

HOW TO TELL THE REAL DEAL

June 6th, 2010

As Christians we often pre-judge people

Romans 14:13 (GN) "So then, let us stop judging one another. Instead, you should decide never to do anything that would make others stumble or fall into sin."

Romans 14:17-18 (TM) "God's kingdom isn't a matter of what you put in your stomach, for goodness' sake. It's what God does with your life as he sets it right, puts it together, and completes it with joy. Your task is to single-mindedly serve Christ. Do that and you'll kill two birds with one stone: pleasing the God above you and proving your worth to the people around you."

Romans 14:22 (TM) "Cultivate your own relationship with God, but don't impose it on others."

Most of us think that if other people only knew what we know and experienced what we've experienced, they'd pretty much see life the way we do

We have a hard time accepting the validity of expressions of the Christian faith that are radically different than our own

We know in our head that each Christian has a unique assignment from God, but when the assignments produce radically different lifestyles and approaches to spirituality, we have a difficult time validating both

John the Baptist or Jesus – Who's the Real Deal?

Matthew 3:1-6 (NLT) "In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, 'Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.' The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said, 'He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, "Prepare the way for the LORD's coming! Clear the road for him!" John's clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River."

Matthew 9:10-14 (NLT) "Later, Matthew invited Jesus and His disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with such scum?' When Jesus heard this, He said, 'Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do.' Then He added, 'Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: "I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices." 'For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.' One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked Him, 'Why don't Your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?'"

John's issue seems to be more in the way Jesus did ministry, i.e. Jesus didn't fit John's idea of how a holy man should live

Matthew 11:2-5 (NLT) "John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, 'Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?' Jesus told them, 'Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen — the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.'"

Jesus sends a clear message – You've been looking at the wrong things

The proof of His messiahship was not to be found in the style and format of His ministry; it was to be found in the fruit of His ministry – God’s power working mightily in the lives of many

Matthew 11:11 (NLT) “I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist.”

There were those who didn’t like John & those who didn’t like Jesus
Matthew 11:16-19 (NIV) "To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge and you did not mourn.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners.'" But wisdom is proved right by her actions."

Despite their differences in their approach to ministry and lifestyle, Jesus said both John the Baptist and He were pleasing to God

The most important thing in pleasing God is not a particular approach to spirituality or style of ministry; what matters is the fruit

Lessons for Today

1. Watch judging other believers
2. There is no such thing as one-size-fits-all spirituality
3. I must ask myself, “What kind of fruit is my life producing?”

Matthew 7:19-21 (NAS) “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.”

My Next Step Today Is:

- I want to sign-up for the following class beginning Wed, June 23rd:
___ Divorce Care ___ Divorce Care for Kids ___ Class 201 – Steps to Spiritual Maturity
- I will help at the Kids Community Festival on Sat, Aug 21st:
___ I will work the early shift from 10:30 am to 1 pm
___ I will work the late shift from 1 to 3:30 pm