

BELIEVING HAS BEEN MADE EASIER

Matthew 7:13-23

Introduction: There was a story going around that this particular bus driver's driving was so terrible and that everybody who rode his bus prayed all the time they were on the bus until they got off. It was also said about this bus driver that he was responsible for more people being in heaven than the local Baptist preacher as so many "got religion" during their ride on the bus driver's bus. It seems today that "believing" is a bit different from what Jesus described believing as. Jesus never asked anybody to follow Him apart from total surrender and He warned of the cost and the narrow way in following Him. Today anybody can find a church that will accept him/her as a member, regardless of commitment or beliefs. Different phrases are used during church service invitations such as "accept, invite, open the door, make that decision, walk the aisle, raise your hand, try Jesus, etc." "Believing" in Jesus has changed it seems.

I. JESUS' GOSPEL HAS BEEN EXCHANGED FOR A LESS DEMANDING ONE

1. Many teach that there is no need to change or give up anything to be a christian.
2. Many churches have those who have been deceived and are barren, empty inside.
 - A Baptist Association had 140 congregations with 50, 357 members. 37, 450 enrolled in Sunday School and an average of 16, 675 average worship attendance. That's only 25% of the membership in attendance on any given Sunday.
3. Sadly, people have been conditioned to believe that repeating a prayer, filling out a card, walking down the aisle, being baptized equals being saved or having salvation.
4. The Bible tells the "believer" to examine his/her faith, see if there is evidence of God at work in that life.

II. JESUS' GOSPEL HAS BEEN WRONGLY DIVIDED

1. Jesus is Savior **and** Lord, **not** Savior **OR** Lord.
2. It is thought that yielding to the Lordship of Jesus is a matter of choice, yet still be saved.
3. It is said that one must **make** Jesus Lord, but Jesus **ALREADY** is Lord.
4. Nowhere in the Bible is there a promise of salvation to anyone who refuses to accept the Lordship of Jesus - **NEVER**.
5. True faith is not **lip service** (talk). It is obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. Jesus will not save those He cannot be Lord of. There is no having a "part" of Jesus.
 - Jesus does not come to anyone until He come as Lord.

III. FAITH AND DISCIPLESHIP GO TOGETHER

1. There are not **super** Christians and then **ordinary** Christians.
 - Christ does not have two sets of requirements, one for a high class of Christian and another set for the average Christian.
2. Jesus' Gospel rules out "easy believing."
 - He warns over and over that the way is narrow and not everybody who "says so" is.
3. Anything less than believing and doing under the Lordship of Jesus is just not saving faith.

IV. REAL, TRUE SALVATION IS BY GRACE AND FAITH ONLY

1. Grace is not automatic upon a person's motions or actions.
 - Raising a hand, filling out a card, repeating a prayer, even being baptized doesn't mean that the Holy Spirit is involved or even there.
2. Grace does not include the liberty of the Christian to do whatsoever he/she chooses to do or not to do. To just keep on sinning whenever, however, because all is well with God.
3. Faith is more than "understanding" facts and saying you accept those facts.
 - Satan and his demons understand the facts about Jesus very well.
4. Faith is inseparable from repentance, total surrender and a supernatural eagerness to obey the Lord Jesus.
5. Salvation is a gift through one's faith and that kind of faith that draws one to Christ and away from everything else.

CONCLUSION:

1. Jesus said that repentance is the center of saving faith and that meaning to think, to change the mind and one's behavior and direction.
2. Jesus also said that repentance was recognizing one's sinfulness and turning away from that sinfulness and from self and turning to God.
3. God's salvation is perfect, no defects, produces good works and is forever.
4. When God saves a person, that person will be forever changed and will continue to follow Jesus obediently and faithfully until God calls that person home
5. Satan is a great duplicator of the things of God and a great deceiver of people. What he is doing with Jesus' Gospel is taking away and adding to in such a way that it still sounds alright and it doesn't require as much as Jesus does. Satan's gospel is easier but deadly.