

Real Christianity Is Real Simple

Introduction:

1. The devil wants to discourage and defeat you by making Jesus Christ's religion complex and difficult.
2. Pharisees add burdens they do not lift and philosophers make things complex (Matt 23:4; Col 2:8,18).
3. False teachers take men away from the gospel simplicity in Jesus Christ (II Cor 11:3-4; I Tim 6:3-5).
4. If you first take care of the religion of your heart, the rest of your duties will take care of themselves.
5. If you first take care of the religion of your heart, the Holy Spirit will bless you to accomplish more.
6. If this is not one of the very simplest messages I have ever preached, then I have failed miserably.
7. We have our landmarks, and we will earnestly contend for true doctrine, but heart religion is greater.
8. You can do all listed below, for the yoke is easy and burden light, and Jesus will help you (Phil 4:13).

Matthew 11:

28 *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

29 *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

30 *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

- A. Are you struggling with the impossibility of being a true Christian? A great Christian? Stop laboring!
- B. Are you struggling with sin, the guilt of sin, the shame of sin? Believe His free and full forgiveness.
- C. Are you burdened by the duties and debts others have laid upon you? Take Christ's yoke alone.
- D. Jesus addressed the Jews of His day, who were burdened under the bondage of Pharisees (Matt 23:4).
- E. If I have caused you this grief, then hear the words of our Savior Jesus Christ. They are gentle words.
- F. Do you like the words rest, easy, and light? Then hear these words and believe them completely!
- G. Here is where we can apply the wisdom of Psalm 127:2 to our spiritual lives, not just our practical.
- H. Even the commandments of God are not grievous, but rather good and wise in every way (I John 5:3).

Micah 6:

6 *Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?*

7 *Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

8 *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

- A. There are four questions here implying the burden of thinking the Lord requires great things.
- B. These words are from a prophet to people with 972 commandments in the books of Moses!
- C. God had always exalted heart religion above the outward ordinances (Ps 69:30-32; Hos 6:6).
- D. The answer is three simple things that are good and what the Lord requires of us.
 1. *To do justly* is to be righteous in all your dealings and treat others with total fairness.
 2. *To love mercy* is to be a compassionate, forgiving, and overlooking peacemaker.
 3. *To walk humbly* with thy God is to have a poor spirit and make God your only portion.

Isaiah 66:

1 *Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?*

2 *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

3 *He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.*

- A. There is no temple or gift you can give to the God of glory, Who created all things anyway.
- B. David or Solomon or Zerubbabel did not do anything you cannot easily and simply exceed.
- C. God looks for the man or woman who is poor and contrite in spirit and trembles at the Bible.
- D. And if you do not have this spirit, then any good thing you do is an abomination to Him!

Romans 14:

17 *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

18 *For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

- A. These verses are found in the middle of Paul's dealing with matters of liberty to the Romans.
- B. The Romans were arguing about Jewish dietary laws, meat offered to idols, feast days of Moses' law, and other concerns more significant than most matters of liberty argued today.
- C. The kingdom of God is not legalistic rules of things indifferent, but rather a spiritual religion.
 - 1. *Righteousness* is doing what is just, right, holy, and godly, as defined by clear scriptures.
 - 2. *Peace* is living graciously and mercifully with others, rather than biting and devouring.
 - 3. *Joy* is the contented and thankful spirit and lives of those who cheerfully walk with God.
- D. These three things are truly serving Christ, pleasing God, and finding approval of men.

Matthew 23:23 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

- A. Thanks be to God! Jesus our Lord ranked some of God's commandments for our learning.
- B. Forgetting tithes and offerings robs God (Mal 3:8), but He wants simple character more.
- C. While tithes of herbs should not be ignored, there are other things much more important.
 - 1. *Judgment* is doing what is fair with all parties in all dealings – the same as doing justly.
 - 2. *Mercy* is what we have seen before – compassionate kindness to live in peace with others.
 - 3. *Faith* is confidence and trust in God that leads to love and fidelity to Him (Luke 11:42).

Hosea 6:6 *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.*

- A. Is mercy really important as you are making it? Is it really more important than tithing?
- B. Yes, it is weightier. Rather than ordinances controlling you, God wants you to show mercy.
- C. Before you can get out of this assembly, you will have numerous opportunities for mercy.

Matthew 12:7 *But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.*

- A. The principle of mercy is weightier than outward ordinances, as Jesus taught the Pharisees.
- B. Surely you can be merciful to others. Just think about His mercy to you (Matt 18:21-35).

Romans 15:13 *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

- A. Your faith can grow into joy, peace, and hope by the blessing and power of God Himself.
- B. If you are not filled with all joy, peace, and hope through faith, you have a spiritual problem.
- C. Consider these traits of true religion – they are simple, restful, light, easy, and pleasant.

Job 22:21 *Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.*

- A. It is a shameful fact that most Christians do not have desire or time to do this simple thing.
- B. The peaceful and blessed religion of Jesus Christ comes from knowing and walking with God.

Jeremiah 9:

23 *Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:*

24 *But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.*

- A. Rather than things earthly men never have enough of, we are given the best, simple and free.
- B. We have a basis for glorying through life by being thankful for knowing God and His ways.
- C. See the total lack of anything complicated or difficult about this aspect of walking with God.

Psalms 69:

30 *I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.*

31 *This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.*

32 *The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.*

- A. Solomon offered 120,000 sheep and 22,000 oxen, but you can sing and give thanks to God.
- B. And guess which gift the Lord appreciates the most and has the best effect on others? Yes!
- C. A Spirit-filled believer will sing with God's grace in His heart (Eph 5:18-20; Col 3:16).

John 12:

20 *And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:*

21 *The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.*

- A. The great goal of our lives is to learn and love the Lord Jesus Christ Himself above all else.
- B. It is not nearly enough to learn about the Lord Jesus Christ or learn all about His doctrine.
- C. If we put Him first and learn the testimony of the Spirit about Him, He will teach us the rest.

Psalm 73:

25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

- A. Asaph had been thinking very foolishly in envy at the easy lives of the wicked (Ps 73:1-24).
- B. A weak human heart for a Christian is due to a loss of the love of God and walk with Him.
- C. This easy and simple priority – making God your only desire and portion – is key to success.

Luke 10:

38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

- A. When we have a choice, and we have one more often than not, we should choose Jesus.
- B. Notice the condemnation of Martha's fretting over the things that do not matter to the soul.
- C. Notice the commendation of Mary's choosing the "one needful thing" and the "good part."
- D. No, you cannot meditate all day every day without work, but you can do more than you do.

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

- A. If you think Mary too carefree (Luk 10:38-42), then consider all the things the Gentiles seek.
- B. If you get your priorities in life straight – easy and simple – He will take care of the rest.
- C. Are you willing to sell all you have or seek in order to get these two things (Matt 13:44-46)?

Colossians 3:

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

- A. Here is the easy and simple goal of a Christian – set your affections on spiritual things above.
- B. The little bubbles of this life cannot in any way compare with the glory to be revealed in you.
- C. Remember that you are dead and risen with Christ legally, vitally, and should be practically.

Philippians 3:

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,*

9 *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*

10 *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*

11 *If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*

- A. Consider that the apostle Paul toward the end of his ministry was still seeking the simple life.
- B. He counted all things loss to learn more about Jesus Christ and know Him and His life better.
- C. Is your greatest goal to learn about the Lord Jesus Christ and conform your life unto His life?

Job 23:12 *Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.*

- A. God's words should be more important to you than the necessary food to sustain your life.
- B. All you need to do to keep this verse is to take time each day with greater zeal than for meals.

Psalms 131:1 *LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*

- A. The poor spirit we have read about elsewhere is humble enough to not pursue mysteries.
- B. Wisdom is given by God to those who confess that they are little children (I Kings 3:7-9).

I John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

- A. Are you wondering how you can start over after wasting a day, a year, a decade, or a life?
- B. It is as certain and simple as this simple verse (Job 33:27-28; Ps 32:5; Pr 28:13; Is 55:6-9).

I Timothy 6:6 *But godliness with contentment is great gain.*

- A. In contrast to complicated false teachers in the context (6:3-5), here are two simple things.
- B. This is a successful life and great gain as measured by God. You can do these things easily!

Galatians 5:

22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

23 *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

- A. Are you discouraged and tired by all the laws against so many things, as in Gal 5:19-21?
- B. Here is a short list of easy and simple things against which there is no law at all. Do them!

II Peter 1:

5 *And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;*

6 *And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;*

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A. Do you want to know if you are going to heaven or not, then do these eight simple things.

B. According to the Holy Spirit, these eight simple things are true fruitfulness in Jesus Christ.

C. These things are not complicated or difficult! They are easy and simple! Lay hold of heaven!

Matthew 5:

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

A. These are not complicated and difficult things, and they are related to many already listed.

B. Do you recognize poor in spirit, contrition, humility, mercy, virtue, peace, and patience?

C. The Lord of glory gave these Beatitudes to define and describe God's simple requirements.

I Timothy 5:10 *Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.*

1. What kind of good works does God require of widows in order be supported by the church?

2. She is a faithful mother, hospitable saint, serving others, helping the poor, and doing good.

I Corinthians 12:

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

- A. You need not worry about being an apostle, prophet, or other gifted member, as Corinthians.
- B. The more excellent way of serving Jesus Christ is learning to love others by God's definition.
- C. Without this Christ-like love of others, all spiritual of exaggerated excellence are nothing.

1 Peter 4:

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

- A. If you think love is too important from I Corinthians 12:28 – 13:13, then read these verses.
- B. *Above all things* is the apostle's description and exhortation to fervent charity among saints.
- C. And if fervent charity is in place, hospitality without grudging will certainly follow.

Galatians 5:6 *For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

- A. Rather than the sign of the covenant of the Old Testament, the gospel exalts faith and love!
- B. Can you believe God and love Him for what He has done and others for being born of Him?

Psalms 27:4 *One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.*

- A. The man after God's own heart reduced his spiritual goals to one pursuit – to seek the LORD.
- B. If this were your greatest desire and chief pursuit, it would greatly affect your life for good.

Matthew 22:

34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

- A. Weighing these words about the *greatest commandment*, it is simple to love our blessed God.
- B. Weighing these words about *two commandments*, it is simple to grasp these two godly goals.
- C. If overwhelmed with all the law and the prophets, simply love God and your neighbor.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

- A. Solomon's pursuit of man's purpose under the sun discovered a very simple summary of life.
- B. The beginning of wisdom and rule for life here is reverence for knowing and pleasing God.

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

- A. God gave eternal life to the elect so that they might know Himself and His Son Jesus Christ.
- B. Are you using your eternal life to know God our Father and His Son Jesus better and better?

Conclusion:

1. Let nothing in this world or a false religious zeal steal the essential factor of a relationship with God.
2. Jesus Christ will receive all who come to Him by faith casting off any pretensions of worth, manmade traditions, their gifts to give, or any other desire for their lives. He will give rest, ease, and lightness.
3. Seek out the Lord Jesus Christ through meditative reading and prayer every day, love others and do justly toward them at all times, seek peace and pursue it with others, and walk humbly with thy God.

For Further Study:

The sermon outline, "Walking with God," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/walking-with-god.pdf>.

The sermon outline, "To Live Is Christ," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/to-live-is-christ.pdf>.

The sermon outline, "A Pure Heart," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/a-pure-heart.pdf>.

The sermon outline, "Godly Priorities," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/priorities2.pdf>.

The sermon outline, "Knowing Christ," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/knowning-christ.pdf>.

The sermon outline, "We Would See Jesus," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/we-would-see-jesus.pdf>.

The sermon outline, "He Is Altogether Lovely," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/bible/christ/he-is-altogether-lovely.pdf>.

The sermon, "World's Greatest Lover," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/worlds-greatest-lover.pdf>.

The sermon, "He Deserves Better than That" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/he-deserves-better-than-that.pdf>.

The sermon outline, "The Heart of David," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/heart-of-david.pdf>.

The sermon, "Eating and Drinking Christ," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/eating-and-drinking-christ.pdf>.