

All That Matters

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In Jesus' incomparable Sermon on the Mount, He said:

Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Mat. 7:21-23).

Herein we see a great and fundamental Truth: the vanity, presumptuousness, and danger of doing anything that Jehovah has not authorized. In His sweeping principle, the Lord embraced every doctrine and practice that constitute faithfulness to God and His Son. If one is determined to "do all in the name of the Lord" (Col. 3:17), he will reject every doctrine and practice Jesus does not authorize in His New Testament (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Jesus' statement demonstrates the insufficiency of several things upon which millions who profess belief in Christ are relying in religion. It is not enough to:

- Merely believe in (i.e., intellectually acknowledge) Christ
- Confess one's belief in Christ
- Prophecy or preach some religious message
- Perform religious works, even if they appear to be great
- Be sincere in one's religious doctrine or practice
- Be zealous in one's religious activity
- Merely "like" a doctrine or practice
- Believe, do, or teach something because of its popularity

To merely speak the Lord's name over something we are doing does not equal His approval. The sons of Sceva quickly learned this to their own dismay and discomfort (Acts 19:14-16). Jesus' statement conclusively shows that God not only requires more than mere faith and its confession for salvation, but that He also requires more than mere works. If one's works are not the works God has authorized, they are all done in vain regarding God's notice or approval (Mat. 15:9). That which God does not authorize, He does not accept or recognize.

Jesus once asked the Jewish rulers, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?" (Mat. 21:25). In doing so, he exhausted all possibilities. The wicked Jews knew

better than to argue that there was a third possible source of authority. Every doctrine and practice in religion is either authorized by God in His Word, or it is human in origin – and vain. All that matters is, does God authorize it?

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