

## 21. The Gospel of John—2:23-25

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*“Is Jesus Committed to You?”*

(3/4/18)

This morning, in our study in John’s gospel, we come to the end of chapter 2—which really serves as a segue into the extremely important material in chapter 3.

**John 2:23-25 (NKJV)**

**<sup>23</sup> Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. <sup>24</sup> But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, <sup>25</sup> and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.**

As we read these verses, we realize that John is using them to transition his gospel from chapter 2 into chapter 3—however, that doesn’t minimize their importance or impact.

You see, together they reveal to us an extremely important truth—that not all faith is genuine in the eyes of God.

I’d like to build this message around the key thought found in each of these three verses.

**I. “Many believed in His name...”—v.23**

**II. “Jesus did not commit Himself to them...”—v.24**

**III. “He knew what was in man.”—v.25**

## I. “Many believed in His name...”—v.23

**John 2:23 (NKJV)**

**<sup>23</sup> Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs [miracles] which He did.**

Now, at first glance you might read that and get excited that many people believed in Jesus when they saw the miracles He did in Jerusalem during the feast of Passover—

*“It’s awesome that He was having such an impact on these people thru His miracles—aren’t miracles a powerful way to save people!”*

As I said, you might be prone to get excited when you read verse 23—that is until you read verses 24 and 25 and you realize that *Jesus* wasn’t so excited about their ‘faith’.

The reason? —Their faith wasn’t the kind of faith that He could respond or commit Himself to because it was built solely on the miracles that He did.

Now, that’s not intended to downplay the power of miracles to impact people and bring them to faith in Christ.

In fact, John himself tells us in the twentieth chapter of his gospel that he purposely chose certain miracles that Jesus did so that his readers would come to believe in Him and be saved.

However, throughout the book, John makes it clear that it takes more than believing in miracles for a person *to* be saved.

Seeing the signs that Jesus did and believing in them would be a *good start* in the process of salvation, in fact, even the disciples started that way—but, in and of themselves, miracles are not enough to build saving faith upon.

It is important to note that Jesus tied His miracles to the truth of His message—they were never standalone events. (Comment)

You see, He knew that the human heart is attracted to the sensational—and miracles would be at the top of the list.

Miracles are powerful in their ability to move people and cause them to *react* out of emotion, rather than causing them to *act* out of reason as when the Word of God is being presented.

An example of this would be the miracle of the feeding of the five-thousand as recorded in each of the four gospels. (Explain)

After Jesus fed the five-thousand (men plus women and children) we read that the people immediately wanted to take Him by force, if need be (emotion of the moment), and make Him their King—that is until He preached a sermon on the Bread of Life, and then they left Him and followed Him no more!

The people loved to be entertained and fed (miracle and fish/bread)—but they weren't interested in hearing the Word of God preached which challenged the way they were living and demanded a change (repentance).

Jesus later chided the people of Israel whose faith was so weak and shallow that it constantly had to be bolstered with the supernatural—*"Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."* (John 4:48)

Any 'faith' that is built solely on the supernatural (signs and wonders)—is a shallow faith.

God's word is the only sure foundation upon which to build your faith—you simply cannot build a strong faith on experience.

And yet, that is exactly what many people are doing—but as Jesus said, “*that ‘foundation’ is nothing more than shifting sand and when the storms of life come their so-called ‘faith’ will crumble and fall*”.

You see, that kind of ‘faith’ is really *feelings* (emotion) masquerading as faith—and it will only last so long until *negative* feelings replace it and then this person walks away from Christ and Christianity—this can even happen with the preaching of the Word:

**Matthew 13:20-21 (NLT)**

<sup>20</sup> The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy [had a great emotional response]. <sup>21</sup> But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God’s word.

Feelings can change moment by moment—one minute you’re up and happy and the next you can be down and depressed.

If your faith in Jesus is dependent upon your feelings then—however you feel at the moment that’s how strong or weak your faith is going to be.

You have to base it upon the solid rock/foundation of the Word of God—because God’s word doesn’t change (“lives and abides forever”—1Peter 1:23).

This is in stark contrast to the shifting sand of emotionalism which is why you cannot base your faith upon experiences—even the miraculous.

Satan is going to be showing all kinds of lying signs and wonders (miracles) through the Antichrist during the Tribulation Period deceiving many. (Elaborate)

And so, when Jesus says, “*You won’t believe unless you see signs and wonders*”, He’s looking for a deeper faith than emotionalism—He’s looking for faith that is built upon God’s Word.

One pastor rightly warned—

*“There are those who seek miraculous proof that Jesus is real and that He loves them. They search for physical, material, or financial verification of His reality. But theirs is a flimsy, faulty faith built upon a sandbar foundation because, as we will see, Jesus is not committed to those who demand a sign. You see, the problem with signs is that they’re never enough. If you base your faith upon signs, you’ll always be upset by the one that didn’t happen—the prayer that wasn’t answered, the healing that didn’t come, the payment that didn’t arrive.*

*That is why our faith must be built and based not upon what Jesus does, but upon who He is. Who He is as revealed in the Word. That is why Paul says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). It’s the Word pointing to the Person of Jesus Christ that produces genuine faith.”*

So, when verse 23 says, “**Many believed in His name**”—it is not talking about *saving* faith.

They believed He was a great healer and a great miracle worker—but not necessarily a great *Savior* from sin and *Master* of one’s life.

Warren Wiersbe—

*“As you follow our Lord’s ministry in John’s Gospel, you see Him moving gradually out of the bright light of popularity and into the dark shadows of rejection. At the beginning, it was easy for people to follow the crowd and watch His miracles. But then, His words began to penetrate hearts, with conviction following; and conviction leads either to conversion or opposition...”*

It is impossible to be neutral concerning Jesus—He Himself said, “*Either you are for Me or against Me*”.

This forced people to take a stand, to get off the fence—to make a decision as to whether they were going to receive Him as Lord or reject Him as a liar and possibly a lunatic.

Those who did not commit themselves to Him fully from the heart on His terms, found out that He *did not* commit Himself to them.

That leads to our second key statement in verse 24—

## II. “Jesus did not commit Himself to them...”—v.24

**John 2:24 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> **But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*,**

The words **believed** in John 2:23 and **commit** in John 2:24 are the same Greek word.

In other words, John is telling us that—these people *believed* in Jesus, but He did not *believe* in them—He didn’t have faith in their faith, because He knew their hearts, and He knew they were “*unsaved believers*”!

Look, it’s one thing for a person to get excited because they saw Jesus do a miracle—but another thing altogether to commit themselves to Him and follow Him for the rest of their lives.

And the reason so many who ran after Him, wouldn’t make a commitment to Him was because—they were nothing more than *thrill seekers* and not true disciples—just like today.

People follow Jesus for all kinds of reasons and with different motives—some really want to know Him, love Him and serve Him—and others follow Him simply for what they can *get* from Him.

But Jesus only commits Himself to those who genuinely commit themselves to Him out of love—which is the only kind of relationship He accepts.

Remember, chapter 2 opened up with Jesus and His disciples being invited to a wedding in Cana of Galilee—a small town not far from where He had grown up.

Marriage is all about commitment, where a man and a woman commit themselves to staying with each other through good times and bad, in sickness and in health until death separates them.

True love based on commitment, is what holds a marriage together and makes the two—one.

Today many couples are seeking to escape making that commitment to each other by side-stepping marriage and just living together.

They have *feelings* for each other or else they wouldn't be together—but it isn't true love because true love (God's love) is all about commitment—and that alone is the only kind of foundation a marriage can be built upon that will allow it to weather the storms of life.

Without it their relationship is nothing more than roommates having sex.

They claim that they don't need a piece of paper to prove their love for each other—and while it's true that a piece of paper won't *make* two people love each other—without it they don't love each other either. (Hurt—hospital; die—life insurance)

There are different reasons why people just live together without getting married.

1.) It could be that they're too lazy and can't be bothered.

2.) Maybe they're too afraid to fail at marriage and have to endure the pain that goes along with divorce—so they play it safe and play at marriage.

3.) Or maybe they're two selfish people who are only in the relationship for what they can get and how the other makes them feel—which they are constantly evaluating day by day and week by week.

And when they find someone else who can give them more or make them feel better they dump their current partner for this new person—which would be messy, expensive and drawn out if they had to divorce them which is why they don't bother with marriage.

They want to keep the door open for a quick escape if someone better comes along—it's Hollywood love. (Explain)

The reason Jesus didn't commit Himself to these people in our text wasn't because He didn't love them, or because they weren't 'good' enough for Him—it was solely on the basis of *them* not wanting to go all the way in their relationship and commit themselves to Him "*for better or worse*" for the rest of their lives on earth.

Jesus Christ loves people, all people, so much that He is proposing marriage to them, but without the other person accepting that proposal and making a commitment to Him—it is meaningless.

And again, that's why Jesus didn't commit Himself to these people—He wants a real relationship built on loving commitment.

He already proved His commitment to us by dying for us—that's total commitment, and He wants the same from us. (Explain)

Now look, the Lord Jesus doesn't mind a person 'checking Him out' before making a commitment to Him—in fact, He actually encouraged that when He challenged potential disciples to first "*count the cost*" before starting to follow Him.

But make no mistake about it—Jesus isn't looking for a perpetual, casual 'dating' relationship with you—He's looking for a commitment.

Some people are satisfied to simply 'date' Jesus but are not interested in taking their relationship deeper by making a commitment to Him—to love Him, serve Him, and stay with Him in sickness and health, in good times and in hard times—for the rest of their lives (a marriage commitment).

This is the kind of commitment Jesus is looking for from those who are thinking of following Him—but some people aren't interested in entering into that level of commitment with Him.

### III. “He knew what was in man.”—v.25

#### **John 2:24-25 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, <sup>25</sup> **and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.**

#### **John 2:25 (AMP)**

<sup>25</sup> And He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man [needed no evidence from anyone about men], for He Himself knew what was in human nature. [He could read men's hearts.]

#### **1 Samuel 16:7 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> ... *the Lord does not see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

God knows every detail of our lives—there is nothing that escapes His attention—

#### **Hebrews 4:13 (NLT)**

<sup>13</sup> Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

#### **Psalms 139:12 (NLT)**

<sup>12</sup> but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

God knows our thoughts even before we express them, even when we whisper our thoughts, God hears the words as if they were being broadcasted—and He even knows the motives of our hearts behind what we say and do.

#### **1 Corinthians 4:5 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

**Jeremiah 17:10 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> I, the LORD, search the heart, *I* test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

Many today say they ‘believe’ in Jesus—I like to ask them, “*what exactly do you mean when you say you believe in Jesus?*”

Do you mean that you believe in the *facts* of Who Jesus is and what He did—in other words that He is the Son of God, Who died and rose from the dead?

The Bible says that even the demons believe that and tremble.

To be saved you must take your ‘passive’ faith and bring it to the next level and make it ‘active’ faith—which means believing to the point of commitment.

Let me use the kind of commitment that goes into marriage once again and how it relates to entering into a saving relationship with Jesus.

A person can believe in the beauty and validity of marriage but unless they actually believe to the point of commitment by pledging their life to a member of the opposite sex, standing before God on their wedding day and vowing to love and be loyal to that person for the rest of their life—until they have done that they haven’t actually entered into marriage—regardless of how much they believe in it.

The same is true when we talk about Jesus and salvation.

A person can believe who Jesus is and in what He did for them but unless they take the next step and enter into a relationship with Jesus where they pledge to love Him above all others and to be committed and obedient to Him for the rest of their life—until they have done that they haven’t actually entered into salvation.

It's the commitment that brings about the relationship that puts you "in Christ" which is what being saved is all about.

That's why the Bible talks about salvation in marriage terms calling Jesus our Bridegroom and Christians the Bride of Christ.

You don't become a Christian until you're willing to enter into the deepest kind of relationship with Jesus that two people can enter into—the marriage relationship.

The problem with many church goers is they want to 'date Jesus' but are not really serious about making a commitment to Him.

Here the Lord is proposing marriage to them (salvation) and their response is—"*I just want to be friends Jesus.*"

But there can be no salvation without believing in Jesus to the point of commitment and receiving Him as your Bridegroom and Lord.

**John 2:24-25 (NKJV)**

**<sup>24</sup> But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, <sup>25</sup> and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.**

Perhaps this is the most astounding fact about God's omniscience—He knows *every* detail about us, yet He *still* loves us and is proposing marriage to every person on this planet.

Some of you married a person that you thought you knew only to find out after you were married that they weren't who you believed them to be.

And even though God can touch and save them—if you’d have known back then what you know now you probably wouldn’t have married them.

But Jesus *knows* us (v.24 and 25 is a Greek word that means intimate knowledge often used of sexual relations)—and He still wants to have a committed relationship (marriage) with us.

**Jeremiah 31:3 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> The LORD has appeared of old to me, *saying*: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

Why are you following Jesus and what kind of relationship do you want with Him?

Many people want to have a relationship with Jesus purely for what He can give them (or what they can get out of Him).

There are names that we have given to men and women who pretend affection for others of the opposite sex but who are only interested in them for their money and not true love—the men we call ‘gigolos’ and the women are called ‘gold-diggers.’

Jesus will never commit Himself to people like these.

But to anyone who truly loves Him and wants to spend eternity with Him—He is ready and willing to make a commitment to you—if you are willing to make a commitment to Him.

I’ve entitled this message—“*Is Jesus Committed to You?*”

That all depends on whether you have made to commitment to Him.