

Washington church of Christ

27 Grand Avenue, Washington, NJ 07882

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washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com

Order of Services

Sunday, September 23, 2012

Song Leader	Derald Sanchez
Prayer	David Osinski
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Lee Redd
Prayer for the Cup	Brian Jeffries
Prayer for the Collection	Glenn Montgomery
Assisting at the Table	Bob DeGrado
Closing Prayer	Bob Celentano
Announcements	Ralph Ruggiero

Sunday, September 30, 2012

Song Leader	Tom Dolan
Prayer	David Osinski
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Bob Celentano
Prayer for the Cup	Bob Wydro
Prayer for the Collection	Matt Grimaldi
Assisting at the Table	Bob Celentano Jr.
Closing Prayer	Brian Jeffries
Announcements	Ralph Ruggiero

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm

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Jesus and Religion ... One or Both?

A few weeks ago I came across a YouTube video titled "Hate Religion, Love Jesus", in which a young man set to poetry his thoughts on separating religion and Jesus. His implied conclusion was that everything associated with "religion" is bad, and everything associated with *Jesus* is good ... hence his position of hating religion and loving Jesus.

It should come as no surprise that this video generated a huge number of responses, in which the large majority of people took differing positions and posted other YouTube videos, like "Why I hate religion but love Jesus, Muslim Version" and "Why I Dislike Your Poem, But Love God."

What seemed most interesting to me was that while the objective of the original video was to **bash** religion, many of those responding stated that it was actually **advocating** religion. Which begs the question ... *Can I show my love for Jesus without religion?*

Well ... from the Bible's perspective, the inescapable reality of this argument is that while it may be possible to have religion and not love Jesus, it is impossible to love Jesus and not be religious.

To "re-coin" a question asked by Pontius Pilate (John 18:38) ... What is religion? The word is generally defined, as "(1) a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices, (2) the service and worship of God or the supernatural, and (3) commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance" (Merriam-Webster).

The New Testament writer James stated...

If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (James 1:26-27 NKJV)

With reference to the Greek word rendered *religion* in this scripture, W.E. Vine's dictionary on New Testament Greek Words says ... "in James 1:26, 27 the writer purposely uses the word to set in contrast that which is unreal and deceptive, and the "pure religion" which consists in visiting "the fatherless and widows in their affliction," and in keeping oneself "unspotted from the world." Here we have *religion* used in both the positive and the negative sense.

Furthermore, in Colossians 2:18, we see the same Greek word rendered *worship* ...

Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, (Colossians 2:18)

Here again we have an instance where the Bible speaks of a "religion", angel worship, that does not necessarily coincide with a love for Jesus.

In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Galatians he spoke to his life before he obeyed the gospel...

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: (Galatians 1:13)

In most all later translations of this verse the phrase "Jews' religion" is rendered "Judaism". In both renderings it fits the definition of "religion" in that it denotes a system of attitudes, beliefs, and practices. It should also be obvious here that this "religion" did not include a love for Jesus ... it could even be said that Paul did not even know Jesus when he practiced this religion. Note his words further in the chapter ...

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, (Galatians 1:15-16)

The revelation referred to here was the miraculous manifestation which was made to Paul on his way to Damascus as recorded in Acts 9. That revelation was, among other things, to make Paul "know" Jesus Christ, and the reality of His resurrection.

At the conclusion of His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed those who would be "religious", but their religion was not acceptable to Him...

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV)

Jesus' call to obedience here is evident in that He makes it clear that the kingdom is not only words, it is expressed in deeds ... and, looking back at our definition of "religion" we can see that it is defined by "deeds" and not just "words".

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? (Luke 6:46 NKJV)

The true disciple is one who combines deed and word.

So, we can conclude the obvious, that is, it is possible to be religious in a way that does not adhere to Jesus' commandments.

But, if we don't keep Jesus' commandments, can we truly say that we love Him?

Our Lord clearly stated His position on this question...

"If you love Me, keep My commandments. (John 14:15 NKJV)

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. (John 15:10 NKJV)

Our closing point comes from a prayer of the prophet Daniel ...

And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, (Daniel 9:4 NKJV)

Christians are in a covenant relationship with God. He has made promises to us, and we likewise have responsibilities to Him ... among these is to love Him, **and** keep His commandments. Being religious is a part of loving Jesus.

...**Bob James**

Prayer, Care & Attention...

On Our Prayer List...

- ✧ Georgia DeLorenzo ... Glenn Montgomery's father ... Mary Calentano ... Phyllis Smith ... Gerry Sandusky's son, Scott ... Linda Davis of the church at West Point ... our young people here at Washington ... our congregation.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

Items of Note...

- ✧ A *First Principles* class is being planned for our new converts. Anyone desiring to participate in this class should see Bob James.
- ✧ Over the coming weeks the men will be discussing the teaching program for the congregation. All members are encouraged to submit any ideas relating to topics, program changes, or improvements to any of the Brothers.
- ✧ All members currently teaching should check the Bulletin Board to review, and revise as required, your current class assignment availability.
- ✧ There are still openings on the schedule for *Building Preparation*. Those desiring to assist can check the Bulletin Board in the foyer and sign-up.

Coming Events - Home & Away...

- ✧ There will be a Ladies Bible Class on Thursday, September 27th, at 7:00PM in the home of Dolans. All ladies are encouraged to attend.
- ✧ Our next Singing Service will be Sunday evening, September 30th. See Derald Sanchez if you have a request.
- ✧ Our next Pot-Luck is scheduled for October 7th at the home of Bob and Kathleen Wydro. All are welcomed!
- ✧ The East Orange congregation will host a meeting with Lindy McDaniel, from Lavon, TX on September 28th – 30th. A flyer is on the Bulletin Board.
- ✧ The Fair Lawn congregation will host Lindy McDaniel on October 4th – 7th. The theme will be "Emotions of a Christian".
- ✧ The church in Exton will host a Fall Gospel Lectureship Series on October 18th – 21st. A flyer is on the Bulletin Board.
- ✧ Marty Pickup will be preaching at the Upper West Manhattan congregation on October 20th & 21st on the theme Real Reasons to Believe in Jesus as Portrayed in the Bible. A flyer is on the Bulletin Board.