



SERIES: Believe

SPEAKER: DAN COKE

Friday, December 29, 2023

Scripture: John 5:36-38

TITLE: Works Witnessing to the Word

John 5:36–38 (ESV): “But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.”

Our beliefs are shaped by our moral condition and our moral practice solidifies beliefs. That might seem a bit confusing or even a bit overly simplistic. So let me give an example of what I’m saying. If I say I believe in God and never do what he says, then I am a liar. Furthermore, I will be tempted to justify my continued disobedience to God by claiming that I still believe. The reality is, if I’m living an unholy life, then I am in fact a liar. I don’t actually believe in God. I may believe some things about God, but I don’t really believe in Him. And no matter how many times someone points out my sin to me, I will cover it up by saying I believe in God despite the fact that I have zero intentions of honoring him as God. Again, liar.

Jesus is calling these religious leaders out for their hypocrisy. They claim to be protectors of God’s ways and yet they can’t recognize the works that Jesus is doing as evidence of God’s power. Jesus healed on the Sabbath showing that the ultimate rest comes from God. Jesus opened the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, that they might see and hear the truth. Jesus performed miracle after miracle teaching the people to look to God, not their circumstances.

These works were more than enough to commend Him as someone come from God. In fact, these works will also witness against these opponents on the day of judgment. Earlier in the week, I mentioned how challenging it can be sometimes for young children to receive an authoritative message from a peer, sent by an authority figure. The authority could be mom or dad or a coach. Kids, especially siblings, are suspicious of being taken advantage of. But often, the key is to look at the messenger and pay attention to their behavior, examine their words and compare them with the character of the one whose authority they claim to represent.

Jesus said the religious leaders are unable to discern His works or His words, because they don’t know God personally. And, they have failed to abide in the Word of God. They claim to be defending the honor and glory of God by confronting Jesus, but essentially they’re lying. They are defending their own glory and honor. Jesus points this out by telling them His own works

point to the Father. Additionally, the Word of God had promised that the Messiah would perform these works. Isaiah 61 comes to mind.

His works witnessed to the Word of God and the Word of God witnessed to His works. These are far greater witnesses than John the Baptist was, whom they believed for a short while. Not surprisingly John warned them to bear good fruit in keeping with repentance. Beliefs are shaped by our moral condition and our moral practice solidifies beliefs. What do your actions reveal about your belief in God?