They thought, yes, we got that down. We know God's will, and the way we know it is we know the law.
Jesus says, not a single one of you obeys it. He's pointing out to them that mere possession of the law can never guarantee sanctity.
And in fact, possession of the law without obedience to the law is the path of condemnation. The law is the school teacher that shows us our need for Christ.
[30:54] Jesus moves directly from here to reveal the hearts of the leaders by reminding them of their actions. Just six months earlier in John chapter 5, he heals a man and they immediately want to kill him.

Now here he is at the feast of tabernacles. I got to quickly explain. Feast of tabernacles. So you know what this is. This is the time when the people of Israel celebrated the fact that God brought them out of the land of Egypt and he put them into their own land, a place of rest and peace.

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I don't know why we, my grandmother took me to church when I was a child. I don't remember hardly anything. Okay? Didn't make an impact on me, I'm afraid, until later in my life when my life was a mess and I thought, oh wow, I went to church when I was little, maybe I should go back there.
But anyway, here is this feast of tabernacles. The one thing I do remember is for some reason our Sunday school teacher had us make tabernacles.
They had us make these little tents out of branches and stuff. I have no idea why. But it did leave an impact on me. That's what happened.
[32:11] What they had was a national camping day. They all took their tents from wherever they lived, they went to Jerusalem, they set the tents up, or sometimes they were just lean-tos, okay?

They set them up in the streets of Jerusalem and they prayed and worshipped God for delivering them out of the house of bondage and bringing them into a land of plenty.
it's a picture of redemption. And that's where Jesus is. He's right there in Jerusalem teaching.
And he brings up Moses. There's a message here. Jesus says the healing of the man on the Sabbath was a cleansing of the whole man.
And just like the partial cleansing that circumcision is supposed to illustrate, the cutting off, removal of the condemnation of the world and the corruption of the world and the making his children his own and marking them out as his.
[33:22] Just like that circumcision overruled a strict keeping of the Sabbath, Jesus says the complete healing of the man overrules the strict keeping of the Sabbath.

Because the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Jesus' healing of that man then becomes a fulfillment of Old Testament circumcision.
redemption of On the very day that served as a sign of God's Old Testament purpose of redemption and rest.
Jesus' reasoning is insistent that his activity is fulfillment of that redemptive purpose of God. By the statement, he's making the point that his teaching, his miracles, his activity is the fulfillment of the redemptive purposes of God.
Finally, in their approach to God's will, if it were one where they were one of faith, they would soon discern that Jesus is not a Sabbath breaker but the one who fulfills both the Sabbath and circumcision.
[34:49] The problem, however, is really that they have no relationship with God. They know the law of Moses, but there's no relationship there.

And Jesus points this out to them and in so doing, he brings them to the point of decision. He says, righteous judgment results from right relationship. relationship.
So how about you? Righteous judgments come from right relationship. Have you come to the place where you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
Have you come to the place where your relationship with Christ so impacts you that when you read the Bible, it's not, oh, this stuff doesn't make any sense, but it's, that's my Savior.
do you seek to obey God? Are you trying to change? Pastor Kenoyer has been saying a lot recently, and it's exactly true, you don't have to stay the way you are.
[36:06] You know what the sad thing is? Most people that I've come into contact with in ministry want to stay the way they are. They don't want to change, at least not if it means giving up any of the sin that they're involved in.

Do you want to change? The Holy Spirit is there to help you, to bring you to that change in life. But you have to say, yes, I repent.
I'm the one who is wrong. Let's pray. Let's pray. maybe this morning that someone needs to make a decision.
In the Sunday school class this morning, we were talking about the fact that Paul labored and toiled to make his people mature in Christ.
Maturity is the goal. Gracious Father, I pray that you would work in people's hearts. That if there's someone here who has just been playing the games, they think they know God's will because they know the law.

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[37:26] They think they know God's will because they look good. That you would reveal to them where their heart really is. And they would come to the place of accepting your son Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, it's also with believers. So many times we can change, but we don't want to. Father, I pray that you would work in individuals' hearts, believers here today, to draw them to the cross again, that they would repent.
By doing so, they would begin the process of you changing them. I ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you.

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