

God Never Said That | Does it Really Matter What You Believe?

Discussion Guide

www.ordinaryfaith.net/sermons/does-it-really-matter-what-you-believe/

There is a common cultural belief that it doesn't matter what we believe as long as we are sincere; as long as we mean well, our path will ultimately lead to God. This "works based" belief is fundamental to many world religions and faiths. These religions emphasize a reliance on inner strength, a strong moral compass or completion of good deeds for ultimate approval.

While many faiths have some type of God at their center, a relationship with Jesus is what sets Christianity apart from other religions. Jesus did not come to Earth to start a religion. He came to initiate a relationship with each of us. He made it known that He is the ONLY path that will lead to eternal life.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Since relationship is the priority of Christianity and real faith, we must be cautious not to get so absorbed in our "doing" for Christ that we lose our connection with Him. Sometimes we become so distracted by pursuits in service to God, that we forget to pursue God Himself. In cultivating a real relationship (rather than mere action without purpose), we must first consider Jesus' ministry.

CONSIDER THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Jesus had a habit of ministering to the condemned, the people who were otherwise written off by society. He offered forgiveness to the sinner, hope to the addict and healing to the forgotten. He came for those who could acknowledge their brokenness and their need for repentance.

Mark 2:16-17 (NLT) But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees saw him [Jesus] eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?" 17 When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

Though Jesus performed miracle after miracle, his critics only wanted him to stop. But He doesn't stop, He hasn't stopped and He will not stop! Miracles, whether ordinary or extraordinary, are continued proof that we are loved. Jesus will accept you and take you farther than you could ever go alone.

CONSIDER THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

The resurrection of Jesus is proof that God REALLY loves us, but REALLY hates sin. In fact, the greatest display of God's love toward us is also the most disturbing demonstration of His hate toward sin. Jesus lived a sinless life, but was arrested, brutalized, convicted and condemned. Even then, Jesus' love for us persisted as he asked, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Three days later, the stone was rolled away to reveal that Jesus LIVED. Yet, despite the presence of witnesses, there were still critics and unbelievers.

Acts 3:15 (NLT) You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. And we are witnesses of this fact!

There will always be critics and there will always be theories from the unbelievers, but Jesus is bigger than unbelief. Over 2,000 years after His resurrection, Jesus has over 2 billion followers and many of those people follow despite persecution.

CONSIDER THE ETERNAL MESSAGE OF JESUS

Placing our faith in Jesus is the only path that leads to God. True faith comes not just from believing in Jesus, but in following Jesus. Become a disciple and cultivate a relationship with Christ. Join in the day to day relationship that Jesus has invited us into.

Romans 3:22 NLT We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

It DOES matter what we believe and no amount of good deeds or sincerity will take the place of walking through life with Jesus. It isn't about 'trying' to be a better Christian, but 'trusting' in the path that Jesus intended for each of us. Only when we place our trust in Christ, do we receive the gift of eternal life. There are not multiple paths that lead to God; a personal relationship with Jesus is the only way.

Adapted from Lifechurch.com and PursueGod.com

Talk About It...

- *What are your first thoughts regarding today's topic? Please share with the group.*
- *What influenced you spiritually as a child? What about Jesus' life and ministry has impacted you the most personally?*
- *What did your belief system look like prior to knowing Christ?*
- *How is your changed life a miracle? Tell your story.*
- *What about Jesus' life and ministry has impacted you the most personally?*
- *How would you respond to friends or family who believe there are multiple ways to God?*
- *Which side do you lean on the religion vs. relationship table?*
- *How can you gain momentum toward a relationship with God?*
- *What is God calling you to do this week to show the love of Christ to people who don't know Him? Take time to pray for them.*