

WHY MEN DON'T BELIEVE ON CHRIST

JOHN 5:43-44 • TV-021A

A television broadcast sermon delivered

SUNDAY, AUGUST 29, 1976

By

HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published

SEPTEMBER 2ND, 2020

HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY

Zebulon Baptist Church

6088 Zebulon Highway

Pikeville, KY 41501

PH: 606-631-9053

John 5:43-44

“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?”

I want you to take your Bibles and open them to the fifth chapter of the book of **John**. I’m going to be reading **verses 43 and 44** for my text today. Now, in **verse 43** our Lord brings a terrible accusation and charge against Adam’s race. Read it with me, **John 5:43**: *“I am come in my Father’s name and you receive me not (you believe not on me). If another shall come in his own name; him you will receive (believe). Let another come in his own name, (seeking his own glory), and him you will receive (believe).”*

Unbelief, unbelief; this is and always has been the nature of every fallen son of Adam, unbelief. When God called Moses to the burning bush in chapter 4 of **Exodus** and said to him, *“Moses I want you to go to Egypt and lead my people out of bondage, (out of slavery).”*

Moses says, “Lord; if I go down there and tell them that you sent me and that you’re going to deliver them and you’re going to take them to a land which you promised our father Abraham, behold Lord, they will not believe me.”

When Isaiah wrote that precious, precious, good news in **Isaiah chapter 53** he said, *“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We’ve turned everyone to his own way. But the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”* That’s good news isn’t it? But you know the statement with which Isaiah preceded that good news;

WHY MEN DON'T BELIEVE ON CHRIST

JOHN 5:43-44 • HENRY T. MAHAN

what did he say? Here's what he said, "*Lord, who hath believed our report (message they don't believe it)?*"

That's what Moses said, "I'll go to them with the good news. I'll go to them with the message but Lord they won't believe me." And when Isaiah wrote this glorious Gospel he said, "They won't believe me, they won't believe me."

And then when Paul wrote about Israel; and how God finally took Israel out of Egypt, brought them across the desert to the place called Kadesh-Barnea and told them to look out over there. "There's the Promised Land, there it is. Enter and possess it, it's yours." They could not enter in, why, because of unbelief, because of unbelief?

In **John chapter 7:5** it says, of our Lord's own family, His brothers and His sisters; it says, "*Neither did His own brethren believe on Him.*" And then the Holy Spirit; Christ said, "*When the Holy Spirit is come He'll convince the world of sin because they believe not on me.*" "*He came unto His own and His own received Him not.*"

And **John 12:37** says, "*Though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him.*"

And at the cross, they walked about that cross and looked up at the Saviour dying on Calvary and they mocked Him and laughed at Him, and ridiculed Him and finally said, "O King of Israel; come down from the cross and we'll believe on you."

And even one of His disciples (now listen to this), Thomas, after the other disciples had informed him that the Lord had risen from the tomb, that the Lord was alive, and they had seen Him, that they had talked to Him; what did Thomas say? "*Except I see the print of the nails in His hands and thrust my hand into His side I will not believe.*"

Now you may not be saying that in words but perhaps you are expressing it in attitude. Perhaps you are expressing it in attitude for someone said and this is true, the absence of faith is unbelief. Now that's so; whatsoever is not of faith is of sin. And the absence of faith is unbelief.

Our Lord said, "*If you're not with me, (with me in faith, with me in trust, with me in confidence) you're against me.*" So you may not be saying that in words like Thomas did. You say, "That's a terrible thing to say, I will not believe." Perhaps you don't even have to say it. Perhaps it's revealed by your thoughts and by your attitude and by your actions, "I will not believe."

Why don't men believe on Christ? He said, "*I come in my Father's name and you will not receive me. John the Baptist bare witness of Him. The heavenly Father bare witness of Him. The works that He did bare witness of me, the Scriptures testify of me,*"

Why will men not believe on Christ? I believe I can give you four reasons and I'm going to begin where the Lord Jesus Christ began. I'm going to give you the reason He gave. In **John 5:44**; look at that next verse.

WHY MEN DON'T BELIEVE ON CHRIST

JOHN 5:43-44 • HENRY T. MAHAN

He says, *“How can you believe? (I come in my Father’s name and you don’t believe me). But how can you believe, how can you which receive honour one of another and you seek not the honour that cometh from God only?”*

What does that mean? It means this; a man will never believe in Christ as his Redeemer, as his Lord, and as his Saviour until he knows himself to be nothing. A man will never receive Christ. He will never come to Christ. He will never believe on Christ until he sees himself to be nothing.

Charles Spurgeon once said, “You must be saved as an ungodly sinner or not at all. You must give up all claims to any personal merit, any personal goodness, any personal righteousness, and the flesh not only finds this hard to do, but finds it impossible to do.”

“The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost.” Our Lord said, *“I’m not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”*

And while others praise us and while others honor us and brag on us; we’re lifted up with pride. And the only way we’re going to be saved is to be brought down. We’ve got to be stripped before we can be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. We’ve got to be humbled before we can be exalted.

And others are bragging on us and honoring us and lifting us up. They talk of our good points. Every mother talks about how good her son is. Every wife talks about how good her husband is. People talk about how good their neighbors are and even go to church on Sunday and the preacher tells them how good they are.

How can we believe when we seek honor that comes from men and seek not the honor that comes from God? Others praise our works and exalt our talents and we’re apt to believe them. We’ve got to be slain to be made alive. We’ve got to be humbled. We’ve got to be emptied to be filled.

Most religion today praises the flesh and not the Lord and you know that’s so. We honor ourselves; God honors His Son and you can’t do both. You go back and look at **verse 23** of **John chapter 5** when our Saviour said, *“The Father honoreth the Son and he that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent Him.”*

Men do not come to Christ because they are seeking the honor that comes from men and not the honor that comes from God. And the honor that comes from God is not on us; it’s on His Son. He is our righteousness. He is our redemption. He is our sanctification. He is our wisdom and all the praise goes to Him and not to us.

In our churches today it is known for bragging on the flesh, bragging on men, bragging on our works, bragging on one another, and praising one another. “This wonderful, gracious, good man, this lovely, sweet, adorable, woman;” the Scripture brags on Christ and puts us down. We’re

WHY MEN DON'T BELIEVE ON CHRIST

JOHN 5:43-44 • HENRY T. MAHAN

nothing. We're less than nothing. *"We're but drops in the bucket and dust of the balance."* Christ is everything.

The Word of God brags on the Saviour, honors the Saviour. And all of our honor is in Him. That's why men don't come to Christ, self is in the way. They refuse to be broken. *"God saveth such as be of a broken heart. God is nigh unto them of a broken heart. God saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. The sacrifices of God are a broken heart and a contrite spirit."* And we refuse to be broken.

And if we go to hear a preacher and he puts us down and he whittles us down and he knocks our foundations of flesh out from under us and He strips our robes of righteousness, rags of righteousness, from off us and slays us; we'll go to hear somebody else because that depresses us.

We want to hear somebody brag on us and tell how much God needs us and how the church can't get along without us and how the kingdom of God can't survive if we don't aid it in some way. "If you don't help us we'll go off the air," that sort of thing.

God doesn't need your help but you need His help. That's why men don't believe on Christ. And I'll tell you the second reason; listen to it!

Secondly: Men do not believe on Christ because they do not feel their need of Christ! That's right; they have no need, *"The well do not need a physician, but those that are sick,"* that's what Christ Himself said. That's who needs a physician.

Let me tell you a good story I read this last week. After the Civil War a revival broke out in a little southern community. And the former slave owner and his trusted slave; they had been together many years and the slave had received his freedom but they remained friends.

And both of them got under conviction. Both of them began to seek the Lord. When this revival broke out in the community the slave owner and the trusted slave for many years; they both got under conviction.

But the slave came to know Christ first before the slave owner. And it amazed him. He wondered about it. So he came to his faithful, old, friend, and he said; "John, how is it that you found the Lord, that you found peace and rest and I haven't?"

And I like this; now listen, the old slave looked at him and said master, "I'll tell you why. When the Lord came to you He said to you, "Here's a new robe for you." But you looked down at your robe and you said, "This is sufficient, it's mighty fine. It might have a few holes in it that needs patching here and patching there and patching somewhere else. But it's mighty fine. It'll do mighty fine. I don't need a new robe. But master, when the Lord came to me He said, John; here's a new robe for you. And I said 'Lord; I'm sure much obliged cause John ain't nothing but rags and I sure need that new robe and I'll take it right now and I'll put it on.'"

WHY MEN DON'T BELIEVE ON CHRIST

JOHN 5:43-44 • HENRY T. MAHAN

“But master; that’s the reason I found peace, I needed Him, I needed Him. You don’t need Him.” And my friend, that’s the reason men do not come to Christ, they don’t need Him. When you can come to the place where you can say:

**“I need thee, oh I need thee
Every hour I need thee
Oh bless me now my Saviour
I come to thee**

**Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind
Sight, riches, healing of the mind
All I need in thee to find
Lamb of God I come.”**

You’ll come; *“Blessed are they that hunger. Blessed are they that thirst after righteousness; they shall be filled.”* But the well, the satisfied; “I’ve got a pretty good robe. I don’t need a new one.”

Your self-righteous rags won’t do but you don’t know it. You’re trying to hide behind your fig-leaved apron of good works like Adam and Eve but it won’t shield you from the piercing eyes of a holy God who sees through you.

We need to cry with the disciples, *“Lord; to whom shall we go?”* To whom shall I go with my sins and with my forgiveness; you tell me, to the church, to the baptismal pool? Maybe the preacher can help him, maybe to the priest.

To whom shall I go with my sins and find forgiveness? I’ll tell you, to Him who said, *“Though your sins be as scarlet; I’ll make them white as snow.”* To whom shall I go in my darkness to find light? I’ll tell you, to Him who said, *“I am the light of the world.”*

To whom shall I go in my sorrow and find comfort, only to Christ who said, *“I’ll never leave you, I’ll never forsake you.”* To whom shall I go in my trial and find strength, only to Christ who said, *“My peace I give unto you.”*

To whom shall I go with my burden and find rest? I’ll tell you, *“To Him, (who said) come to me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; I’ll give you rest.”* To whom shall I go in death and find resurrection? I’ll tell you, *“To Him who said I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”*

To whom shall I turn at the Judgment and find a true, sufficient, adequate, Mediator who is able to save me to the uttermost, who is able to deliver me from even the wrath of God himself, Jesus Christ. Now, when you need Him, you’ll come to Him, you’ll keep coming to Him.

Thirdly: The reason why men do not come to Christ; they do not come because they do not approve of God’s way of saving sinners.

WHY MEN DON'T BELIEVE ON CHRIST

JOHN 5:43-44 • HENRY T. MAHAN

What is God's way of saving sinners? Well, God's way of saving sinners is certainly not the law, good deeds, morality, church membership, baptism, sacraments or communion.

The way God saves sinners is through the death, burial, resurrection, and intercession of His Son Christ Jesus our Lord who said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.*" Who said, "*I am the door. By me if any man enter in he shall be saved.*" He said, "*I am the resurrection and the life.*"

But, **John 5:40**, "*You will not come to me that you might have life.*" You'll go to the preacher and seek life but you won't come to me, Christ said. You'll go to the altar and seek life but you won't come to me. You'll go to the sacraments, you'll go to the law, you'll go anywhere but you won't come to me. You will not come to me that you might have life.

Life is in Christ. He is the life. I don't know why it is but men will go to Sinai's Mountain of law but not to Christ. They love laws though they don't keep them. They love religious regulations, religious rules, religious customs, and religious tradition.

I suppose it is because they want to be able to say; "I thank you Lord I'm not like other men. I tithe; I give alms, I fast. I'm not an adulterer. I'm not an extortioner. I'm not unjust. I'm not even like this Publican. Thank you Lord; I'm not like other men."

Now that's the reason men love to go to Mount Sinai. It gives them something to rest in, in themselves. They won't come to Christ but they'll go to the law.

And then, I don't know why it is, but men will go to the baptismal pool, they'll go to the front of the church, they'll go to the minister, and they'll go to any of these things. I think it's because they want something to do, anywhere but to Christ.

They want something to feel. They want something to experience. They want to have a part in their salvation. They want to exchange with God. They want to take life from God and give God something in return.

And then men will go to religious works and religious activities. This allows them to stand at the Judgment and say; "Lord we preached in your name and we cast out devils in your name. And we did many wonderful works in your name." But Christ said, "*I will say unto them depart from me I never knew you.*"

My friend, salvation is not in the church, it's in Christ. Salvation is not in an earthly priesthood; it's in Christ. Salvation is not in laws and deeds and rituals; salvation is in Christ. The way to be saved is to come to Christ; "*Who loved us and gave himself for us, who knew no sin, and was made sin for us, who was wounded for our transgressions, who was buried and rose again for our justification.*"

WHY MEN DON'T BELIEVE ON CHRIST

JOHN 5:43-44 • HENRY T. MAHAN

He's the Redeemer. Our Lord said, *"This is eternal life that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."* And it's not a mere decision; it's a living and vital union with Christ. It's not a mere commitment; it's a surrender, a surrender to the Lord.

It's not just owning Christ as your fire escape from hell; it's bowing to Christ as your Lord. It's not just receiving His doctrine; it's receiving Him. It's not just giving mental ascent, an agreement with some facts and doctrines; it's to bow in the heart to Jesus Christ, submit to Him and receive Him as Lord and Saviour.

As the song writer put it:

**"Out of my bondage
Sorrow and might
Jesus I come
Into thy freedom
Gladness and light
Jesus I come**

**Out of my sickness
Into thy health
Out of my want
Into thy wealth
Out of my sin
Into thyself
Jesus I come, I come."**

And then the fourth reason why men do not come to Christ, why they do not believe on Christ; He said, *"I come in my Father's name and you won't receive (believe) me."*

Fourthly: Now hold on; listen to me, they don't want to, that's right; they don't come to Christ because they don't want to.

He said in **John 5:40**; read it again, *"You will not come to me that you might have life, you will not. O Jerusalem how oft would I have gathered you unto myself as a hen doth gather her brood. But you would not."*

My friends, it's, it's not a physical defect, and it's not a physical inability. If coming to Christ only required that I stand on my feet in an aisle and take a few steps forward and put out my hand, there's nothing to it. People are doing that all around the world.

If coming to Christ is nothing in the world but mental consent, if all in the world I do is I read the book of Kora and then the book of the Bible, the book of God, and I say, "Well; I take the book of God, it sounds more reasonable."

WHY MEN DON'T BELIEVE ON CHRIST

JOHN 5:43-44 • HENRY T. MAHAN

And then I read the Methodist Handbook, the Baptist Handbook, and the Presbyterian Handbook, the Episcopal Handbook and I say, "Well; this Baptist Handbook sounds better."

So I read that and I find a Baptist church that I like and I say, "Now I agree with what they say, so I'm going to give mental agreement to this, hallelujah I'm saved." That's not it. Man's problem is not a physical inability, it's not a mental inability; what is it, it's a moral inability, it's a moral inability.

It was born in his nature. It occurred in the Garden of Eden when man fell. When man fell he fell from God. And the Scripture says; listen to it, "*They love darkness and not light.*"

Now the sheep out there hears the shepherd's voice and he loves that voice and he follows that voice. The wolf hears the same voice but he doesn't love it and he won't follow it. The sheep sees the shepherd. He sees the shepherd there, his shepherd, his friend, his provider and he loves the sight of Him and he runs to Him. The wolf, he sees the shepherd too but he doesn't run to Him, he doesn't delight in Him.

The shepherd leads the sheep by the still waters into the green pastures and how delighted is the heart of the sheep as he starts munching on that beautiful green grass and eats it. The wolf runs across the green pastures too but he finds no pleasure in that grass. He doesn't eat grass; he eats sheep. He doesn't want any grass. He's not on a grass diet. That's not his nature.

This is what I'm saying. This is why men need to be born again; they need a new nature for the nature with which they're born the first time, the fleshly nature, loves darkness and hates light. It loves evil and hates God. That's so!

He loves sin and hates holiness. It loves itself. Men love themselves and hate other people. Why do we hate one another? Why do people hate other people? It's because of their nature; their nature is a nature of hatred.

Why do they murder, kill, loot, steal, and do these things? Why do we do these things? Why do we make war against one another? It's because of our fallen natures. Christ comes in holiness, beauty, loveliness and grace and opens His arms and says, "*Come to me.*"

And he will not because your nature is a nature of the wolf; it hates the shepherd. It flees from the shepherd. It loves evil. It loves blood. It hates the green pastures. "*You will not.*" Somebody does. But it says in **Psalm 110:3**, "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*"

In **John 1:12-13** it says, "*To as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, who are born not of blood, (that is, they didn't inherit it from their mother's and father's. I'm not a Christian because my daddy was). It's not of the will of the flesh. It's not of the will of man. They are born of God.*" God comes down to that old wolf nature. God comes down to that old evil nature and God puts within that

WHY MEN DON'T BELIEVE ON CHRIST

JOHN 5:43-44 • HENRY T. MAHAN

sinner a new nature, a divine nature, a holy nature, a nature that when he hears the sheep's voice he'll run to Him. *"My sheep hear my voice and they follow me."*

A nature that seeth the Son; *"He that seeth the Son and believeth on Him hath everlasting life."* He sees in the Son his only hope. He sees in the Son his only plea. He sees in the Son his refuge. He sees in the Son his Shepherd, Brother, Friend, and he loves Him.

And his appetite's changed too. I'm not saying the old nature is eradicated at all. I know better than that and you know better than that. Anybody out there that's got good sense and will tell the truth knows better than that.

But I'm saying God gives you a new nature, a nature that loves the Word of God, a nature that loves the people of God, a nature that loves all men. You can't hate anybody and love God, a nature that loves the church, a nature that loves the Gospel, a nature that loves holiness, truth, integrity, and honesty.

God will give you a new nature when God saves you and *"You will be made willing in the day of His power."*

There are four things; there are some people who come to Christ and there are four things that are true of every person whom the Holy Spirit draws. I'll give them to you in 30 seconds:

First of all: They have a sense of sin; they know themselves to be sinners.

Secondly: They have a strong desire to be forgiven; they want to be saved.

Thirdly: They see Christ as the only hope, not the church, but Christ; He's the only Saviour.

Fourthly: They commit themselves to Christ.

Paul said; *"I know whom I have believed. I'm persuaded He's able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day!"*