

# "Just Who is the Real Jesus?"

Pastor Rick Shelton

Sunday, November 29, 2009

- We must all know Jesus better and grow in Him.
- If you know God as He really is, and know Him well, than you will find His wisdom and grace on our life to know what He wants you to do and He'll give you the empowerment and ability to do it. Your behavior comes out of your belief system.
- There is a lot of confusion about who the real Jesus is, and if we don't believe correctly we won't make right decisions.
- Pastor Rick's story of him flying to Virginia Beach to help son, Gabe, find a house before he returned from Bahrain: The real estate agent met Pastor at the airport. He was a nice, intelligent guy. On the second day, he took Pastor to a restaurant, and knowing Pastor was a minister, he said, "Do you know what I think about religion?" He proceeded to tell Pastor that after studying different religions, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, he came to the conclusion that they all have good and a piece of truth. So, why can't they all get along with each other, instead of fighting, being rigid with each other? Pastor waited for him to finish talking, then Pastor told him that some of the things he had said were insightful, and he agreed with him, but said, "The only problem I have is what do we do with Jesus? Do you believe Jesus was a great man, teacher, prophet?" The man said, "Yes, even the Muslims believe Jesus was a great man and prophet!" Pastor said, "I believe the Bible, and Jesus says in His own words of Himself, 'I am the way, the truth and the life and no man comes to the Father but through me,' and secondly Jesus said, 'If you have seen me you have seen the Father.'" And thirdly, Jesus said of Himself, "I am the Son of God!" Now, if a man was to say about himself that He was God and He was the only way to heaven and to God the Father, and he was God come in the flesh, and he said all this, well, let me say it like C. S. Lewis, "Either Jesus was God, whom He said He was, or He was a lunatic or a bald-faced liar."
- From C. S. Lewis's book, *Mere Christianity*, pages 40-41 - "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic -- on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg -- or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. After Pastor's had said this to the man as an appeal, he waited for a response, but there was none. The man put his head down and began eating. Pastor asked if he had a response, and the man said time was short, and they had to get going."
- Many of us face people with this same 'view' that this intelligent man had all the time, at work, school, etc. Satan blinds them.
- It had never occurred to this man to think about Jesus the way Pastor explained it.
- We must all be loving and gracious but not fearful to say who Jesus really is.
- **II Corinthians 11:3-4 (Ampl.)** (Paul said) But [now] I am fearful, lest that even as the serpent beguiled Eve by his cunning, so your minds may be corrupted and seduced from wholehearted and sincere and pure devotion to Christ. "For [you seem readily to endure it] if a man comes and preaches another Jesus than the One we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the [Spirit] you [once] received or a different gospel from the one you [then] received and welcomed; you tolerate [all that] well enough!
- You can actually believe another gospel other than the real authentic one of Jesus Christ.
- We are not judgmental or condemning in this church.
- Some have been duped into thinking the 'absolutes' must be watered down.
- Some mean-spirited people are called 'right-wing radical fundamentalists'.
- Some look at people who don't know God as Lord as their enemy, to be shunned, or feared, rather than people who are creations of God, not filthy sinners, but are 'pre-Christians' who haven't found out who they are yet.
- Pastor spoke last Sunday about staying pure until marriage, and then staying faithful in it. If we speak the truth to others, God will convict them, we don't convict them. Speak the truth in love; God will love them into His presence.
- Our thinking should be, "I will love you just as much even if you reject all I say, and decide to live as a complete heathen. It is my job to speak the truth; your job to accept or reject it."

- When some pastors are confronted with the same conversation as Pastor was, they often don't make a stand, and will say, "Well, this is what I believe . . ." We have become vague in what the truth is.
- "God said it! I believe it! That settles it!" is a 'wrong' statement. The 'right' statement is: "God said it, and that settles it! I believe it!" The Bible is true whether you believe it or not!
- The cross wasn't just a great idea that showed us how much God loved us. It showed us that we were helpless and hopeless until Jesus came on the cross, and made a way for us to have a way back to God. Jesus is the way!
- **Galatians 1:6-8 (Ampl.)** (Paul said) I am surprised and astonished that you are so quickly turning renegade and deserting Him Who invited and called you by the grace (unmerited favor) of Christ (the Messiah) [and that you are transferring your allegiance] to a different [even an opposition] gospel. <sup>7</sup>Not that there is [or could be] any other [genuine Gospel], but there are [obviously] some who are troubling and disturbing and bewildering you [with a different kind of teaching which they offer as a gospel] and want to pervert and distort the Gospel of Christ (the Messiah) [into something which it absolutely is not]. <sup>8</sup>But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to and different from that which we preached to you, let him be accursed (anathema, devoted to destruction, doomed to eternal punishment)!
- Why do people make churches so elaborate? Religion to them is some 'idea' story; they don't understand how 'real' Christ is to us today!
- In Australia, a man said to Pastor, "When I first met you I thought you were a calm and conservative guy, but when you get up to preach you are quite exuberant!" Pastor commented (he was calm) because the other day they weren't talking about Jesus, the Bible, or Heaven. He always get this 'way' when he discusses the things about God, because God is a living reality to Pastor.
- Until the 1800's there was a basic underlying philosophy or basic antithetical presupposition that "good and evil are opposite of each other; right and wrong, opposite truths."
- A man named Hagle came along and espoused the idea that all thought was not antithetical, but is synthetical, things aren't opposite but they flow together. Synthetical presupposition means good and evil (right and wrong) are not opposite of each other but are two ways of looking at the same thing.
- Applying antithetical presupposition to Jesus: the Bible says Jesus is God, came in human flesh, is the only way to Heaven, so if the Bible says this, it is truth. Synthetical presupposition says that you believe you have a view of who Jesus is, but I have another view of Jesus, and we are both right in how we believe.
- 'A' is 'a' and anything that is not 'a' is something other than 'a'. If 'a' is Jesus, then everyone else is not 'a', but b or c.
- Synthetical presupposition says: you have your 'a', but I also have my 'a'.
- Example: Bible says we are to preserve ourselves for marriage, BUT we love each other, live together, better for us financially, plan on staying together, but don't want to get married. Do you think God would deny our love for each other? (Same scenario with two men wanting to be together). That thinking is a synthetical presupposition.
- No absolute truth, my truth is as good as your truth. When we start living like that we loose the very power source we need to get through life . . . Jesus!
- Kirkegaard believed there was something 'flawed' about Hagle's idea. He said there is no absolute truth, I have my truth, you have your truth, there is no divine truth-giver; we are the author of truth ourselves. There are some questions we can't answer by reason: "Who am I and why am I here? Who is God?" They can only be answered by faith. Everything you deal with in your life (job, finances, relationships) is in the realm of reason, and the questions about 'who am I' belong in the realm of faith. Faith needs to stay out of realm of 'reason' and they should be kept separate.
- Ninety percent of people believe in God. Only 42% believe in Jesus specifically.
- Gabe was in a college class where a professor said Christians have a 'heard' mentality, only believing what they have read or heard. Pastor asked Gabe where did she get the information she was sharing. Gabe named the books she was quoting. Pastor said she has a 'heard' mentality also.
- You may ask, "Pastor, how are you different than the professor?" Because he read and heard, BUT also after that he had a personal experience with God. He's a living reality in his soul. God has spoken to Pastor, healed him and his children, even used him to raise a dead child to life in Africa. He KNOWS God by experience.