

IS IT AUTHORIZED?

Near the close of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said:

Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Mat. 7:21–23).

This passage teaches a great fundamental Truth—the emptiness and presumptuousness of doing anything the Lord has not authorized. Every ingredient of faithfulness to God and His Son is subsumed in this sweeping principle. One who has his heart set on doing “all in the name of the Lord” (Col. 3:17) will be faithful in all things.

The Lord's statement clearly demonstrates that God requires more than mere faith, sincerity, human effort, and/or “religious” acts if one is to be saved. Unless one is engaged in behavior God has authorized (i.e., doing “the will of my Father”), one's efforts are all in vain. What God does not authorize, He does not recognize.

It is not enough that we like something, something attracts large crowds, a “big” congregation somewhere is doing this or that, or some “great name” preacher supports, endorses, or teaches it. All that matters is, does God authorize it?

Merely to call Jesus' name over what we do is no sign of His approval (Acts 19:14–16). Faithful men restored the church in modern times on the premise of book, chapter, and verse—explicit or implicit—Scriptural authority for every word and deed. We must never forget this fact. So much preaching and practice nowadays has no more authority for it than John Calvin, ancient councils, creed books, some popular

psychologist or philosopher, “I don’t see anything wrong with it,” “I like it,” or a combination thereof.

One is not faithful to God who is not faithful to Christ (John 15:23). One is not faithful to Christ who does not honor His Word (John 12:48). God has given His Son “all authority” (Mat. 28:18), and we must scrupulously submit to it. According to Jesus, those who try to “free-lance” in religion will arrive at the Judgment to hear Him say, “I don't believe we've met and it's too late to get acquainted now.”

—Dub McClish

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