

“Thinking Right”

John 11:28-37

Hello friend, I'm J. Mark Horst, your host and I welcome you to *Hope for Today*. The program you're listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope, we're an international Gospel media ministry. Each week the Bible teaching broadcasts of *Heralds of Hope* circle the globe in English and 21 other major languages. Thousands are tuning in each week to receive spiritual nourishment and blessing.

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 make, 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 in both audio and print. And we receive many testimonies of lives that have been transformed by the power of the Gospel.

Here's a testimony from a 65-year-old grandmother in Zimbabwe who received a copy of the Scriptures in her language, Shona. Here's what she wrote, "Thank you very much for reaching me and my community with the true word of God. It is very difficult to buy Shona Bibles in this country but through your benevolence I am a proud owner of a personal copy of the precious book of life. I am very active in the women's ministry and now that I have a bible, I am going to double my effort. I have received a new lease of life. Having received a copy of the bible, I am encouraged and motivated to do more for the Lord because God is with me. Thank you."

That's a testimony from the country of Zimbabwe in the southern part of the African continent. What a privilege to bless this woman with a copy of God's Word! I'm sure this gift will impact her life and the lives of many around her.

Now, here's Dr. Yoder with today's teaching, "Thinking Right."

God made us in such a way that we can think. He made us with the power of thought. There is a right way to think and there is a wrong way to think. No one can come to the right conclusion if

he starts wrong. Just as you cannot reach your home unless you go in the right direction, so you cannot come to the right conclusion if you are thinking wrong.

Since wrong thinking will lead to wrong conclusions, we need very definitely to try to think right. Our Scripture text, John 11:28-37, will help us get our bearings for THINKING RIGHT. This is the story of Mary and Martha, their brother Lazarus, and Jesus.

28 *And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*

29 *As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.*

30 *Now Jesus was not yet come into the town but was in that place where Martha met him.*

31 *The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, she goeth unto the grave to weep there.*

32 *Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*

33 *When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,*

34 *And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.*

35 *Jesus wept.*

36 *Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!*

37 *And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?*

From our Scripture text I bring together several WARNINGS to help you in thinking right.

First of all, **Avoid Judging Action.**

“The Master is come, and calleth for thee,” Martha said to her sister, Mary. It was a secret message and there was an immediate response. Mary arose up quickly to go and find Jesus.

The Jews misunderstood her action. When they saw Mary get up quickly to leave, they concluded that she was going to the grave, Lazarus’ grave, to weep there. But, you see, they were wrong in their judgment. In judging Mary’s actions they drew the wrong conclusion because they did not know everything that was going on in her heart and mind or in the heart and mind of Martha. Because they did not know everything that was going on, they judged the action of Mary and came to the wrong conclusion.

Thus, this warning is good for us, too, because actions do not always tell us everything that is happening. Actions are an indicator. But we should avoid judging actions without all the related facts in mind.

A second warning is **Avoid Judging Absence**.

When Mary came to Jesus, like her sister she said, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” There may be several ways to interpret Mary’s word. It appears to be something of a veiled charge against Jesus for not coming when they first sent for Him. It may also be an expression of complete and utter confidence that had Jesus been there, then Lazarus would not have died.

I think Mary may be expressing something of a judgment on Jesus for not coming when they first sent for Him. In this statement is implied that Jesus’ absence was the result of neglect. Had He come when they sent for Him then there trouble would not have been so acute. She was judging the absence of Jesus.

I want you to see that Jesus did respond when He saw all this and heard the sister’s remark. The Bible says He groaned in His Spirit. And then He asked, “Where have ye laid him?” He was not without deep felt love for these sisters. But they were judging Him because He was not there because He had been absent.

So this warning is good for us too. Absence does not necessarily mean neglect. It may be for reasons that we do not understand. These sisters needed to learn that the Lord’s absence was not because He did not care.

There's a third warning: **Avoid Judging Attitude.**

We have probably the shortest verse in all the Bible right here: two words, "Jesus wept". Mary was weeping. The Jews were weeping. And Jesus' heart yearned for His friends. So Jesus wept.

Now the by-standers who were looking on rendered a judgment. They said, "Behold, how he loved him!" It was in the same general community where Jesus had healed the man who was born blind recorded in John the 9th chapter. That's why they responded the way they did, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind man have caused that even this man should not have died?"

In other words, they were judging Jesus' attitude. He should have done something which He did not do. If He could have opened the eyes of the blind man, which indeed He did, He should have been able to do something for these sisters before their brother died.

This warning also is good for us because they judged the attitude of Jesus incorrectly. You see, attitude cannot be seen and sometimes we make wrong judgments because we do not understand the attitude of the person we judge.

I lay before you these warnings so you might think right: avoid judging actions just by what you see; avoid judging absence when someone may not be there; avoid judging attitude for you cannot see everything in the heart.

Our deepest problem is we often lack the facts to think right. So I urge you, be absolutely sincere in your search.

Thank you, Dr. Yoder for showing us so clearly the importance of proper thinking. You and I must be sure we have the correct information in order to think clearly. So, along with Dr. Yoder I urge you to sincerely seek the truth found in God's Word, the Bible.

My friend, was this teaching helpful to you? If so, you can request a copy of it either on an audio CD or in a printed script. Just ask for it by the title, "Thinking Right."

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Now, I urge you to tune in next week as Dr. Yoder continues our study from John's Gospel. And until then, I urge you to keep looking for that blessed HOPE.