

DON'T SETTLE FOR RELIGION

Don't settle for living a 'religious' life. Live a life of love.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ We live in a world full of religion!
- ❖ When we speak of "religion", we are referring to: a system of beliefs, doctrines, codes of conduct and worship toward a supreme being – the things people believe, say and do in an effort to please their G/god.
- ❖ Now although just about every religion preaches love, harmony, tolerance, peace on earth and goodwill to all, a huge number of wars the world has endured have been started over religion. On a whole, religious people just can't seem to get along!
- ❖ But don't let this discourage you to believe that religion is a bad thing in and of itself. On the contrary, if we live religious lives as James outlined in his epistle, we'll really be doing well (James 1:27).
- ❖ It is extremely important to take care of our widows and orphans during their time of need and to live pure holy lives, unstained and unspotted by the rampant sinfulness of the world around us. *This* is "pure religion", not the use of slander, bombs and war.
- ❖ Loveless religion is prone to accusation, supposition, anger, ungodly, immoral and illegal behaviour.
- ❖ In the name of religion, pro-life activists have killed doctors; some Christians have demonstrated hatred toward homosexuals; suicide bombers have killed innocent people; fathers have killed daughters they felt had left their faith. Many sects of the same religious system have fought to the death over differences in doctrine and understanding.
- ❖ Please understand. Living beyond religion and living in love does not mean we have no commitment, no absolutes, no backbone, no non-negotiable beliefs.
- ❖ It does not mean "anything goes", "everybody's right in their own way", or "all roads lead to Heaven".
- ❖ Nonetheless, we must be aware that until Jesus comes, we'll have to deal with strong differences of opinion, strongly held positions and conflict among brethren.
- ❖ "True religion" means that in spite of our differences, we must let the love of Christ supersede.
- ❖ Let's look at a biblical example of how to go beyond mere religion into a place of love.
- ❖ Acts 4:36 tells us of a man by the name of Joseph (or Joses in the KJV) who lived in such a manner that the apostles found it necessary to change his name from Joseph (meaning "May God Increase") to Barnabas – the "Son of Encouragement".
- ❖ He was the one who paved the way for (the newly converted) Paul to meet the apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 9:27) and he put his own reputation on the line to have them give Paul a sympathetic hearing.

KEY SCRIPTURES: James 1:19-27; Acts 21:17-32; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

- ❖ He, with Paul, was part of the first 'foreign missions' team to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46) and was a faithful friend and partner of Paul's for well over a decade (Galatians 2:1).
- ❖ Barnabas and Paul eventually had a very strong dissention that ended their partnership. Why? Because Barnabas wanted to extend a hand of love and restoration to a young man who had failed them in time past: John Mark (Acts 15:39).
- ❖ Barnabas' acts of love led to Mark's development into a proficient and useful minister of the gospel, to the point where Paul himself requested his help as "being useful to me for service" (2 Timothy 4:11).
- ❖ Mark also became the first to write a biography of Jesus, which is one of the four 'gospels' in our Bibles today, 2000 years later.
- ❖ That's the power of a Christian who lives in love. We have the power to change the lives of others in such a manner that their use and effectiveness for the Kingdom of God may far supersede ours!
- ❖ Love is patient, love is kind, love believes all things, hopes all things (1 Corinthians 13:4 & 7). This is life beyond religion.
- ❖ God doesn't just judge us by the way we adhere to a code of conduct, rules and regulations, but by the love we demonstrate to our brothers and sisters and those in our world outside of the church.
- ❖ Let's not settle for mere religion. Let's truly and sincerely live in love.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. From this lesson, scripture and your own understanding, how would you describe "true religion"? Name/define what you see as "untrue" religion.
2. Some religious organizations/individuals focus primarily on "good works", some on appropriate appearance and others on miraculous signs, for some examples. Is any one of these things the "most important" religious practice and/or (how) do they work together?
3. Reflect: What area(s) of "true religion" do you most need to improve in as you walk with God?

PRAYER TIME

Lord, please give me understanding of how to live out "true religion" in love, bringing glory to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

WEEK OF SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 2021

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) 🧠 (Think about)

! (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↔️ (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline

Start-up: Canada Day 2021 is almost here. How will you celebrate this year (or not)?



ANNOUNCEMENTS

To register for in-person Sunday services:

Go to www.faithsanctuary.com > click the "Eventbrite" link in the top menu and follow prompts

Time: Church doors open at 10:15 a.m. & close at 11:00 a.m.

Public Health protocols to be observed

FAITH SANCTUARY DONATIONS

To donate online, please go to www.faithsanctuary.com/give

For email transfers, please use donate@faithsanctuary.com

Let Me Touch Him

*Oh, to be His hand extended
Reaching out to the
oppressed
Let me touch Him
Let me touch Jesus
So that others may know and
be blessed*

FAITH SANCTUARY ON-LINE SERVICES

SUNDAY @ 10:15 a.m. – Sunday Bible Study

SUNDAY @ 11:00 a.m. – Worship Service LIVE

SUNDAY @ 3:00 and 8:00 p.m. – Worship
Service Rebroadcast

MONDAY @ 6:30 p.m. – Berean Bible Study on
Zoom, Facebook, YouTube

WEDNESDAY @ 7:00 p.m. – Worship Service
Rebroadcast

FAITH FOUNDATIONS

GOD

We believe there is only one God: the eternal, holy, loving, all-knowing, all-powerful, omnipresent Spirit, creator of all (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Timothy 1:17; Leviticus 19:2; 1 John 4:8; Hebrews 4:13; Revelation 19:6; Jeremiah 23:24; John 4:24; Isaiah 44:24; Colossians 1:16).

GOD'S WORD

We believe the Holy Scriptures—The Bible—is God's true and complete Word to humanity, verified most notably through fulfilled prophecies concerning Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Isaiah 41:21-23, 42:8-9, 46:9-10; Luke 24:25-27; John 17:17).

GOD'S CREATION

We believe all people were created in the image of God for His pleasure, to be His children, His church and His bride, living in eternal love and fellowship with Him (Revelation 4:1; Genesis 1:27; John 1:12-13; Romans 8:16; Ephesians 5:25-32; Revelation 19:7).

HUMANITY'S FALL

We acknowledge that we have all sinned and failed to fulfill God's plan and purpose for our lives, through willful disobedience to the word of God and our own conscience. All sinful acts lead to separation and alienation from God's pure, holy presence, eventually resulting in both physical and spiritual death (Romans 3:23, 6:23a).

THE GOSPEL

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Almighty God, fully divine and fully human (1 Timothy 3:16). He came to Earth and suffered death by crucifixion, willingly substituting Himself for us in receiving God's judgment against sin (Isaiah 53:5). But God raised Him from death (Acts 5:30), and He now offers eternal life to all who will believe in Him (John 3:14-17, 6:29; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Romans 6:23b; Ephesians 2:4-9). Faith is sparked within us when we hear the gospel, the "good news" that Jesus died, was buried and rose from the dead for our benefit (Romans 10:14-17; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

OUR FAITH RESPONSE

Hearing the gospel is intended to lead us to repentance, a divinely inspired change of heart that causes us to turn away from our sins and turn to God (2 Corinthians 7:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:24-26). Faith and repentance lead us to obey the scriptural command to be baptized in Jesus' name for the forgiveness of our sins and to receive His gift of the Holy Spirit. His Spirit gives us the power to live a righteous, godly life, joyfully sharing the good news of our new life in Christ with others (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 4:12; 1 Peter 1:22-23).

CHRIST'S RETURN

We believe our Lord Jesus Christ will soon return to Earth to receive His people to Himself and establish His righteous, eternal kingdom (John 14:3; Matthew 25:34).

JUNE 27, 2021



2021 ~ Live It! ~ 2021

Pastor: Rev. Granville E. McKenzie

*"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 1:27 NKJV*

1901 Jane St, Toronto, Ontario M9N 3T9

Phone: 416-244-4898

Email: mail@faithsanctuary.com

Website: www.faithsanctuary.com

Livestream: <https://faithsanctuarytoronto.online.church>