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Does Jesus Believe In You?

John 2:23-25

Intro: Sir Isaac Newton's 3rd Law of Motion states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Or to put it plainly: every action produces a reaction. This is always true in Physics and almost most always true in every other area of life. Someone **does** something - others react. Someone **says** something - something else happens.

This was also true during the Lord's time on earth. In **ch2**, there are 3 different actions performed by Jesus, each producing a distinct reaction. At the beginning of the chapter, Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding in Cana. Not too many saw this miracle, but we're told that the disciples who did see of it **believed on Him**. This was the **first reaction**. A few days later, Jesus drove the merchants and money changers out of the temple. This was a sign too. Nevertheless, the religious leaders **reacted** to Him in **anger**, demanding that He provide them a sign (miracle) to prove His authority to do this. Finally, we're told that when He was at the feast of Passover in Jerusalem, He performed many other miracles with the result that many more "**believed in His name**."

Here we see 3 different responses to Jesus and His actions, from **total disbelief** of **the Jews** to the **partially informed faith** of the first 6 disciples. We might conclude that some of the reactions were bad; some were better; some were quite good. At least the disciples believed the Scriptures and the words Jesus spoke to them as vs22 says. Now, a whole lot more people have believed on Him. From a human perspective, that's got to be a good thing, right? I mean, that was the whole point of Him coming to the earth and walking among men, isn't it?

Yet, while we may be impressed with all the new believers, it may come as a shock to us that Jesus isn't impressed at all. Despite the obvious acceptance of Jesus by many people at the feast, that seems so significant to us, **Jesus did not commit Himself to anyone**. In our study today, we're going to look first at what's happening in the text and then we'll take some time to look at the reason behind it.

23- signs – I must point out first that these last few verses of **ch2** are actually setting the stage for the next great act in John's Gospel: Nicodemus' meeting with Jesus. There is a direct link between **vs25** and **vs1** of **ch3**: the repetition of the word **man**. In spite of this, these last 3 verses stand alone in declaring yet another aspect of the character of Jesus Christ. There are some interesting, yet difficult truths tucked away in this text that we'd do well to discover.

While Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover, He performed many miracles in public. It must have been these signs that caught Nicodemus' attention and piqued his curiosity in Jesus. Now, none of these miracles are given in detail in any of the Gospels. In fact, John only records a total of 7 miracles in his Gospel. It has been often pointed out that in the first 3 Gospels; Jesus speaks **disapprovingly** of faith that must be supported with signs and wonders; while in **John**, Jesus performs miracles for the express purpose of **calling forth faith** from those who witness them.

Why the disparity? Our text shines light on this because here, Jesus is making a clear distinction between those who were superficially impressed by the miraculous sign and those who looked past the signs and grasped the spiritual truth that the sign was meant to signify. Nicodemus came to a positive conclusion about Jesus by seeing the signs He performed but, as we'll see, he was slow to appreciate their spiritual implications. But he's not the only one to have this problem. Thru-out John's Gospel, the Jewish people are divided over the meaning of Jesus' miracles. The same miracles that drew Nicodemus to Jesus made some of his fellow religious leaders want to kill Him! They will even dare to claim that His miracles were done thru the power of Satan!

What we must understand is that the Lord's miracles actually served 2 purposes: **1)** they were **testimonies**; giving proof of His **divine authority** and **power**. But; **2)** they were also **tests**; **exposing** the hearts of men. The same miracles that opened some eyes only made other eyes that much more blind. There's no one so blind as he who will not see.

It's also important to see that Jesus always tied His miracles to the truth of His message. Turning the water into wine pointed to the end of the Jewish religious system and the arrival of a new and better form of worship. His cleansing of the temple pointed to the same truth. The disciples who saw

the first sign might have had second thoughts when they saw the small preview of the physical reality of that truth. Later, when Jesus feeds the 5000 – they want to make Him King – until He preached a sermon on the Bread of Life and they couldn't leave fast enough. **Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (1:17)**. In grace, He fed the hungry; in truth, He taught the word. The people wanted the physical food but not the spiritual truth, so they abandoned Him by the droves.

So, we can see that there are 2 levels of believing in Jesus' name: that spoken of in **1:12**, which carries with it **the right to become children of God** & that revealed here in our text. The 1st one involves an unreserved personal commitment to Jesus Christ, one that willingly acknowledges Him as your Lord and Savior. But none of that will ever happen for those who only choose to see the miracles but are not willing to see the Miracle Worker.

24-25- commit – Here's where it really gets interesting. So, a lot of people believe in Jesus but Jesus doesn't commit Himself to them. Okay, I kind of get the gist of the text but the lack of real clarity has always bugged me. That is, until I really studied it out. The Greek word for **believed** in **vs23** is **episteusan**: have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing); to entrust (especially one's spiritual well being to Christ). Come to find out, that same word is used in vs24 but it is translated as **commit**. What John is telling us is that these people believed in Jesus but He didn't believe in them! Jesus recognized there was something superficial about the commitment of these people because it was based solely in the miracles Jesus was performing. They had a faith that was based on signs and wonders!

Now, **Rom 10:17** says that **faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God** which simply means **faith comes by hearing God's Word**, **not** by seeing God's works. A faith based on the Word of God is a faith that's unshakable because God's Word never changes! But miracles – sometimes God does them and sometimes He doesn't. If my faith is based on miracles then when God doesn't do the miracle I want Him to do then my faith in God is shot! This is a relationship that's always up and down; I'm in with God or I'm on the outs with Him; I believe in Him or I don't believe; it's a never ending cycle of fluctuation between faith, doubt and fear. It's a miserable condition to live in.

Clearly, it takes more than believing in miracles for a person to be saved. Seeing the miracles and believing in them is a great place to start; even the disciples started that way and then grew in their faith. But it is one thing to respond to a miracle and quite another thing to fully **commit** oneself to Jesus Christ and then **continue** in His Word. Why was Jesus so quick to dismiss the belief of the crowds? Because He knew what their real motivations were!

in man – Its common for leaders and teachers to mistakenly grant their followers more credit for loyalty than they actually have. Many have done it and suffered the consequences. But not Jesus, He could read the inner most thoughts of the men and women in the crowd like an open book. We've already seen Him display this ability: He knew the character of both Peter and Nathaniel; He will brush off Nicodemus' flattering introduction and get right to the heart of his most pressing spiritual problem. He'll tell the woman at the well everything she had ever done; the man by the pool of Siloam; the repentance in the heart of the woman taken in adultery; the murder in the hearts of His enemies. God knows the human heart but when He looks into the heart, what does He actually see? Since we can't see into the hearts of men, we might be surprised at the picture of the human heart that God will paint for us.

Now, being human ourselves, we may see most folks as basically good, with some obvious blemishes of sin but, basically good. But that's not what God sees when He looks into the heart of man (**Jer 17:9**). If you're not familiar with the Bible, this may come as a shock but Scripture tells us that according to God the human heart is filled with **madness, mischief, and evil**. It is **impenitent, dark, gross, hard, proud, blind, filled with lust**. It is **far from God**. This is shown to be true on a daily basis in the news. We may think evil people are an aberration, exceptions to the rule; when in fact, they are the rule! It is a grim picture, yes; but **it's only as we begin to see the human heart as God sees it that we can finally begin to appreciate the greatness of God's love towards us**.

Let's look at this historically. What's the first great event in the Bible that reveals the true heart of man? The fall of Adam and Eve. What does it reveal? It shows **man in his state of rebellion against God in which he refuses to go God's way even if his own way kills him**. It's tempting to blame

Eve for everything (Adam did!) but that's not how the Bible sees it. The Bible says that Eve was **deceived** by the devil, so she **fell thru error**. It also says that when **Adam sinned** he did so, **not** through deceit or weakness but **in willful rebellion against God**. **1 Tim 2:14**.

Adam knew what he was doing so his guilt was greater. God had put Adam in the Garden and made him lord of all creation under Himself. God gave Adam all the trees in the Garden for food except 1; that tree would be a symbol of Adam's dependence on God, it symbolized the need for both Adam's faith and obedience. But, as long as that tree was in the Garden as a symbol of his dependence on God – Adam hated it. He ate of it and died (in spirit then body).

Adam's sin wasn't a deception or a mistake – it was rebellion, a willful act of rebellion.

We are exactly like Adam. How do you know? Just look at your kids. Tell them to do 1 thing and they'll do everything but that. Their actions illustrate how Adam's rebellion has passed thru us into our children. Can we see it? it's critical that we do because **spiritual wisdom only starts at the point at which we begin to accept God's description of our nature and then truthfully ask Him to lead us into the ways that actually please Him**.

Not convinced? Consider what happened at Mt. Sinai. Moses was on the mountain, meeting with God, for 40 days. Since he was gone so long, the people thought something happened to him so they convinced Aaron to make them a couple of idols that they could worship and that could lead them back to Egypt. See the irony of their rebellion? While God was saying, **"You shall have no other gods before Me,"** the people were turning their backs on the One who delivered them from Egypt. In both cases, man was in the perfect environment for faith and obedience and in both cases, man failed – because that is the nature of man; that is the true heart of man. That's what Jesus saw...

Do you believe in Jesus? It's an important question but there's another one, equally so: **Does Jesus believe in you?** **Mt 7:22-23** will happen. Jesus doesn't accept **superficial** faith, faith that's untried & unable to bring real change into your life. A faith that can't change you, won't save you either. God loves you in spite of your sin and He proved it by letting His Son die in your place. It is not hard to love someone who's lovable. We all do that. It's

even possible to love someone who's not lovable. Some do that occasionally. But to love someone who is rebellious, proud, arrogant, corrupt, ruthlessly independent, and who will crucify the very one who most loves him—**that is real love!** Only God is capable of that sort of love. The only way to appropriate that love in your life is to surrender your life to Jesus, to set aside your will, expectations and desires under His. That's a belief that moves past the superficial into the depths of His reality. That's the only kind of commitment that brings His salvation and His love.

You might say, "Well, I've already done that. What does it mean for me?" Jesus still knows what's in us but, in the case of those who've been given the right to become children of God, He knows our situation has been settled by faith, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. He knows that the Father is now able to look at us and say that we have been justified, that we are being sanctified and that one day soon, we will be glorified w/ Christ in and for all eternity.

Not by our performance, or works or by our own merit but by belief – because we've trusted in Jesus Christ, believing on Him for Who He truly is and not just for who we want him to be.

As we move thru John's Gospel, we'll see Jesus gradually moving out of the bright light of popularity and into the dark shadows of rejection. At first, it was easy for people to follow the crowd and be wowed by His miracles. But then, His words began to penetrate hearts and conviction would follow. Conviction inevitably leads either to conversion or opposition. It is impossible to be neutral towards Jesus. Either you will be convinced and converted or you will come to hate Him. People have to decide and most decided against Jesus in His day. What about you? 😊