Religion or relationship

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Someone has defined religion as man's attempt to reach God. This is exampled in the story of the Tower of Babel. The endeavor by mankind to build a tower to reach into the heavens was met with resistance by God. Our attempts to use some physical means to reach or satisfy God are also met with resistance and leave us empty and unfulfilled.

Contrasted with this, the good news about Jesus Christ is that God became a human being and came to live among us so we could eventually live where He lives. He did this by reuniting mankind and Himself through His Son, Jesus. There may be numerous "religions" available to us, but there is only one Jesus the Son of God. And as we approach the Easter season, it is incumbent to observe that Jesus is the only leader of a "religion" who actually walked out of His grave, having come back to life after being certified as dead. Therefore we have a living hope.

The question we have to ask ourselves is, are we practicing religion or are we seeking a relationship with the living God in the form of Jesus the Son? It is an easy thing for us to get so involved in the things and works of God, that we lose sight of the God of the things and works. Jesus seeks a relationship with each and every one of us. He used the metaphor of a vine to describe to His disciples that true life comes when we reside in a communicating, personal relationship with the True Vine. And of course, He said, "I am the Vine and you are the branches."

It is possible to get consumed with doing religious things and participating in religious activities as an attempt to legitimize ourselves to God. This was the issue with the older brother in the story Jesus told of the prodigal son. He was so occupied with trying to please his father with all the good things he was doing, he lost sight of the fact he had an inheritance from his father simply because of his relationship with him. As Johnny Lee sang many years ago, we might just be "looking for love in all the wrong places."

So I ask you, are you hiding in the midst of your religious works, or do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Himself? Obviously, if we have a true relationship with Jesus, good works will follow. Remember we are not Christians because we do good works; we do good works because we are Christians.

Religion or relationship? Choose relationship with Jesus!

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