

Religious Inconsistencies

Introduction. In Matthew 7:1-5, our Lord taught that it was possible to be religiously inconsistent. "Inconsistent," as it relates to persons, means "to be incoherent, or illogical in thought or actions; hence inconstant, fickle." Another word for inconsistent is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is harshly condemned in the scriptures (Proverbs 15:8; Luke 6:46). I pray that no one wants to be a hypocrite and no one wants to be inconsistent.

The purpose of this lesson is to clearly reveal some religious inconsistencies. This ought to cause us to examine ourselves to see if we are inconsistent in our religion (2 Corinthians 13:5). Although we could show denominational inconsistencies in the areas of doctrine and practice, we are going to instead look to see if we are sometimes inconsistent.

I. ***Emphasize Obedience, But Fail To Faithfully Study The Bible***

- A. Study is commanded; therefore, we must do it to obey (Colossians 4:16; 1 Timothy 4:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:27).
- B. We cannot obey without knowledge, and we cannot have knowledge without study (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15).
- C. Failure to study indicates a lack of:
 1. Respect and love for God (Joshua 22:5; Psalm 119:15, 99).
 2. Spiritual hunger for higher matters (Matthew 5:6).

II. ***Pray For Those Who Need It, But Never Do Anything For Them***

- A. We condemn those who pray for:
 1. Salvation without obedience (Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
 2. Miraculous healing of the sick without the use of a remedy (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).
 3. Bread without toil (Genesis 3:19; Proverbs 6:6-8; 2 Thessalonians 3:10).
- B. We are commanded to:
 1. Preach to the lost (Matthew 28:19).
 2. Visit the sick (Matthew 25:36, 43).
 3. Help the needy (Ephesians 4:28; James 1:27; Galatians 6:10).
- C. We preach that miracles ceased, but act as though we still expect them!
 1. Will the lost somehow miraculously hear the word?
 2. Will the sick miraculously have their needs met?
 3. Will the needy be miraculously provided for?
 4. Do we condemn ourselves (Romans 2:1)?

III. ***Emphasize The Need For The Lord's Supper, But Neglect The Assembly***

- A. Virtually any excuse will do when forsaking the assembly (Hebrews 10:25).
 - 1. Sometimes we give so little thought to God and being faithful to Him.
 - 2. We are able to do so many activities, but never can seem to make it worship God.
- B. The Bible says that when we partake of the Lord's Supper, we proclaim the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:26). We know that the disciples met every first day of the week to partake it (Acts 20:7). Thus, we have a divine example demanding us to do the same.
- C. But practically we end up practicing exactly what many in the denominational world practice. Which is worse?
 - 1. Observing the Lord's Supper once a year, quarter, or month and thereby violating the Lord's commands?
 - 2. Observing the Lord's Supper when it is convenient or does not conflict with our schedules and thereby violating the Lord's commands?

IV. ***Teach That Apostasy Is Possible, But Act As Though It Is Impossible***

- A. We tell the Calvinist that a child of God can:
 - 1. Believe for a while and then fall away (Luke 8:12).
 - 2. Become a castaway (1 Corinthians 9:27).
 - 3. Fall from grace (1 Corinthians 10:12; Galatians 5:4).
- B. Is there a practical difference?
 - 1. Calvinist doctrine teaches "once saved, always saved." They offer as "proof text" passages such as John 10:28-29 and Romans 8:35-39.
 - 2. But our practice sometimes seems to be "believe, repent, confess, be baptized, and live however we want to live."
 - 3. Must we not live to a higher standard of holiness (Romans 6:3-6; Colossians 3:1-2)?

V. ***Condemn Others For Having False Standards, But Live By False Standards Ourselves***

- A. We emphasize the importance of standards in our preaching.
 - 1. Christians should demand book, chapter, and verse preaching. They should demand preaching that will strengthen the hearer through admonition and encouragement.
 - 2. Religion no exception. Our standard must be the "doctrine of Christ" and the "oracles of God" (2 John 9-11; 1 Peter 4:11). The

scriptures are sufficient for us in every way (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4).

B. We condemn such standards as:

1. The religion of our parents (Galatians 1:13-14).
2. Our conscience (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11).
3. The voice of the majority (Matthew 7:13-14).
4. Various creeds, manuals, and disciplines (Revelation 22:18-19).

C. But Christians often base their beliefs and practices on standards other than the Bible.

1. Some look to what a "giant" of the faith said or did.
2. Others consider the position of popular preachers and papers.
3. Some fall back on the way we have always done things in the past.
4. Many also consider the majority of the brotherhood.

Conclusion. It is often very easy to see the religious inconsistencies in the lives of others. But can we see it in ourselves (Romans 2:21-23)? An old proverb says, "Consistency, thou art a jewel!" Indeed. The hypocrite stands condemned before God (Job 8:13-15; 27:8-9). Let us never glory in appearance and not in heart (2 Corinthians 5:12). Let us be doers and hearers of the word and thereby be saved (James 1:22-24).