



The Atheist and the Preacher

I recently heard about an Atheist who challenged a Christian minister to a debate. The Pastor said, “Sure, I’ll debate, but let me suggest something to make it more interesting. I will bring 10 people who have experienced freedom from addictions by the power of Jesus Christ. I want you to bring only one who has been set free from addictions by Atheism.

I will also bring 10 married couples who have had their marriage healed by the power of Jesus Christ and you only have to find one couple whose marriage has been saved by Atheism. The Atheist declined to debate!

This story caused me to think of all the folks I have met over my lifetime who have toyed a little with Christianity the way one might try out a new energy drink. They checked it out a little, went to church once or twice and then decided that the *magic* just didn’t seem to work for them.

What these people sadly misunderstood is that Christianity is not magic and it’s not a formula. It is not even a religion the way most religions are defined. No, Christianity will not work for you unless you actually **change sides**. Jesus taught repentance, which means a 180 degree turn from the way you now live, and complete obedience to Him.

Now reader, you might say, “Ha, I tried that but I couldn’t keep the commandments.” I would say to you, “You’re right! And the reason you couldn’t keep the commandments is because you were trying to be *religious*.” You expected Christianity to work like magic.

The missing ingredient here is the very fiber of what defines Christianity from other religions, the fact that Jesus is **not in the grave** like the founders of other religions. Jesus was raised from the dead and sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven. From there He communicates with those who have already changed sides, gotten serious and asked forgiveness of their old ways and are now the children of God. These are the ones that God gives the power to live a life of victory.

Jesus taught that unless we come to Him in faith as a little child might, we will not see the kingdom of heaven. He speaks of a tender relationship between Himself and His followers. He tells us, "Because you are sons (family), God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So, the missing ingredient that transforms Christianity from mere religion into a powerful, warm, loving relationship with God, is the very much alive person of Jesus Christ. (I know, I spoke to Him this morning.)

My friend, If you have toyed with Christianity as a religion and found no lasting satisfaction, get serious, change sides, invite the Lord Jesus to come and live in you as the Lord of your life. He will give you the power to keep His commandments and you will never go back again.

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