

Heart Religion

by John Wesley

True religion begins with a heart-felt faith, which leads to justification and ultimately to salvation.

Scripture: Matthew 5:3, Romans 10:10

Topics: "Justification", "Heartfelt Faith"

Description

John Wesley emphasizes the significance of the heart in true religion, asserting that belief and justification come from the heart rather than mere understanding. He explains that confession with the mouth is essential for salvation, linking it to the concept of justification, which is God's act of declaring believers righteous through faith in Christ. Wesley highlights that justification is not just forgiveness but a declaration of righteousness that fulfills the law, allowing believers to embrace their relationship with God fully. He encourages a heartfelt belief that leads to genuine outward expressions of faith, reflecting the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount.

Transcript

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10:10 This verse, in accordance with all of Scripture, reminds us that it is the heart that needs to be in our religion. Wesley comments: "for with the heart, not the understanding only, man believeth to righteousness - so as to obtain justification. And with the mouth confession is made - so as to obtain final salvation. Confession here implies the whole of outward, as believing does the root of all inward, religion."

Eugene Petersen's Message translation of the Bible conveys the exuberance of this verse: "with your whole being you embrace God setting things right, and then you say it, right out loud: "God has set everything right between him and me!" " What Petersen calls "setting right" is what Wesley calls "justification." Justification is the judicial act of God, by which He pardons all the sins of those who believe in Christ, and accepts, and treats them as righteous in the eye of the law and as conformed to all its demands.

In addition to the pardon of sin, justification declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied in respect of the justified. The law is not relaxed or set aside, but is declared to be fulfilled in the strictest sense; and so the person justified is declared to be entitled to all the advantages and rewards arising from perfect obedience to the law. It involves the crediting to the believer by God Himself of the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Justification is not the forgiveness of a person without righteousness, but a declaration

that the person possesses a righteousness which perfectly and for ever satisfies the law, namely, Christ's righteousness.

The sole condition on which this righteousness is imputed or credited to the believer is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Paraphrased from Easton's Bible Dictionary) Believing this good news, not with your head but with a spiritually poor and mourning heart is the beginning of inward, Sermon on the Mount type religion from which outward, Sermon on the Mount type religion cannot help but flow. Who in heart on thee believes, He th' atonement now receives, He with joy beholds thy face, Triumphs in thy pard'ning grace (340)

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