



SERIES: September 2022 – February 2023 Believe

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Monday, October 24, 2022

Scripture: John 5:41-42

TITLE: Religion Won't Save You

Have you ever been turned down for a job? How did it make you feel? In the world of pastoral ministry, people can love you one moment and turn on you the next. When Jesus said that a prophet is rejected in His hometown, He was right. So rejection from a job or anywhere else can be deeply painful.

But what if your value wasn't found in what other people thought about you? That's what we want to talk about today. So let's pick up our study of the Book of John in John 5:41-42.

“I do not receive glory from people. But I know that you do not have the love of God within you.”

Jesus is in the middle of defending himself to the religious leaders who are out to kill Him. He's healed on the sabbath which was against their rules. He's claimed to be God in the flesh. He isn't denying either charge. He's embracing them because they are true.

Beginning in verse 30, He's calling on four witnesses: the witness of John the Baptist, the witness of His works, the witness of the Father's words, and in this section the witness of the Word of God.

The Pharisees are all messed up. They know Scripture but don't know truth. They know of God but don't know Him personally. They are focused on the outward appearance while ignoring the inner reality.

So Jesus says, “I do not receive glory from people.” In Matthew 15:8-9, Jesus quotes Isaiah's prophecy. He says,

““This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.””

Jesus is not interested in flattery or empty words. He's not interested in carrying around an icon or bobble head Jesus on your dashboard. He doesn't want t-shirts. He wants your heart. These Pharisees looked the part but had no heart. Jesus is concerned with the hearts of mankind not empty religion. Jesus' true concern was His Father's glory and God's validation.

We need to be the same. We should find our value in Christ alone. When God sees His children, He sees Christ in us. He doesn't care about the job, the car, the house, the clothes, or social media likes. He loves you. He wants you and your heart. Not religion and hypocritical praise.

This is why Jesus said, "But I know that you do not have the love of God within you." Jesus' knows our hearts. There is no fooling Him. We can fool others with our church attendance, our tax donations receipts, and our bumper stickers but Jesus knows our hearts.

Religion won't save you. Jesus will. Looking good won't save you. Jesus will. That's what Jesus is saying. It's not about religion. It's all about a relationship with Him all at no cost.

So here's my challenge for you today: take the love test. Jesus is asking us today, "Do you love me?" Do you really love Jesus, or do you love the praise of others? Do you love Jesus, or do you love your status at church, online, at work, or at home?

Jesus says, "I don't care about your status. I care about you. It's not about doing. It's all about being."

I can't find anything in this world that compares to the love of Christ. So why do we even try?