

External religion

or

Internal religion

True Faith or false church

External religion or internal religion

There is a war going on between TRUE FAITH and a FALSE CHURCH.

The world believes changing our circumstances is the way to experience a better life and enjoy peace and contentment. In the world it wants a Better Education. A Better Employment. A Better Health. A Better Husband or wife. A lottery win. A Better religion. A Better involvement in the community. A Better diet. A Better system of exercise. A Better choice of entertainment. A Better philosophy. A Better government. A Better choice of behaviour. A Better house. A Better self-image. A better group of friends.

External religion is a hopeless process of human effort to achieve only what God can do. Man ignores the law of God and replaces it with a salvation of works, of human endeavors to achieve satisfaction with God.

When the right perspective is understood about the sinfulness of man and his inability to please God, it is clear that trusting in God to do what we cannot do is the way to life. In Him we receive the blessings of faith that upholds God as God and the only one who achieves satisfaction through faith.

Faith makes us aware of our sin and brings us into conviction that we don't deserve mercy, so that we are willing to repent by turning away from any idea of carrying on with our declaration of independence.

The Bible tells us the only way to a better life is to receive a new life through faith after repentance by being born again by the will and the work of God.

Unless the change happens on the inside, in our heart by the work of God, all the external things we attempt are only a facade on a dead life.

Unless God dwells within the person, the life they have is devoid of spiritual vitality. When repentance comes to fruition, we can say we no longer live, but Christ now lives in us. Gal 2:20

When God lives within us by the Holy Spirit, the quality of our externals doesn't determine the quality of peace and contentment. God alone gives peace and contentment to the hearts of those He includes in His life by faith. So that regardless of the external circumstances, we are secure in His life.

However

Regardless of the Biblical truth to the contrary, some people want to insist that anyone can have fellowship with God by choosing to enter His kingdom by themselves. They become convinced God will give them a better life on their terms.

They make a decision from a place of ignorance. They are told to say a prayer which God will obey. They join a church to gain credibility. They make changes to their behaviour to gain acceptance with God.

But this is still changing the external dressing and the cancer within remains. The heart of the person is no different than it was before this useless work to gain heaven. Without faith there is no repentance.

Repentance comes as a result of the conviction of sin which is the acceptance of our willful treason against the one in whose image and likeness we were formed and were created to reflect His holiness and glory.

External religion sees no need for repentance, because it does not acknowledge and accept responsibility for the guilt that is owned, it shuns repentance that results in death to self to trust in God for all things according to His will.

Therefore, external religion is without the forgiveness of God, it has no justification for the faith it rejects, and is not sanctified into the service of God, and it remains under the wrath of God, prepared for eternal damnation along with the devil.

Works without faith are dead works, because faith comes from God, producing a new heart alive with God, which always results in His works being the results of the new disposition. For God is able to work from the new heart.

Consequently, without the work of God producing faith, anything done is from the heart of sinful flesh which is dead to God. So the effect of the works is also dead because they are not the result of God given life to the body that works.

This means that all the religions of the world, apart from faith in Jesus Christ, are spiritually dead religions, because they all rely on man's efforts to justify self without the spiritual life that must be received from God, who alone works

effectively by faith in Christ, and only in Christ who has been raised from the dead by the power of God who is life.

Works based Christianity is a worldly based counterfeit religion, just as the rest of the religions that lack faith in Jesus Christ, they all lack the resulting repentance and surrender of self to live completely for Him, forever.

Words are cheap. A life dedicated to Christ shows the works of His life.

"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognise no one by the flesh; even though we have known Christ by the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."
2 Cor 5:14-17

Human willing can't get anyone into heaven, it is impossible for man to be saved by his work. 'A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"You know the commandments, 'DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY, HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER. And he said, "All these things I have kept since my youth"'
Luke 18:18, 21

Keeping the religious laws is not enough if the heart isn't changed first.

'Now when Jesus heard this, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely wealthy. And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God!"
Luke 22:25

The fact that this man valued his money more than obedience to the Lord showed his heart really belonged in the world.

Those who heard Him said, "And so who can be saved?" But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God." Luke 18:26-27

This is exactly the issue, no one can be saved on their own terms. Unless God changes the heart there is no heaven.

God tells His children it isn't their choice to be with Him, but His.

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;"

Eph 2:4-6, 8

When God gives life to someone, He gives the faith to believe and the heart is irreversibly changed to please Him, and the decision to have fellowship with God is already made by God so that His will for them is achieved.

Good works without faith is a dead end. External works are no more than human wisdom which God laughs at. *'For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the sight of God. For it is written: "He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE BY THEIR CRAFTINESS"*

1 Cor 3:19

Human wisdom is false religion trying to make things better by human effort alone.

True religion is the work of God by faith, which always results in doing the work of God because God now motivates the heart to please Him. He begins by giving His love to those whom He has chosen so that they love Him and want to do what pleases Him. When God works there is always results.

The internal life of the true believer is recreated in the image of Christ. The reborn person now lives by faith because they trust in God to complete in them that which He has undertaken on their behalf. Evidence of God's work is the indwelling Spirit who carries out the work of transformation God desires.

The heart of the person of faith is compelled by the love of God in them to be disposed to godly living. The spirit lead life is a life of prayer. Life is automatically included in the church, which is the gathering of those made alive by God.

This means those who have added church as external dressing are not under the control of the Spirit to reveal the life of Christ, they are not really the church.

The kingdom of God is now the kingdom of those God alone has chosen. The behaviour of the chosen people changes because the motivation of the heart has been changed. The peace of God is their peace because the God of peace dwells within them. Contentment is always available because the God who rules all things secures His children in His love, and He now governs the heart and the mind by the leading of the Spirit of God.

External religion cannot demonstrate peace and contentment when God allows His secret will to bring testing into their live to show what they have as a result of their own works.

The external works of man don't determine the quality of life required by God. God alone is the one who lives in the believer to quieten the heart in the face of danger because He is life and peace.

The Spirit of God confirms alongside the true believer that they are indeed children of God.

"However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

Rom 8:9-11

Perseverance in faith is guaranteed for internal religion

God is able to complete what He has intended to do from before the world was made.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of

His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He favoured us in the Beloved."

Eph 1:3-6

"I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work among you will complete it by the day of Christ Jesus."

Phil 1:6

The god of external religion is inadequate.

If the god we think we believe in is made in our image, we will naturally think that he is not able to do all he has promised, because he is like us. So, if god is like us, we will think we must add to his undertaking by helping him out by doing it ourselves. We will think our external works will make up for what god cannot do on the inside.

The God of internal religion is God indeed.

The Christian life is His life, it is obtained by His sovereign power. It is lived by His enabling. It is the expression of His life. The scriptures give witness to these truths so that we can be sure we are living life according to His will and not our own.

The Spirit of Christ living in the believer sets the standard for the whole of the life lived before God. True religion is about God, self no longer has a say in what to do or how it should be done.

The new life delivered into Christ doesn't allow for dual occupation of the heart. There cannot be any sharing of decision making, or separate plans for the life lived on earth.

The whole life is to be about the Spirit of Christ expressing His life, and His purpose and priorities, through us, so that the world may see our good works and give glory to God. His life of holiness and truth has become our life, to be live by faith.

Our concern now is for His holiness, His righteousness, His truth, His mercy, His justice, and His salvation plan for the nations of the world. The life of the believer is the vehicle for the Spirit of Christ to find full and free expression in revealing the heart of God to the world so they will glorify God.

The Spirit will want to talk about the things of God with God's people, and share how to enjoy His presence in the daily events He places us in.

He will desire His special kind of devotion and fellowship with all His people who live by faith.

He will always want to be doing the things consistent with His Holy and righteous nature.

The Spirit of Christ will be focused on fulfilling the work of salvation Christ has died for, for this Christ has been raised again with all authority and power.

Everything that the Spirit of Christ does in the world and in the believer has this one objective, that God's glory is magnified in all creation.

But external religion is about the experience of man. External religion is false religion. True religion is not just about our experiences and our preferences. True religion is not about worldly comfort and pleasures.

True internal religion is about self-sacrifice. It's about living out the humility of surrender to God's will that exemplified the life of Christ.

True internal religion is about joyfully carrying out the work of God regardless of the many obstacles placed in our way. It is about dying to the world to live for God.

True internal religion is never about having as our priority what we want in the world. True faith is always about working out the purposes of God as He works in us for His glory.

True internal religion is about showing mercy in the situations the Lord presents to us in the world for His life to be manifested in the world.

True internal religion is about having prayerful conversation with God and His children as a way of spiritual breathing. As we breath continually, we are to pray continually as we go about our service to the Lord.

True internal religion is about the genuine fellowship of love with His people. True internal religion is having deep and enduring passion for the people of the church which is the physical expression of the life of Christ.

True internal religion reveals the affectionate love of God in warm and devoted tenderheartedness, especially towards His people, and to all those He has created.

True internal religion is always looking for opportunities to show practical support for the needs of God's people.

True internal religion is about sharing the spiritual burdens of the redeemed children of God.

All true believers have been reborn with the Spirit of God to live the life of Christ in the world. Therefore, being born in His image is purely for the purpose of revealing His life to the world.

True internal religion is about hating sin and standing up for the truth in Christ so that His word is not compromised by us looking the other way.

True internal religion is about bearing witness to Christ and His word in everything that we do in the world.

True internal religion is about magnifying God in Christ who lives in us as we present Him by representing Him to the world as we go on living for His glory.

True internal religion is advanced by the application of faith through obedience to the revealed will of God in His word. True faith is expressed in ongoing thankfulness and sincere adoration for Christ our redeemer. In this way the true believer grows in the knowledge and the image of Christ who lives in them.

True internal religion perseveres through every trial and tribulation, because God works in the heart of those He has chosen and promised to complete His expectations for them to be transformed into the image of Christ.

Given the curse of God in Deuteronomy 28 as judgment against sin, and judgment of the Lord sending out the 4 horseman, and scrolls and bowls of revelation; in the piled-up chaos of our world, and the undesirable suffering we endure, sometimes daily, we can always give thanks that our God reigns.

True religion means Christian perseverance is actually Christ's perseverance working in the believer. Those who persevere until the end will be saved because God perseveres in them. Those who don't persevere never had a saving interest in Christ or a genuine relationship with God.

But false external religion is about life according to the desires of the world.

External religion is opposed to internal religion as the flesh wars against the Spirit. External religion wants to replace internal religion.

External religion finds comfort in all the false religions of the world.

With external religion Satan appears as an angel of light so that he may even deceive the saints with empty religion.

However, God's Salvation is about being delivered from the power of sin as it finds a home in self. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has dealt with the judicial requirements of the justice of God, but in order to be set free there has to be a death to self and a rebirth in the image of Christ.

This rebirth happens on the inside as the Spirit of God takes up residence in the heart producing repentance in the believer and then he turns away from living according to the flesh, which is the external life in the world without God.

There are two, the flesh and the spirit

The flesh is home in the world which is under the dominion of satan.

The spirit is home in heaven where Christ reigns. The flesh is concerned with the external life of the world under the dominion and control of satan.

The spirit is concerned for the things of God under the dominion and control of God the Holy Spirit.

The flesh cannot please God. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

The flesh is looking to carry on business as usual but with a religious bent, meaning we can have the world and the church at the same time.

True internal religion does the work of God.

Faith without works is dead, because works are evidence of the Spirit of life dwelling within.

"So that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." Rom 8:4, 9

The requirements of the law are to love God with all the heart, mind and strength, and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

"If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." Rom 8:10-11

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh provides no benefit." John 6:63

Since the redeemed are the dwelling place of God, God will reveal His purpose and desires through the saints.

True internal religion is no longer condemned by the Law but able to fulfill the requirements of the Law by the law of the Spirit. The law of the Spirit is the enabling power of the Spirit.

Jesus spoke to the disciples about this kind of connection with God in John 14.

"Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I am going to the Father." John 14:10-12

And since the Spirit is in residence, He will do the work through us that the Father has called us to do. And the greater works for disciples will be to see the salvation of thousands of thousands.

True internal religion is worth fighting for

The evidence of salvation life is the indwelling work of the Spirit of God.

The blessings of God in the lives of the redeemed people of God is the testimony of the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, they must open their mouths, open their wallets, and open their hearts, and allow the Spirit to speak and do His work through them, as they surrender to the majesty of Christ the Lord.

If we have internal faithful religion we will love God, we will obey God, and we will work with Him to achieve His purpose that we will be like Jesus Christ.

The consolation and secure foundation for those who have true internal religion, is that they have God, for God has them united with Him even while

they walk in the evil darkness of the world, where we suffer with Him (Rom 8:17) where we groan as we wait for His return. Rom 8:23

External religion can gain all knowledge but the heart, the disposition chained to self-interest does not change.

True internal religion first changes the heart and the disposition so that the first desire is to please God. So, the knowledge gained is useful in understanding how to walk with God according to His revealed purposes.

External religion makes a great show on the outside, while internal religion is content with humility. External religion has a lot to say and can excel in emotional expression, but so can the devil.

God is glorified in the lives of those who love Him because they live for Him and follow the way of obedience demonstrated by Jesus Christ. Those with whom God smiles upon are governed by His Spirit so that they remain committed to His love, regardless of the trials and tribulations He allows for their spiritual benefit and glory.

External religion is fake news, for it only covers up sin and death.

“For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. So you too, outwardly appear righteous to people, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” Matt 23:27-28

True religion is all God's work of love

“For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord: “I will put My law within them and write it on their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each one his neighbour and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their wrongdoing, and their sin I will no longer remember.” Jer 31:33-34

God forgives sin. He imparts His law into the heart and they will acknowledge God to be God who is to be obeyed.

"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes, and are careful and follow My ordinances."
Ezekiel 36:25-27

True religion only happens because God creates a new creature who will know Him and obey His commands from the heart. They will do the will of God according to His revealed will, for it will be the desires of their hearts.

External religion is no accident of chance, it is planted in the heart by the prince of the air, the master of deception, the enemy of the Spirit of God, the principalities and powers of the world, satan.

'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.'
Eph 6:12

Satan plants the seed of unbelief in the hearts of the unrepentant so that they will not see the glory of God in Christ but instead be blinded to the truth.

"The field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the weeds are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels."
Matt 13:38-39

True religion belongs to the gentleness of the Lamb that was slain, who is welded to the power of the Lion of Judah, who now reigns victoriously after His humble sacrificial death, and His majestic resurrection, to rule over all creation forever, as Jesus Christ who is our Lord and Saviour.

Every true believer has the gentleness of the Lamb and the power of the Lion resident in their hearts by the indwelling Spirit of God who reigns in them as Lord and God.

Therefore, true internal religion has the perfect balance of meekness and authority to be properly equipped to carry out the work of God in revealing the glory of Christ.

In conclusion

We must examine ourselves, we must test ourselves, to see if we are who we claim to be. *'Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed you fail the test?'*
2 Cor 13:5

'For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they do not make you useless nor unproductive in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the one who lacks these qualities is blind or short, sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choice of you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.'
2 Pet 1:8-11

Faith in Jesus Christ is never intended to be a private affair to shield us from the Christ in others. *"I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another."*
John 13:34-35

Internal religion is not about us, it is all about God employing us for His glory. We are only to be faithful servants doing what we ought to do. Every good work that we do, God has prepared for His people to do, and this has been planned before the creation of the world. Our fruitfulness of faith is the result of God's providence as the life of Christ is made real in us.

In fact, external religion and dead works are also included in the providence of God, and are used for our ultimate good. Satan has his day in the world but God is superintending all things at the same time. By the working of false religions, the unrepentant are sorted from the believing community, and the faithful are adequately tested in their faith as they resist the lure to put their faith in the world. We are where we are because of God's unseen hand, therefore we should give thanks in all things knowing He is working for our ultimate good, and He cannot fail. The rough and tumble of life in the chaotic darkness of the world and in the church, is under the providence of God's finishing school for believers, where the rough edges of fleshly thinking are

worn off by trial as if by fire, even while they resist the forces of darkness, and even as they carry out the work of God assigned to them, so that they come out of the fire shining like pure gold. To ignore God's sovereign providence over all things in achieving His goal is to bite the hand that feeds us.

The struggle for Holiness in the church of the world is not an accident, God intended it would be this way, otherwise it wouldn't be like it is. It is therefore not wise to want to avoid the pain, or resist the struggle, the shedding of blood, and the endless sweat and tears. But instead to live for Christ in the fire. The best work is done where it is hottest. The true inner spiritual life bears good fruit from the heart of the Son of God in the fallen world.

And at no time does the Father leave His beloved children without His witness to encourage them in their service by standing with them. *'The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.'*

Rom 8:16-17

And what God wants, God gets

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.'

Rom 8:29

What pains true believers as being disagreeable or even crucifying, is actually love training from the hand of God the Father. *'And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.'*

Rom 8:28

"But you have a few people in who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. The one who overcomes will be clothed the same way, in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

Rev 3:4-5

May I offer a prayer: Oh Lord our God, everything in our life is from your hand, so we will give thanks in all things. For your ways are above our ways, and your wisdom is unsearchable and true. May we be true to Your work in us so that our religion is from the heart and not just some external covering that will never be acceptable in Your sight.

Living Water Resources

Come to the River

**I will build My church;
and the gates of Hades
will not overpower it.**

Matt16:18

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