

Message: Contrast: A Christian & A Disciple of Jesus

Hello and welcome to JesusFamilies.org's audio messages!

The title of this message is, "Contrast: A Christian & A Disciple of Joshua"

I hope the title of this message catches the attention of the listener, for the information in this message both has the potential to make significant differences in your life as well as impact your destiny after your physical death. Please remember that Joshua teaches that to those who are given much, much is required. Christians – all exposed to the teachings of Joshua - have been given much regarding opportunities to find and know Joshua and become his disciple. When we refuse to take the good thing that God offers, we condemn ourselves. Make no mistake, God condemns no one for he loves everyone and He desires that all come Home to Him...it is we who condemn ourselves by our lack of faith and our lack of love and our lack of thirsting after righteousness.

So, let's start from the highest perspective of our topic of the contrast between a Christian and a disciple of Joshua, which would be religion. What is religion? It is what people believe or do in order to be accepted by the god they believe exists. For those who don't have a clear god concept, but who still hold to some destiny after this life is over, religion would be the beliefs they hold about that destiny and the behavior they believe they must do in order to attain to that destiny.

So, in that context, what is a Christian? At this time in history, a Christian can mean many things. From one end of the spectrum, it is a person who merely claims that as their religion when required for some reason to do so (like a hospital visit) with no other meaning beyond that. For many in the middle of the spectrum, a Christian is a person who can recite some beliefs about the "Christ" figure or concept that the sect they belong to teaches, and who can claim some moral standard as well as some level of attending what they call 'the church'. For those at the serious end of the spectrum, being a christian means diligently attending the religious organization they call 'the church' as well as reading their sects religious literature or the bible regularly, and being able to explain, to some extent what they believe about God and why.

Today in the US, the term 'christian' is becoming more and more meaningless – or stated another way, it is so broad that it can mean anything. The person who takes the label, 'christian' (or a sect variation of the term like catholic or protestant) is virtually indistinguishable from those who don't take a religious label. In general, christian's talk the same way and live the same way as people who do not associate with a religious sect or who don't profess any belief in a clear god concept. One thing is certain, that a Christian today in the US is not a follower of Joshua.

OK, you might ask, so what is a disciple of Jesus or Joshua and how are they different than a Christian or the other labels Christians use like Lutheran or catholic or Episcopalian, etc.

Well, it starts with what we believe. Beliefs do matter, dear listener, for they guide and direct our behavior while living this life. For example, if I believe that money or having material things is the most important thing that I value in this life, then my thoughts and behavior will be centered around how to gain more money and more material things. As another example, if entertaining myself is what I care about most in this life, then I my thoughts and words and actions will revolve around how best to accomplish that. Now, most religious people – including Christians - are

clever and know that their god is supposed to be the most important thing in their life and will often provide that answer if cued off by a religious or god context, but again, if you look at how they live their life, the only difference between the Christian and the non-christian is the Christian goes to the religious building on some frequency while the non-christian does not. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude one of three possibilities:

That a christian's beliefs are pretty much the same as non-christians;

The christian's beliefs only address things that have nothing to do with how they lives their lives;
or

The christian's god beliefs have little or no impact on how they live their lives because they have no real faith and associated conviction behind those beliefs.

All three options arrive at the same conclusion...that in general, chistian's god beliefs are irrelevant to their lives or don't address how they ought to live.

In contrast, what does the disciple of Joshua believe? Quite simply, that Joshua is who he said he was – the only sure Way to our Father – and that by having faith in him and his Father, and thus making him our Master, we will be on the road Home to him; and that road affects how we live our lives while on the earth. With Joshua as our Master, we try to both understand and live our lives according to his teachings alone. Let's review that again...

In contrast, the christian has many voices they listen to in order to know what to believe and how to live. They have their own voice, the voices of their psychologists and counselors, their religious leader's voices, and the various authors they read, both contemporary and in the bible. Needless to say, it would be impossible to harmonize all those voices into one clear direction or one clear understanding on any given topic. As such, the christian does not have any external master – rather, they have put themselves into the position of being their own master since they decide who or what to listen to.

The master concept is difficult for a person to understand if they have never had another person as their Master, but rather have always been their own master. The definition of a Master is a person who has mastered the thing or skill or realm or subject matter of that which they claim to be a master of. Joshua has claimed to be the master of the metaphysical or spiritual realm...The master of knowing God and knowing what God wants...the master of how to live the human life well. Thus, a student or disciple or follower of that master will listen to him ONLY in regard to those realms or domains he claims to be master of, and will understand those realms or domains through the master's understanding and eyes, so to speak. Therefore, a student or disciple or follower of the one who says he is the truth, will both submit to him only, and will understand their existence and purpose through that master only...no other voice can add anything to, or take anything away from, the master's teachings.

Again, this is a foreign concept to most Christians since the master concept is simply not part of their – or the average Americans - experiences.

Dear listener, let's take a step back for a moment and ask a very important question - is Joshua or Jesus of Nazareth your master? Really? Or are you like millions of others who say he is their God and savior etc. yet who make no serious attempt to know him or his teachings or to live by them? Have you believed the falsehood that you just have to know a few things about 'the christ' and go to church occasionally, and participate in some rituals in order to be on your way to heaven?

It is important to make something clear at this point. This disciple believes that faith and a sincere heart that seeks to listen to the object of one's faith, and to live according to their conscience, is all

that is required for a person to avoid the destruction of their soul after physical death. Thus, disciples do not make judgments regarding people's destiny after death because we cannot know who has faith and a sincere heart or not – instead we focus first on ourselves. We are slow to judge people's hearts or motivations, and for those who profess some type of faith, we provide the benefit of the doubt even while we are quick to judge ourselves in the same measure. This does not mean we don't judge what is true and what is false, what is real and what is not. It is essential that disciples take the truth very seriously as they are following the one who says he is the truth.

I need to clarify the faith and sincere heart point because religion typically teaches people that they must believe the doctrine that their sect teaches in order to go to heaven. In other words, the religious sects have substituted mental beliefs for faith – thus they have their 'statements of faith', which statements are self-contradictory since faith is not the doctrines the statements are made up of, nor can a person have faith by agreeing with the doctrines. I have had enough experience to understand that the doctrine that the sects teach, and whether a person has faith or not, are simply not related to one another – there is no correlation. In my experience, usually a person has faith in spite of the dead religion and its doctrines that the sects preach.

Sadly, contemporary Christian religion says it is what you believe that matters – meaning you must have the correct religious doctrine in order to be heaven bound. This is a false belief according to Joshua of Nazareth. Rather, whether a person has faith or not AND how they live their lives in regard to who or what they place their faith in, is what matters. Let me repeat that very important truth - whether a person has faith or not AND how they live their lives in regard to who or what they place their faith in, is what matters. Stated another way, a life well lived is one that both has the correct standard to know truth from falsehood, right from wrong; AND acts in accordance with that correct standard. Let me repeat as these truths are crucial to understand - a life well lived is one that both has the correct standard to know truth from falsehood, right from wrong; AND acts in accordance with that correct standard. So, for the disciple of Joshua, basing our lives on his teachings alone and then living by those teachings, is a life well lived.

Let us return to trying to get a better understanding of what a disciple of Joshua is compared to what a Christian is. We will use contrasts to accomplish this.

A disciple believes that Jesus or Joshua of Nazareth is alive and is their living master who alone guides our life. We don't listen to any other voices for spiritual guidance – including the authors who contributed to the bible. Listening to Joshua will make the disciple different than the people of the world – we will live and speak differently.

A Christian believes that God exists and that they should believe what their religious leaders say – or the bible doctrine those leaders point to - in order to go to heaven. They only listen to the teachings of Jesus that don't impact how they live their lives – they are indistinguishable from moral non-Christians from a speech and behavior perspective.

A disciple rejects all other voices that claim knowledge or authority regarding the kingdom of God – the only voice we listen to, and the only one we ultimately submit to, is the king and his voice, Joshua of Nazareth. Joshua, being our spiritual master and king, shapes our view of the world and our lives in it. We try and accept and submit to the master's teachings even if it means it costs us something or if we lose our life in this world as a result. That is good evidence of faith in Joshua.

A Christian believes pretty much what they want, choosing what they themselves think is OK or what is not regarding the god/heaven thing. The Christian is their own master, believing what they want to believe regarding spiritual matters. Christians oftentimes change their beliefs according to how it will benefit them and their lives in this world.

A disciple of Joshua submits to no other authority in terms of what to believe or how to live our lives. We will obey the laws and rules of men if those laws and rules do not cause us to disobey our Master.

A Christian, on the other hand, submits to whatever authority they find themselves under whether religious or political even if it means contradicting Joshua's teachings. Christians listen to Paul or Peter who say obey the governments of men, and generally don't know Joshua's teachings.

For example, disciples of the Light don't kill people a government says are our enemies for that contradicts his teaching to love your enemies.

Most Christians take the guns and bombs handed to them by their governor and kill others with them.

Disciples share the material things we have because to do otherwise would break Joshua's command to love one another and to love our neighbors.

Christians usually share only with natural and legal family, and even then oftentimes with qualifications and begrudgingly.

A disciple's family are other disciples, for only then do we truly have the same Father which is the definition of even the natural family. The normal course of events for the disciple of Joshua is to have their natural and legal family reject them and cast them out due to their faith in the Master.

A Christian's family is no different than non-Christians – the natural or blood and legal relatives are their family – same as any other person on the earth. The Christians are not separated from their natural and legal relatives because they don't speak and live Joshua's teachings.

A disciple understands what Joshua means when he speaks of the world, and does not belong to the world, for the world is the people who reject the person and teachings of their Master.

In general, Christians have no clue about the separation between the world and the King's kingdom, for they cannot recognize a distinction because they cannot see. Christians merely recognize people's moral characteristics – whether someone is good or bad – without caring about what the source of the motivation is for someone being good. For the disciple, that is faith in Joshua and his Father.

A disciple is conscious of Joshua and his teachings regularly during any given day. The more devoted, the more time we will think about him and act according to his teachings each day. But make no mistake, the disciple of Joshua by definition, is turning to him for strength and considering his teachings each day. This is what it is to abide in Joshua – to be aware of his person and teachings at some level of consciousness.

In contrast, Christians largely ignore Joshua and his teachings while living their life – in general they are not connected to him by faith and thus they cannot abide in him as he asks. Many make God talk, but few do – or even know - what Joshua says.

Lastly, disciples of Joshua make a really big deal out of love, Joshua's greatest teaching. Truly, what the people of the earth need is to love one another. Not as the people of the world define love, but rather how Joshua defines it – selfless behavior motivated by compassion. Let's repeat that all important definition of love that Joshua provides in his teachings – selfless behavior motivated by a heart of compassion. Disciples understand that this is what the people of the world need, and disciples try very hard to model that love collectively so those who don't know Joshua or his Father might know what love is.

I must ask at this point, dear listener, how hard are YOU trying to model the love Joshua teaches, which love can only first be modeled amongst disciples. How many disciples make up your Family? How are you doing sharing your life and material things with those who are truly and actually your brothers and sisters and mothers, etc.? If we are not trying to do this, then we are failing miserably at the all important New command that Joshua speaks of. And if we are not being each other's family as evidenced by the love we get from our Father, then we have no leg to stand on regarding conveying to the Christians that there is something more and much better...without an actual expression of love, it is just more doctrine to them.

“For this is how the world will know that you are my disciples IF you love one another.”

Christians, in contrast, don't even see that they are not loving one another – they think the cold, selfish, independent, autonomous lifestyle of the average American is normal, and any love beyond that is expressed with a hug and greeting once or twice a week at the religious building or by giving some money to a charity. There is no real sharing of lives.

I hope the listener is asking why this is so? Why do so many people choose Christianity over following Joshua? The answer is simple - because christianity is easy and following Joshua is hard. Christianity at this time in the US amounts to having a few God beliefs the sect you join says are required, and attending a meeting where those God beliefs are affirmed and some songs are sung...this is what people are told will get them to heaven.

In stark contrast, following Joshua means we must give up our love for the world we find ourselves in...following Joshua means we must come to the firm conviction and conclusion that the heavenly Father we have, and his love for us, is so much more valuable than the things the world has to offer, that we do in fact reject what the world values and instead live according to Joshua. Do not deceive yourself, dear listener, thinking you can live for what the world offers and at the same time love your Father with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

Listen to this fundamental teaching so Joshua repeated several times in the four gospels:

“For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”

What does this mean? Have you ever really considered it? How often have you heard this basic teaching of Joshua discussed in christian circles? If you've never heard it, why? Please do find it and read it and ponder it, dear reader. Two instances of this saying can be found in Matt. 10 and John 12. Read it over and over in context, and try and figure out what it means, and ask yourself how this is coming to pass in your life.

Since this saying is a fundamental teaching of Joshua on what it means to be his disciple, no doubt he taught it often. Here is the saying again in John's gospel:

“He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.”

For those who have ears to hear, it means what it says, like most of Joshua's teachings that are not delivered via parable.

If we are going to follow Joshua, we must lose our lives in this world – that is reject what the people of the world say is worth living for and valuable –and instead live to proclaim the Master's message and to live it out – love, righteousness, truth – with other disciples – the new command.

What are a few of the things we need to forsake in order to get on with losing our lives? Education the world's way – attaining degrees people say are necessary. Living for material comfort and security. Living for our blood or natural relatives. In the united states, these three things rule

people's – including most Christians - lives, and pursuing the education is usually directly related to making money. Please listen to truth, dear listener – you cannot follow Joshua – you are not seeking to lose your life – when you are living for education, jobs, money, careers, natural family, glory in the world, etc. Again, please don't deceive yourself by saying, "oh, well, I don't live for those things...I love God more". Really? How is that love manifested? In truth, if we don't care to do what Joshua says, then we don't love him. He says this plainly:

"If you love me, you will do what I say".

He says we need to lose our lives and even hate our lives in this world in order to gain or find Life Eternal. He says we must forsake all the world values in order to follow Him. Are we willing to do this? Are we willing to even try? He says this is the difficult way that requires faith to walk. He also says the reward is Life Everlasting.

Living to have others say, "oh, wow, he is such an accomplished – fill in the blank – artist, stock broker, information technology developer, athlete, government official, doctor, fisherman", etc. If you want to 'pursue a career', then you cannot follow Joshua. If you want to learn something to help the Family of Joshua, great, go learn it and then use it to fulfill the new command. Here is the new command, what Joshua says is the only way people will know he exists:

"And this is how the people of the earth will know that you are my follower – IF you love one another the way I have loved you."

Dear listener, don't just be a listener. Don't buy the western culture's belief that a political democracy and participating in religion is all that is necessary for human's to thrive. Look around at the result of that experiment in the US and look at the powerlessness of christianity – this nation's religion - to change it:

People killing themselves in increasing numbers – either directly or with drugs. It was just recently announced that suicide has become the leading cause of injury related death in the US., with drug overdose – including drugs prescribed by doctors – in third place behind automobile accidents. What does that say about his culture?

Is it not true that hopelessness is the root cause of people killing themselves? And it is not true that christian religion is alive and well and growing in the U.S.? Is it really because people are 'unchurched' or is it that the thing that calls itself the church has a deadly illness and thus is incapable of substantial help to hopeless humans?

And what about even the lesser barometer of at least a belief that God exists and will hold people accountable for how they lived their lives and that belief's fruit, morality – in the U.S.

People living for entertainment and pleasure, elevating the likes of Madonna and 'lady gaga' as their American idols.

The most popular entertainment - from movie screens to phone screens - involves violence of some kind and to some degree. What is it about a culture's people who are so thirsty for violence?

Homosexuals adopting children with barely any resistance from any quarter. The homosexuals are not the primary target of my rebuke here. Rather, it is the people who aid and abet them in putting children into such a dysfunctional and destructive environment. If you facilitate a homosexual couple adopting a child, you are committing a great sin...the one who will hold you

accountable says, “but whomever harms one of these little ones, it would be better to have a huge stone tied to your neck and be thrown into the sea”.

Medical professionals feeding behavior control drugs to more thousands of children each year, because of hopeless and lost parents who don't know how to be parents anymore since they have rejected the concept of reward and punishment largely due to christianity's grace, positive thinking, and never judge anything teachings. The parents and doctors are equally to blame for this great sin.

I just spoke to a christian leader the other day who freely shared that they had “church members” who are feeding their children the powerful brain chemistry altering drugs to control behavior. The fact is that many of the people involved in – or who advocate or who at a minimum do NOT speak out against – the destructive behaviors just described, are people who take some christian label.

Dear listener, please look at christian religion is in the US and world today and see it for what it is...just another self-serving social club justified by God talk. Please remove yourself from that destructive and deceptive environment, and instead start to listen to the one who says:

“I am the way, the truth and the Life”, NOT christian or bible religion which merely uses him to create their power fiefdoms on the earth.

You are either a part of the problem or a part of the solution – there is no neutrality when it comes to why you are living your life and how you are spending your days. Let's repeat that...

The solution is not political, it is not judicial, it is not legislative or law, it is not psychological, it is not religious, it is not even ethical or moral, for ethical or moral behavior are only by products or fruit of the solution.

What is the solution? The solution is having the right leader, loving that leader, and doing what he says. Let me repeat that.

The right leader is not the fallible and weakness prone, men or women that you are likely looking to for leadership – whether religious, political or familial. Rather, the solution is the perfect model for mankind sent by the creator of human being's souls...the solution is making Joshua of Nazareth your leader, your master, your teacher, your guide. The solution is getting together with other disciples to show those who don't have faith or who don't know the Way what the solution looks like – a group of human's whose faith in the right person causes them to live by love and peace, rightness and justice, caring and compassion.

Dear listener, please become part of the solution. Don't remain a christian lost in religion. If you are listening and are not a christian – don't remain in the hopeless and dark world which does not love you. Instead, become a student of the One who says:

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Become part of the greatest adventure the human experience has to offer. Follow the Light of the world and live for things that matter eternally.