

# MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Christianity Is Not A Religion

Dear Friend,

We live in a world filled with imitations, things that look so close to the original that it's difficult, if not impossible, to tell the difference. Recently, I was in a store buying something and when I handed the clerk my money she took a marker and swiped each bill to see if they were real or forgeries. Praise God, they were real. Too bad we can't take a marker and swipe everything else in our world to see what is real and what is fake. I believe we would be surprised to discover how much of what we believe to be real and genuine is just as fake as a \$3 bill.

If a person took a \$20 bill and copied it on a copy machine using regular white paper, they would have no chance of fooling anyone, except maybe a young child. A person who has handled money on a regular basis could quickly detect the difference. The reason a child could be so easily fooled is because of their inexperience.

This is often the tactic used by enemy forces against their opponents in an effort to topple countries by contaminating their currency. Flooding their economic system with counterfeit currency effectively dilutes its value, their money becomes worthless and the economy collapses.

The enemy of God's kingdom, satan, also uses this technique effectively. In fact, since he is the father of lies (John 8:44) he is the original counterfeiter. Arguably, one of his greatest, most deceptive imitations is the one he has perpetrated against the body of Christ. The devil has managed to simulate God's masterpiece for the salvation of mankind to the point that even the trained eye can be fooled, not to mention the immature believers.

What I am referring to is manmade religion being the imitation of the real. The real is the Kingdom of God and man's entry into God's kingdom through the new birth. Don't be so naïve as to believe that satan hasn't developed an imitation of God's original that is so close that even the trained eye can be fooled into accepting the imitation. Satan's imitation looks right, sounds right, feels right, but

lacks the crucial elements unique to God's solution, beginning with the new birth and including all it means to be a child of God.

The devil's imitation lacks grace, love, mercy, kindness, and true forgiveness. Instead, his imitation focuses on our performance. Have we been good enough for God to bless us? Have we accomplished enough good deeds? How about our church attendance, have we gone every single time the doors are open? Have we put in enough hours of prayer to get God's attention?

Am I saying that good deeds aren't important or that any of these things are wrong? No! But, good deeds don't save us and **the idea that our actions earn us anything in the kingdom of God is where satan's imitation gains its strength.**

I would venture to say that many churches are full of people who have no concept of God's grace and mercy, nor that His love is the reason they have been given entrance through the new birth into God's family and out of spiritual death. Too many are focused on their daily performance instead of on what Jesus accomplished for them through His death, burial, and resurrection. They don't recognize that true salvation isn't about trying to earn anything; it's about discovering whom we have become as born again children of the Most High God and believing we are who God made us to be.

The devil's imitation of true Christianity tries to convince people that they are saved by their actions. If that were the case, Jesus wouldn't have needed to go to the cross. The trap the devil sets begins with trying to persuade people that their good actions earn them favor with God and their bad actions subtract God's favor. **The enemy's goal is to get the person focused on their actions instead of focusing on who they have become.** Once a person buys into the devil's philosophy, his second wave of attack is to convince them that they can never do enough to truly please God.

Just try telling many good church going members that they are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus because they were born that way through the new birth. I can almost assure you that their reply would be: "There is none righteous, no not one." What they are actually saying is; "We really haven't entered into the Promised Land yet." They see themselves stumbling around in the wilderness and the Promised Land is in the sweet by and by, in other words heaven, and they won't enter that until they die. So, while they are still here they believe themselves sinners doing the best they can to please God. These people are some of the hardest workers God has because they are trying to earn their salvation. **Salvation cannot be earned.**

The Holy Ghost through the Apostle Paul said this in his second letter to the church at Corinth. (II Corinthians 5:21)

***“For He (God) hath made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (Jesus).”***

The verse generally quoted to prove their lack of righteousness and validate their claim of continuing to be sinners is taken from Paul’s letter to the church at Rome. (Romans 3:23)

***“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”***

What is so sad is that entire denominations of born again people have taken this verse out of context instead of leaving it in context and enjoying its benefits. A simple look at the verses before and after verse 23 would completely deliver them from the notion that they are just old sinners. By reading the verse in context they would realize that they are now the righteousness of God in Christ. Let’s look at these verses. (Romans 3:21-22)

***“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; (22) Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.”***

Paul is explaining how the righteousness of God is available to anyone who believes, either Jew or Gentile. It is **“by faith of Jesus Christ”** not through our actions. Then comes the verse everyone seems so desperate to hold onto. (Romans 3:23)

***“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”***

But, thank God Paul doesn’t stop there. He continues to say, (Romans 3:24)

***“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”***

The idea of “being justified” simply means that we are declared to be righteous by His (God’s) grace through the redemption made available to us by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus on our behalf.

The truth of the matter is that verse 23 is actually explaining the real purpose of the Law given by God to Moses. God had to prove to spiritually dead people that they were in fact spiritually dead. He did this by giving them the Law and telling them to keep it, knowing full well that they had no ability to keep His law because they were spiritually dead. As a result God could say to humanity, “Look everyone, Israel’s inability to keep my Law is all the proof you need that all humanity is spiritually dead.”

Instead, humanity looked at the Law and adopted the same conclusion Israel adopted, “**It’s all about our actions**”. Then, the devil came along and helped promote that idea and manmade religion was born.

Let me be perfectly clear, no one is righteous in and of himself. Our righteousness is the righteousness of God received the moment we identify ourselves in Jesus Christ. Instantly, we receive what He has made available to us through our redemption and new birth into God’s family. **We are born again, righteous with God’s righteousness through identification in Jesus.**

Manmade religion works to convince people that they are still on the outside looking into the Promised Land. In this way, satan keeps them on the religious treadmill always trying to earn God’s approval, not realizing they became approved of God the moment they made Jesus Lord of their life. This particular “religious” devil manifests himself in many different ways, but generally the same underlying theme; “You aren’t good enough, you’ll never be good enough. But, if you keep your nose to the religious grindstone eventually you might just squeak into heaven, if you are lucky.”

Some groups believe the more doors they knock on the happier God is with them. Others believe that if they repeat some prayer as they go from one bead of their necklace to the next they are pleasing to God or by repeating the same prayer over and over again they somehow receive forgiveness. The more times they repeat the prayer they believe they work themselves out of the hole they dug through their sinful actions. If you look at all manmade religions you will find the unique thread that links them all together is the religious idea that by man’s actions they qualify themselves to approach God.

**Christianity is not a religion it is a living relationship with a living God.** Satan is constantly working to lure unsuspecting people away from the truth about who they have become in Jesus by convincing them to focus on their actions. This leaves the person oblivious as to who they have become as children of God. Instead, they serve a religious form that is all about ceremonies

and rituals and images. Jesus loves us and died to give us life, righteousness, redemption, sanctification; not religion. (I Corinthians 1:30)

***“But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”***

Have you ever heard a person talking about becoming sanctified? This verse says, we became sanctified the moment we made Jesus Lord of our lives. We don't become sanctified by our own actions. He made us this way when we were born again, just as He made us righteous in His righteousness.

Since all these things are accomplished facts, how is it that the church as a whole isn't walking in more of these truths? It is because we simply don't believe we are the people God made us to be in the new birth. We still look at ourselves as the old sinners we used to be and we listen to the lies of the devil as he continues to reinforce what a sorry excuse we are as Christians. The devil is identified as the “accuser of the brethren”. (Revelation 12:10)

***“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night.”***

As long as a believer gives ear to satan's lies they will not see themselves for who they truly are. The devil's lies never let the person see them self as good enough, certainly never righteous, nor forgiven. Religion paints a picture of a God who is generally ready to squash you like a bug, mad and angry because you don't measure up. Yet Love sent Jesus to suffer the worst death imaginable on a cross, in our place, followed by unimaginable suffering in hell until the price for man's sin was forever satisfied. The truth is, our Father loves us that much.

Jesus made a statement in Matthew 7 that ought to get our attention. (Matthew 7:13-14)

***“Enter you in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: (14) Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.”***

I imagine there are going to be many, good, church going people who will eventually discover that when they thought they were on the narrow path they were actually on the wide path serving “religion” instead of Jesus. Religious

devils convinced them that because they went to the right church, said the right things or acted a certain way that they were okay. Sadly, they failed to surrender their lives to Jesus Christ by making Him their Lord. Instead, they served a “religious” image formed and fashioned by satan to fool the very elect. Paul describes people in the last days who will have a “form of godliness, but denying the power thereof”. He says of such people we are to turn away. (II Timothy 3:5)

***“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”***

As we wind down to the end of this age, the narrow path is going to become more narrow all the time. We cannot allow ourselves to be fooled by satan’s imitations. We cannot allow ourselves to be moved by the opinion of others. A person who allows them self to be swayed by the general consensus of large groups, who can’t stand being on the outside or who refuses to make a stand for what they know is truth, could easily become a casualty of war.

So how can this be avoided? The key is to know who you are, who you became the moment you received Jesus. Know what belongs to you as a child of God. Stop ***trying*** to be a Christian, and start believing you are a child of God and God is your Father. I can’t stress enough how important it is that we discover who we have become. The “in Him”, “in Christ”, “in Whom” verses I talked about last month, located in the epistles, are one of the best ways to find out who we are as born again children. Look them up, say them over yourself and follow up the verse by saying, “This is who I am, This is what I have.” It won’t take long before you start believing you are the person God made you to be.

Once you discover who you are in Christ it becomes more and more difficult for the accuser of the brethren to convince you otherwise. Your days of trying to earn your place in the kingdom will be over and you will simply believe you are the person God says you are.

Christianity isn’t a religion it is a relationship with a living God who has become our Father, and a Lord and Savior who loves us and gave His life for us.

[The list of references to the “In Him” verses are in the July 2015 letter](#)

~ Grace be with you

*Mark Jenkins*