

“Obedience Opens Understanding”

John 7:14-24

Hello friend and welcome to *Hope for Today*. My name is J. Mark Horst; I’m your friend and Bible teacher. The program you’re listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope, an international Gospel radio and literature ministry. Each week the Bible teaching broadcasts of *Heralds of Hope* circle the globe in English and 21 other major languages.

The Bible is the only source of lasting hope. It is God’s Holy Word. You know as well as I do that we can’t rely on the words of men because men change. Think of all the unkept promises people have made, maybe even specific promises to you personally. But God is unchanging, He keeps His promises. His Word is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The Psalmist, David, said in Psalm 119:89, “*Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in Heaven.*” You and I can depend on God’s Word.

Because God’s Word is unchanging and reliable, we share this teaching with many people around the world in different languages. And we receive many testimonies of lives that have been transformed by the power of the Gospel.

are available, but they are expensive. The average person can’t afford to buy one. We look forward to expanding our Bible distribution ministry there.

Now in just a few moments, we’ll present today’s teaching, “Obedience Opens Understanding.” But before we do, let’s pray. Gracious God our Heavenly Father, we bow in your holy presence. We acknowledge You as the giver of every good gift. We worship you and praise your name.

And now, Father, as Dr. Yoder comes to teach us from your Word, open my heart and the heart of each person listening to receive what you have for us today. Help us to see how obedience opens our understanding. I pray this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Now, here’s Dr. Yoder.

Obedience opens understanding. Many people have hesitated to believe because they were not able to understand. They have the mistaken notion that they must understand everything before they believe, when really it is the other way around. We believe and then we understand. All of us have asked questions from our childhood. To us they were important questions. We probably have some questions that are still unanswered.

One of the secrets to understanding spiritual truth is obedience. This is an important principle. Obedience is closely related to belief. Some people think they must understand everything before they can believe. Others think they must understand everything before they will obey. But I want to point out to you that OBEDIENCE OPENS UNDERSTANDING.

This comes to the surface so well in the discourse of Jesus in John 7:14-24.

14 *Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.*

15 *And the Jews marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*

16 *Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.*

17 *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

18 *He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.*

19 *Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?*

20 *The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?*

21 *Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.*

22 *Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.*

23 *If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?*

24 *Judge not according to the appearance but judge righteous judgment.*

In these verses we can develop several PROPOSITIONS from which we must conclude that obedience opens understanding.

The First Proposition is,

You Must Earn the Right to Speak.

For the people it meant you go to school; it meant you get an education. They looked at Jesus while He was teaching and said, “How can this man teach never having gone to school?” He doesn’t know very much; he’s never been to our schools. I know what it means to work hard for

an education, to spend long hours at a study table. I know what they meant, yes indeed, but Jesus went on to say it's not so much where you have spent your time, at this or that educator's table, it is whether you know Him. For Jesus it meant a proper relationship to God because He explained that anyone who does the will of God shall know whether His teaching is of God or not. He said, "I speak what God gives me," and He challenged them to believe and do.

I want you to especially notice how Jesus said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." I point out to you that you must earn your right to speak and when you obey, great areas of understanding are opened to you. In that way proof is forth coming. Before you turn off Jesus' words, make sure that you test them. Don't just walk away from this and say, "No, there is nothing to it." Do what He says and see whether I'm not right that obedience opens understanding.

A Second Proposition is,

The Law of Moses Was Given to Keep.

Jesus said, "Moses gave you the law and nobody keeps it." We all acknowledge that Moses is the lawgiver. Maybe we should change that just a bit; Moses was the law revealer for God gave him the law. We can read about this in the Old Testament in the book of Exodus. Moses went up on the mountain and God gave him the law. But in that law was this statement: "this do and thou shalt live". Yet Jesus, looking in upon the situation of His day, said nobody keeps the law. Well, I could add, were Jesus here today He would say the same thing, nobody keeps the law. Yet in His day and ours some of the people who are strongest in their condemnation of another are those who do not practice the law themselves. So, it was in His day. He said, "You don't keep the law but you condemn me."

Now how could that be? The law of Moses was given to be kept. Now before you take sides, my friend, make sure you do not condemn in others what you allow in your own life. I'm speaking to you right there, right now.

There's a Third Proposition:

The Basic Truth Everyone Must Meet.

Jesus used the illustration of circumcision. That right was given to Abraham many years before Moses came on the scene. That's why Jesus said it wasn't of Moses, it was of the fathers.

God instructed Abraham that the circumcision should be done on the eighth day. It could at times fall on the Sabbath day. In the time of Jesus, it was important enough for them to go ahead with the circumcision. So, in order to keep this law of the circumcision they set aside another law, the law of the Sabbath. This law took first place. Then Jesus raised a very important question with them because He had healed a man on the Sabbath day. He said, “Are you going about to kill me because I made a man every bit whole on the Sabbath day?”

He questioned their form of reasoning. Well, I do too, don't you? If to circumcise a boy baby on the Sabbath day is right, then surely to heal a man, make him whole, would also be right. Such basic truth we must all meet. Before we decide we must make sure we have all the facts. Truth must be faced with honesty. We cannot shirk it.

From Jesus' words we must conclude simply that obedience brings depth of understanding. These propositions make that very clear: you must earn the right to speak; the law of Moses was given to keep; such basic truth everyone must meet. I urge you to listen to Jesus.

Thank you, Dr. Yoder for that helpful teaching. My friend, can you testify to this truth that obedience opens understanding? If you can, we'd like to hear your experience and your testimony.

You can send your testimony to us by e-mail using this address, mail@heraldsofhope.org. That email address again is, m-a-i-l@heraldsofhope.org. Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. And, when you send your testimony you can also request a printed manuscript or an audio CD of this teaching, “Obedience Opens Understanding.” We'd be happy to send this teaching to you.

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Now friend, I urge you to tune in next week as we continue study in the Gospel of John. In his teaching, Dr. Yoder will speak on the subject, “Is This the Very Christ?” You won't want to miss that. And until then, keep looking for that blessed HOPE.