



**SERIES: September 2022 – February 2023 Believe**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Tuesday, October 25, 2022**

**Scripture: John 5:43-47**

**TITLE: Out with Religion In with Jesus**

Who is the person you trust most in this world? Why is it that you trust them? But have you ever heard them say something that was just too hard to believe? What was it? Why did you doubt?

Well, Jesus challenged some religious leaders to reconsider the words of their most trusted source. Who was that? What was the topic? Let's turn back to the Bible for the answers. Let's pick up our series Believe in John 5:43-47.

“I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

Jesus' ministry so far could be summarized in two words: proof and purging. Jesus continued to prove His deity. He did miracles both recorded in this book of John as well as in the other Gospels. He knew people's hearts and minds. He could heal the sick. He could restore sight. He could turn water into wine. He proved Himself time and time again. But He was really about purging. Jesus came to purge religion and produce relational salvation. For the past three chapters Jesus has been telling people that eternal life is possible. But it's not possible by your performance. It's not about looking good for God or for each other. Instead, salvation comes through Jesus alone. It's a gift. He's purging religion.

So He continues this purging beginning in verse 43. He says, “I come from the Father. The one you supposedly know and learn from. He sent me. You've read the Scriptures. But you reject me. You don't like my message. You don't like God's plan.”

And then He calls them out. He says, “How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God.?” If Jesus showed up today, he'd say, “Okay. I'm here to blow up your good ol' boys club. Stop passing awards back and forth. Stop dressing up for each other and having self-produced award shows for each other. The only opinion that matters is God. So knock it off.”

As a pastor, I know a lot of the behind-the-scenes of churches is not about the glory of God and of outreach. It's about numbers, inflating reputations, and the best Google ranks. Jesus is not impressed.

And we all do it. We all play the performance game. We want to look good in the eyes of other people. We want the awards publicly given and displayed. We default to religion instead of relational salvation.

Then Jesus brings up Moses. This seems odd to us today. What does Moses have to do with them? They revered Moses. They viewed His writings as definitive. He did write the Pentateuch: the first five books of the Bible, so it wasn't totally misplaced.

But the whole story of the Old Testament was a pointing to Jesus. It was the story of reality and the reality of a coming Savior. 353 prophecies about Jesus and these people knew them. But they look past Jesus and cared more about themselves, their performance, and the opinions of the good ol' boys club.

Moses' words and the writings of the Old Testament are about Jesus. But their most trusted person, they rejected His witness about Jesus. Jesus said in verse 47, "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" It's tragic. The one thing that should have led them to Jesus was the one thing that put up a barrier to Him. That's the danger of self-driven religion.

So here's my challenge for you today: Trust Jesus. Do you believe Jesus? Jesus said in John 5:24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." That's it. Jesus is our only hope. It's not religion. It's not the approval of others. It's Jesus. Do you believe it?