

## 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 that is not authorized by the Lord. Every item that one might list as an ingredient of faithfulness to God and His Son is subsumed in this sweeping principle. If one has his heart set on doing "all in the name of the Lord" (Col. 3:17), he will be faithful in all things.

It is not enough to like something. It is not enough that something attracts large crowds. It is not enough that a "big" congregation somewhere is doing this or that. It is not enough that some "great name" among us supports, endorses, or teaches it. **All** that matters is, **does God authorize it?**

To merely speak the Lord's name over something we are doing is no sign of His acceptance or approval. The sons of Sceva quickly learned this to their own dismay and discomfort (Acts 19:14–16). The Lord's statement conclusively shows that God requires more than mere faith and its confession, more than mere sincerity, more than human effort, and more than 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. **That which God does not authorize, He does not recognize.**

Faithful men restored the church in modern times on the premise of book, chapter, and verse—explicit or implicit—Scriptural authority for all that we do and say. My, how we constantly need to be reminded of this fact. So much preaching and practice among us nowadays has no more authority for it than John Calvin, the denominations in town, some popular psychologist or philosopher, “I don’t see anything wrong with it,” or “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 doctrine (John 12:48). God has given His Son "all authority" (Mat. 28:18) and we must scrupulously submit to it. Those who try to "free-lance" in religion, whether in the church or out, will arrive at the Judgment to hear the Lord ask, "Who are you? I don't believe we've met and it's too late to get acquainted now."

—Dub McClish

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