

43-07-02-An Amazing Promise from Jesus
 evangelism, Kingdomtide, doubt, faith, knowledge, will, truth, choice
 John 7:16-18

A sincere willingness to obey God opens the heart to Gospel truth.

INTRODUCTION:

–*Kingdomtide's* focus is on *spreading the Gospel, growing the Church* [i.e, *sharing our faith*]. A good way to start sharing is to ask, “*Can I pray for you?*” or say, “*Tell me about your spiritual journey.*” If we *do* get to speak about Jesus, *they may say they can't believe* in Him. In that case, He has a promise for them in **John 7:17**, *If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.*

–An ***amazing promise***, but ***conditional***: people “will find out” that what Jesus says about Himself is true, only if they conform self-will to “God's will.” **HOM.idea.** [**John Colin Kruse**, in the Tyndale Comm. on John, says, “*recognizing the truth of Jesus' teaching is not dependent upon intellectual ability or formal learning, nor is it a reward for the noble search for truth. It depends, rather, upon a person's willingness to do the will of God. The impediments to knowing the truth about God are more likely to be moral (lack of readiness to do God's will) than anything else.*”] (Some just aren't ready for that level of self-surrender.)

–**Here's the context of Christ's promise: John 7:16-18**, ¹⁶*Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.”* ¹⁷*If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.* ¹⁸*He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.”* Jesus said this to Jewish religious leaders who wanted to kill Him for healing a man on the Sabbath. *What was their problem?!*

I. Legalism Blinds People to Godly Discernment– John 7:24, “Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.”

- A. A “right judgment” about Jesus was guaranteed, if they'd *really* be willing “*to do God's will.*” (But *religious legalism* blinded them.)
1. Legalists think they're already doing “God's will.” (“*We follow the Sabbath law, but Jesus broke it, making him a false teacher!*”)
 2. Legalists have tunnel-vision, seeing things only in the way their group interprets the Bible: “*No dancing, no card-playing, and no movies, because all of them are associated with other evils!*”
 3. Legalists judge “by mere appearances,” when others don't conform to their own behavior patterns: “*If she's a real Christian, she*

would dress in her Sunday best at church, like all of us.”)

- B. **John 1:17** told us, “the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (*The difference is crucial!*)
1. **Legalism** looks to “the law” to *gain and maintain a right standing with God*, but that *wasn’t* its purpose— **Rom 3:2**. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. (“So the law,” says **Gal 3:24**, “was put in charge **to lead us to Christ** that we might be justified by faith.”)
 2. OT “law” is *holy and true* but offers no “grace” to help us keep it. (Jesus brought the “grace and truth” of faith.... When asked in **John 6:28–29**, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”)

TRANS: Jesus was speaking to *legalists* who *judged by* “appearances,” had *tunnel-vision*, *didn’t trust Him*, so they couldn’t “do the works God requires... to believe in the one he has sent.” But He gave them a very effective way to end their unbelief: “*If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.*” **Only a sincere willingness to obey God opens the heart to Gospel truth.**

II. Why Does This Conditional Promise Work?

- A. A *choice of the will precedes acknowledging truth*. (It’s a principle in all *human learning*, both *natural* and *spiritual*.)
1. The **will** is involved in *learning*. [e.g., we must *pay attention* to the lecture to know what’s on the test; we must *open our eyes* to study a manual; we must *use our hands* in *hands-on* training.] (Learning is work: *our will makes an effort in the learning process*, or *we don’t learn*.)
 2. **God designed us** with an even greater need for our will to make a *choice* before we receive *spiritual knowledge and growth*.
 - a. We see this in Job 28:28, ‘The **fear of the Lord**—that is **wisdom**, and to **shun evil** is **understanding**.’ (*The chosen disposition comes first...*)
 - b. It’s stated perfectly in— **Pro 16:3** (NKJV), **Commit your works** to the LORD, And **your thoughts** will be established. (*The will before mind*.)
 - c. Jesus says it in John 8:31b–32, ...“**If you hold to my teaching**, you are really my disciples. **Then** you will **know the truth**, and the truth will set you free.” Again in Mat 11:29, “**Take my yoke** upon you and **learn from me**.” (*A choice of will precedes learning true knowledge*.)
 - d. Paul’s hope in **2 Tim 2:25**, expressly states this concept: “that God

will grant them **repentance** leading them to a **knowledge of the truth**.”

- B. God seeks an authentic love-relationship with us, **not** based on our partial knowledge of Him, **but** on our commitment to Him in the same way He has committed Himself to us: a choice of His will.
1. [Wedding vows are pledged by couples who don’t fully know each other. But they *choose a life-long pact, promising mutual love for the long, often rough journey of getting to know, better and better, the person they married.*]
 2. Those with doubts about making a faith-commitment to Jesus have this gracious, **amazing promise** from Him: “*Surrender yourself to do God’s will, and it will become crystal clear to your understanding that **I am the way, the truth and the life, and that no one can come to the Father except through Me.***”

CONCLUSION:

—**A sincere willingness to obey God opens the heart to Gospel truth.** Pray that unbelievers have that willingness. If they say, “*I can’t accept Christ without all my questions answered first,*” they themselves **aren’t** answering the most important question: “*Are you ready to accept the challenge of John 7:17? Are you prepared to give up society’s popular ideas, your philosophical opinions, or even the religious belief-system you were raised with, in order to do exactly what your Maker wants?*” —God doesn’t let people know Him personally, if they’re unwilling to give their wills to Him. **This applies especially to us as His Bride.** If we want to know *our Bridegroom Jesus* better, that *intimate, personal kind of knowledge* must be preceded by a surrendered will, even by a choice to repeat, as often as necessary, our eternal wedding pledge: “*I do.*”