



Resurrection Sunday: From Religion to the Gospel

Religion places the prime emphasis upon doing; the Gospel places the emphasis on a Person. The goal of religion is to get good things from God such as health, wealth, insight, power, and control. The goal of the Gospel is that we get God; He gives Himself as the greatest gift.

"Christianity's basic message differs at the root with the assumptions of traditional religion. The founders of every other major religion essentially came as teachers, not as saviors. They came to say: 'Do this and you will find the divine.' But Jesus came essentially as a Savior rather than a teacher (although He was that as well). Jesus says: 'I am the Divine come to you, to do what you could not do for yourselves.' The Christian message is that we are saved not by our record, but by Christ's record. So Christianity is not religion or irreligion. It is something else altogether."

– Timothy Keller, 'Religion and The Gospel' in *The Reason For God: Belief In an Age Of Skepticism*

Since it is through God's kindness, then it is not by our good works. For in that case, God's grace would not be what it really is — free and undeserved. Romans 11:6

God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. Ephesians 2:8-9

We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in His grace, freely makes us right in His sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when He freed us from the penalty for our sins. Romans 3:22-24

Reflection Questions:

1. What is the difference between being religious vs. being a Christian who follows the Gospel?
2. Is your identity found in Jesus Christ or what others think of you?
3. What is your motivation for obeying God? Is it so He can give you a good life or simply because you love Him?
4. "Religion says: I obey God, therefore I'm accepted. The Gospel says: I'm already accepted by God, and it is out of love for Him that I obey." How do you understand this?
5. Religion teaches all the things we need to do to get to God. The Gospel upholds the idea that everything we need to get to God has already been done for us through the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What does this mean to you?

Final Thought: Religion puts burdens on ... the Gospel takes burdens off.

