

Why People Refuse To Follow Jesus

Introduction. In John 5:40, Jesus said, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Why do people refuse to follow Jesus? Life is precious. Dying men fight desperately to hold on to life. But depicted here are dying men who spurn the offer of eternal life, and turn their backs on the life-giver!

But, why do those who are spiritually sick reject the Great Physician? Jesus gave the answer in John 5:42. It is good to study some of the reasons people refuse to follow Christ. Maybe we can help someone today who is undecided about following the Lord.

I. ***Some Think They Do Not Need Christ***

- A. They are counting on morality to save them. Morality is necessary, but, apart from Christ, it does not save (Acts 4:12; Ephesians 5:23).
- B. Few men, if any, are more moral and good than Cornelius, but he needed Christ (Acts 10:1-2). Peter came and told him what he needed to hear and they were baptized (Acts 11:13-14).
- C. The truth is, all men really want Christ, because they want what only Christ can give. The fact that most people think they are going to heaven in polls means they want to go.
- D. The problem is, many people want something else more than they want Christ.
 1. The love of sin (John 3:19).
 2. The praise of men (John 12:42-43).

II. ***Some Do Not Love The Truth***

- A. Some have their own conception of the gospel and the Bible. They are so wedded to their own opinions that they pridefully say with respect to some Bible doctrine, "I wouldn't believe that if you showed it to me in the Bible!"
- B. Those who come to Christ must come in the way appointed by the word of truth. Jesus Christ is the personification of divine truth, and the Bible is the vehicle of truth (John 14:6; 17:17). Those who do not love and respect the truth cannot come to the Father (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).
- C. Stephen preached the truth, but the Jewish leaders did not love the truth (Acts 7:51-59). So, because they were full of prejudice, they stopped their ears, and murdered one of God's fairest noblemen.
- D. I heard of a lady in who taught a Bible class in a denominational church who regularly attended a series of gospel meetings.

1. She was convinced that the truth was being preached. She said, "I know that preacher is preaching the truth, but I just cannot bring myself to let those children in my Bible class down."
2. Who could possibly be letting anyone down by standing up for the truth? If that lady loved her Bible class children as much as she thought she did, would it not have been her greatest desire to teach them the truth? This lady, and others like her, need to learn that such disregard for the truth, if not eradicated, will lead to damnation.

III. ***Some Are Affected By Failure***

- A. They observe something inconsistent or a failure in the life of a professed Christian and they excuse their disobedience to the failure of these weak members. But this is altogether the wrong basis (Romans 14:12). The religion of Jesus should be judged, not by the mistakes of Christians, but by the perfect example set by the Christ whom Christians propose to follow.
- B. The fact, however, that some do refrain from becoming Christians because of the sins some professed children of God commit in their lives should cause all of us to think of our deep obligations as disciples of Christ (Matthew 18:6; 1 Corinthians 8:12).
- C. On the other hand, some fear that they cannot be successful as a Christian. They know that they are weak and sinful. They magnify their faults and weaknesses, and say that it is useless for them to become Christians until they are sure they can hold fast.
- D. Suppose the farmer or a businessman would say, "I won't plant a crop this year or I won't start a business because I might fail." We have precious promises that assure us of God's help (John 6:37; Philippians 1:6).
- E. But your being a successful Christian does not depend upon your own human strength, but upon your abiding attachment to Christ (John 15:1-8). God has promised that those who dedicate themselves to Christ and who depend upon Christ to deliver them from temptation will be successful (Matthew 6:13).

IV. ***Some Worship Their Parents***

- A. Many, when they hear the gospel preached in purity, realize that it is quite different from the way their parents were taught. Their parents were good people who were sincere in their religion. It is not easy to convince people that such good parents could have been so wrong. Because of this, they say, "Well, if it was good enough for my parents, it is good enough for me!"

- B. Sadly, there have been those who have gone so far as to say that if their parents were not saved, then they do not care to go to heaven! They judge what it takes to please God, not by what the Bible says, but by what their parents believed, taught, and practiced (cf. Matthew 10:37-38).
- C. If those who decline to obey because they feel that it would be a reflection on their parents would think seriously, they might take a different view. Those whose parents have passed on say, "My parents were good people and they did not think it was necessary to obey the gospel." Parents who love their children want them to do what is right. Your parents loved you. If you have had an opportunity to learn truth that your parents did not know, do you not feel that they would want you to embrace whatever truth you learn (Luke 16:27-28)?

V. ***Some Think They Have Already Come To Christ***

- A. Some refuse because they have been taught the modern popular doctrine of salvation by faith only -- saved the very moment they believe.
- B. It is very popular for preachers to tell people today that it is not necessary for them to obey the gospel to be saved. It is a "do-nothing" philosophy -- the idea that man is saved by the grace of God upon the basis merely of a mental assent to the divinity of Christ, and a mental or passive acceptance of him as Savior, without doing what God has ordained for our salvation.
- C. The Bible clearly teaches that one must come to Christ in God's appointed way, and a careful study of the New Testament will convince any fair-minded student that the way that one must come to Christ is by obedient faith (Romans 1:5; 16:26). The Bible positively states that one must obey the gospel in order to be saved (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 1 Peter 4:16-17).

Conclusion. If you are among those who are inclined to procrastinate with respect to your obedience of the gospel, you need to be awakened by the cry of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 6:2). Why do you keep Jesus waiting? In the beginning of our lesson, we quoted John 5:40: "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." That does not need to apply to you. You can come to Christ, and those who come to Christ will have everlasting life! Lay aside every excuse, overcome every seeming obstacle, take your stand now for Christ. Don't let Satan to snatch the word of God out of your heart (Luke 8:11-12).