



SERIES: September 2022 – February 2023 Believe

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Saturday, September 10, 2022

Scripture: John 1:24-28

TITLE: Christ Alone?

One of the greatest struggles we face today is legalism. We struggle to understand the sufficiency of the work of Christ and the lack of power we have in our salvation. The misunderstanding of who has the power is ongoing. The struggle for our role in salvation is constant. But it doesn't have to be.

Let's pay close attention to an ongoing conversation between John the Baptist and some religious leaders regarding this topic. John 1:24-28 (ESV)

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

In case you forget, the apostle John has made the non-negotiable claim that Jesus Christ is God and took on flesh for our sake. He made his home among us. John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for Jesus.

John's ministry was to be a spotlight that pointed right to Jesus – the Messiah. His job was to prepare the hearts and minds of the people who were to expect this Messiah.

But the religious leaders looked right past Jesus and ignored the Baptist's message. So here, a sub-group of religious leaders continue trying to make sense of John's message. They say, "So you're not the Messiah. You're not Elijah, who we have been expecting. He's not the Prophet that Moses prophesied in Deuteronomy 18.

They were confused because there was the baptism of converts to Judaism. But he was baptizing Jews! They were stumped with John.

So he answers them, "Look, I baptize with water." In other words, you're missing the point. This water baptism does nothing. It's a spiritual discipline. It's preparation. It has no salvific power. I'm preparing people for this Messiah who is here, but you won't recognize him.

How tragic is it that they had been waiting so many years for the Messiah? Over 350 prophecies pointed to Jesus, but they missed him. John says, "this Messiah who is here is so great; I am nothing. I'm not even worthy of untying his sandals."

That's an odd statement. But his point is that a task that many servants and slaves were forbidden to do. He says, "I'm for lower than them and am not worthy of such a task."

John was sent to prepare the hearts and minds of the people to receive the Messiah. Their Savior came to rescue them from their sins. They could do nothing to save themselves. Baptism in water is useless. Religious rituals are meaningless. It is only possible through receiving Jesus and believing in His name (John 1:12).

So here's my challenge for you today: Admit how you are struggling with legalism. That anti-Gospel belief that we contribute or have to do something to earn or keep our salvation. No action can do it. Jesus Christ alone is our hope.

So admit your struggle and then lay it before his feet. It's in Christ alone is sufficiency for salvation.

When we believe this, we will win the day!