

# MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Free From Law And Traditions

Dear Friend,

It is commonly believed that Albert Einstein said: “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results.” Whether Einstein actually said it or not is irrelevant because the statement is true. No matter the issue at hand, continuing to do the exact same thing time after time and expecting different results is, for a lack of a better term, crazy. This is the case for spiritual issues, as well.

Many of us read the New Testament and see the victorious, overcoming life we are supposed to be living, but all too often our lives look nothing like what the Bible declares it should be. Instead of considering that something might need to change in the way we approach our spiritual life, we just continue to trudge along with the rest of the crowd, who are also seeing little, if any, fruit.

Attending every service, sitting in the same seat, often listening to the exact same messages week after week doesn't seem to change anything. Generally speaking, the lack of change is because we have relegated our responsibilities over to the pastor and expected him to take care of our spiritual maturity for us. He is content in preaching a message that won't ruffle any feathers and we are content in listening. The only problem is that none of this is bringing us any closer to living a victorious Christian life.

Assigning the responsibility for your spiritual relationship with God to a pastor or other spiritual leader is like hiring someone to be your spouse's spouse in your place while you go off fishing. That won't work! Church should really be a training center that educates the saints, shows them what the new birth produced in them and prepares them to go and share the good news with others. It's not supposed to be the place we go once or twice a week to fulfill some spiritual obligation by listening to a pastor we pay to do our spiritual growing for us. If your church has managed to keep a spiritual pacifier in your mouth for the last 20 years, then it's no wonder you are spiritually unsatisfied.

“Well, Mark, my parents and grandparents have gone to this church forever. My great granddad nailed the first boards together that built this church building. I can’t go anywhere else.” Spirituality is not something that is genetically passed on to you nor does God expect you to stay in a church just because your family has gone there forever. The fact of the matter is, hearing one more message designed to keep you saved another week really does you little good. Sadly, in so many cases it has become a place where people go to feel spiritual for an hour and a half each week. Once they meet their obligation, they are ready for another week and they wonder why their lives are not changing. The notion of actually being **a son of God** isn’t even on their radar. **They are so focused on their sin and trying to keep God happy with them that they have no time left over to appreciate being a son of God.**

Recently I was working in a man’s house who fits this scenario perfectly. He was telling me about how he had shingles and had spent the previous night in the emergency room at the hospital. Yeah! God sent me to this man’s house to pray for him. I looked around the room and saw a Bible laying on the coffee table. I said to the man, “I see a Bible laying there, you must be a Christian.” He said, “Well, I’m not a very good one. We go to the Methodist Church.” **Notice how he highlighted his shortcomings instead of rejoicing in his salvation.** He is still serving the law of Moses and does not know the liberty available to us as children of God. (2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

***“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God; (6) Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”***

If a person has a steady diet of being preached the law, in other words the do’s and don’ts, they are missing out on the true message of the New Testament. The true message is that Jesus came to give us life and life more abundantly as sons of the living God. Constantly focusing on our actions and shortcomings will never result in the victorious life Jesus died to give us. When we focus on our actions we are saying that what we do or don’t do is greater than what Jesus did for us. Am I saying that what we do doesn’t matter to God? No! But, our good actions do not make God love us more and our bad actions do not make God love us less. What matters is believing that we are the new creations Jesus died and rose again to make us to be.

It saddens me to see people surrounded by preaching that tells them they are the problem, they are not good enough to live the life Jesus said we could live. To see people dedicated to becoming better, based on law and traditions, hoping

beyond hope that their results will change though they continue to do the same things, desiring to become good enough for God to bless them. Or to see new believers that accept the Lordship of Jesus, who begin with enthusiasm and zeal that their life is going to make a difference for the Kingdom of God, only to be discouraged against becoming too zealous. They then settle in with the rest of the crowd obeying the laws and traditions of men which keep them from experiencing that **we already have everything** Jesus paid the price to give us in the finished work of the cross, when we are born again.

Proverbs 13:12 tells us that when hope is deferred it makes the heart sick. I believe that people live unfulfilled lives spiritually and their heart grows sick. They believe there's more, but are not sure how or what to do and consequently their life slips by and they come to their end, unfulfilled. Hearing messages week after week based on the law or man's tradition instead of the message Jesus taught, **about being born again a new creation child of God**, will only produce frustrated Christians living powerless defeated lives.

Instead of experiencing a living, vibrant, fulfilling spiritual life with Jesus as a son, in which they daily walk with the Lord and fellowship with Him, they go through the motions of modern "Christianity". When I say "modern Christianity" there really isn't anything modern about it. With a few exceptions, the message being preached today, in large part, is really the same message the Pharisees preached. It is a message about you and your actions instead of being the sons of God you were born to be in Jesus. Messages that constantly highlight you and your inability to do right will never produce the results Jesus told us to expect in verses like John 14:12.

***"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."***

Maybe a person begins to get glimpses of this truth and a fire is lit inside them for the things of God. But, instead of being encouraged to continue they are told to "be careful". If they persist they are put into a category with the rest who refused to settle for mediocrity, as if to say; "These are the trouble makers. Don't be like them! Stay in line. Don't cause any trouble."

I am convinced that the people who truly experience the fruit of this verse are those who refuse to allow "religion" or "religious minded" thinking to control their lives. They somehow break free from the religious rhetoric, the dogma, which

has replaced the real message of the gospel, that Jesus has made a way for us to join Him in the new birth as a member of God's family.

I believe the first step necessary to break free from the chains that bind a person in "religion" is to recognize that the chains exist. Just to be clear, when I say "Religion" I'm talking about the idea that man's efforts in and of themselves can somehow appease God. This is why Jesus spoke so strongly against the Pharisees, because He knew this would be the very thing that would imprison believers and keep them from experiencing all He died to give us.

In our last letter we learned about the Pharisees and how they ensnared the people into living a life centered on the "do's and don'ts" of the law. I can tell you from my own experience, growing up in church and hearing and seeing a message centered on my actions instead of a living relationship with my heavenly Father and my Lord Jesus, that I lived as frustrated a life as anyone. As a teenager, **I was the epitome of someone continuing to do the same thing and expecting different results.** I lived what was taught to me and for a lack of a better way of saying it, I was taught the law, just as the Pharisees taught. It was all about my actions instead of the finished work of the cross and the redemption Jesus paid for with His life.

I still remember as a child having to memorize the 10 commandments. If we were able to recite them correctly we would receive a bright, shiny silver dollar. I wanted that dollar so I memorized the 10 commandments, even though Jesus said: (Matthew 22:37-40)

***"...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self. (40) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."***

Now that we are born again children of God we have the capacity to love the way God loves. We shouldn't need to be told not to steal or kill because stealing and killing are not in our nature any longer. In fact if we cultivate a life of love, as Jesus did, we won't steal or kill or do any of the other violations of the law because we love people and don't want to hurt them.

All too often, maybe even the majority of the time, people are fed a steady diet of "sin consciousness" instead of "righteousness consciousness". This thinking will defeat you. So long as a person remains focused on sin it seems as though they are destined to sin. Instead of preaching messages about sin, preachers simply ought to tell people who they are in Christ Jesus as new creations,

children of God. I do wonder if the real problem is in the fact that if preachers told their people just how free they are in Christ, that they are afraid the people won't need them any longer. Perhaps they feel they would lose control over the people and their kingdom might be threatened. That's how the Pharisees thought. (John 11:47-48)

***“Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said, ‘What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. (48) If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.’ ”***

Clearly, these Pharisees cared more about their position of power over the people than they did about seeing them healed and ministered to by Jesus. This is a good test to use in measuring the heart of a leader. Does he care about his paycheck or about the well-being of his flock?

What's sad is that there are not more churches preaching the message that Jesus preached and less preaching law and traditions. (John 1:17)

***“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”***

The law of Moses did not have the power to change a person on the inside. That was not the purpose of the law. The main purpose of the law was to prove to mankind that they were spiritually dead. Sadly, the Pharisees believed they accurately kept the law (and their traditions) and in so doing they believed themselves to be righteous. Righteousness does not come by keeping the law. If it did then Jesus died in vain.

When I said that people continue to do the same things and expect different results, I'm referring to how Christians get saved and fall in lock step with some church dogma and never seem to break out into a loving fellowship with God. Their spiritual life centers on their actions, the do's and don'ts outlined by their spiritual leaders. They might see where the Bible speaks of being a new creation and doing the works of Jesus and even greater works, but are bound by the ideas of others that hold them captive to a doctrine that promotes a person's actions. By focusing on actions we are robbed of the truth that we have become different people in Christ through the finished work of the cross.

How do you see yourself? Do you see yourself as the same person you were before you accepted the Lordship of Jesus only now you are forgiven? Or, do you recognize that you have become a completely different person, reborn into

God's family? Allow me to draw your attention to two other verses in John. (John 1:12-13)

***“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”***

The Holy Ghost began to draw my attention to verses like this a few years ago. He began to teach me about what it means to be a son of God. I could tell that what He was sharing with me was powerful, but I did not anticipate the backlash from the enemy that followed. Recently, I have come across another minister speaking about what it means to be sons of God. This minister said that he has been able to trace back to when God began within the last 100 years to try and bring this message to the forefront and each time it was met with tremendous opposition from the enemy. So much so that the enemy was successful in sidetracking the message to the point that error entered in. But, God has not given up.

The counter message to that of the Pharisees is the message of Jesus. **That by accepting His Lordship of our lives and His substitutionary work on the cross, we are reborn into God's family as His children.** Praise God! God has been teaching me for years along these lines in an effort to bring me to the point of being able to say what I am saying here. Little by little the Holy Ghost has built stone upon stone from the bottom up until finally I am able to put into words what He has been showing me. There has been many important messages He has taught me along the way, but one in particular was a message I taught entitled: “A Door Disappeared”. This message along with the message: “The Last Adam's Legacy”, helped to solidify inside me the truth of what happened in the first Adam and how **the second man, the last Adam** paved the way for us to step out of spiritual death and into life as reborn sons of God.

I encourage you to go back and listen to these messages on our website. They will help you better understand who you now are as a child of God and why you are free from the Law. Praise God!

~ Jesus Loves You!

*Mark Jenkins*