**Does It Matter What We Believe?**

Jarrod Jacobs

 Many today ask this question in reference to religious matters. Depending upon who we ask, some will say that it does not matter what we believe so long as we are honest and sincere about religious issues. Others will say that what we believe matters, religiously. Which answer is correct? Let us look to the Bible and see whether or not what I believe “matters”.

 If, in spiritual matters, it does not matter what we believe, why did Jesus condemn the Pharisees and the Sadducees for their behavior? Let us read Matthew 15:9. There, Jesus said, “in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” Does this sound like Jesus does not care how we worship him or what we believe? If it does not matter what we believe, then why did Jesus make that statement in Matthew 15:9? Another passage we ought to read is found in Matthew 22:29. Jesus condemned the Sadducees at that time and said, “Ye are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures, nor the power of God.” How could these people be “wrong” if it does not matter what we believe on religious matters?

 Let us look at an early teacher and preacher of the gospel; a Christian by the name of Stephen. This space will not allow us to print the entire text, but please read Acts 6-7 so you can understand the entire context. We are introduced to Stephen in Acts 6; and Acts 7 records a time when he was opposed by the Jews for preaching about Christ. Toward the end of Acts 7, Stephen condemned the Jews for refusing to believe that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and that He is the Messiah. Please notice what happened, “When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth...Then cast him out of the city, and stoned him” (Acts 7:54, 58). Does this sound like a reaction from folks who have been told, “It doesn’t matter what you believe so long as you are honest and sincere”?

 Why do people insist that it doesn’t matter what folks believe in religious matters? We know that this idea of “It doesn’t matter what you believe” is not true in any other area of life. For example, we can’t say, “It doesn’t matter what you believe about the rules of arithmetic. So long as you are sincere, any answer will do.” We can’t say, “It doesn’t matter what you believe about the prices of items at the store. So long as you are a sincere person, any amount will be accepted.” We can’t say, “It doesn’t matter what you believe about stop signs. So long as you are a sincere person, any action you take at an intersection is accepted.” Since we know this to be true, why then do men teach that it doesn’t matter what you believe when it comes to religious matters? Put simply, it is because these folks do not want to do what God says, but want to follow their own will!

 My friend, what we believe religiously, matters! What we believe concerning religious matters will determine whether we go to Heaven or Hell! This is how serious it is. If you are not sure, then please read John 8:24, and ask yourself if there is “room for interpretation” there. When people declare that it does not matter what you believe so long as you are honest and sincere, they are teaching something completely foreign to the Scriptures.

*-- You are invited to visit with the Caneyville church of Christ. Times of services: Sun.: 10:00 am, 10:45 am, 5:00 pm; Wed.: 7:00 pm. Website: http://caneyvillechurchofchrist.com Tune in to our radio program on 99.9 FM at 1:00 pm and 1570 AM at 8:30 am, Mon-Fri. Questions? Call: (270) 589-4167*