

“‘THAT’S JUST WHAT I BELIEVE’ SIMPLY DOESN’T CUT IT”

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Greetings in the Name of our Crucified and Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

When you debate Christian doctrine and practice with others, you are not permitted to use the “that’s just what I believe” argument. “That’s just what I believe” simply doesn’t cut it. It is incomplete. If your belief is not based upon the Word of God, it is nothing more than your personal opinion and holds no weight when debating Christian doctrine and practice. If all you have is the “that’s just what I believe” argument, you lose.

I can’t tell you how many times I run into the “that’s just what I believe” argument when talking about Christian doctrine and practice with people. It’s the “ace in the hole” for many people. They pull it out when they don’t like what they’re hearing. It doesn’t matter if what they’re hearing is based solely on Scripture. You can quote Scripture passage after Scripture passage to back up what you’re saying, but they’ll disagree and claim to believe differently. When you ask them how they can hold a belief in opposition to Scripture, they say, “That’s just what I believe.” What is so frustrating about this is that, most often, they use this argument in confidence, truly believing that they are justified in doing so, as if their own personal belief has the right to trump the Word of God.

Case in point: Not long ago, I was engaged in a debate with a woman who claimed to be a Christian, but argued that faith in Jesus Christ was not necessary for salvation. “Any person can get to heaven,” she said, “as long as they live a good and decent life.”

“That is not what the Word of God teaches,” I replied, quoting several Bible passages which make it crystal clear that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven (e.g. John 14:6).

“Yeah, I know about all those passages, but I just don’t believe God would send good people to Hell simply because they fail to believe in Jesus.”

I informed her, as nicely and tactfully as I possibly could, that she was wrong, citing several more Bible passages to prove my case. She simply replied that she disagreed. When I asked her how she could disagree with the clear Word of God, her reply was, you guessed it, “That’s just what I believe.” For her, that ended the matter. Case closed. Conversation over. Her personal opinion trumped the Word of God and that was that.

“That’s just what I believe” is the battle cry of our post-modern and post-Christian age. You are free to believe anything you want and whatever you believe is your own personal “truth.” It is all about personal, individual choice and opinion in our world today. You call the shots. You make the rules. You decide what is right and wrong, what is true and false.

But, this mentality has no business in the Christian Church, regardless of what the plethora of false teachers in our day and age, who are doing everything they can to make the Church more worldly, claim. “That’s just what I believe” cannot peacefully coexist alongside of God’s Word. The Bible is the sole source and norm of all Christian doctrine and practice. It is the sole authority. Personal opinion does not count. You simply do not get to have things your way in the Christian Church. God calls the shots. He makes the rules. He alone reveals what is right and wrong, what is true and false.

And, by the way, this is not open for debate, no matter what you hear on “The View” or on “Oprah” or even from many of the popular “Christian” leaders of today. To be a Christian – a true Christian – is to believe every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God in Holy Scripture. A true Christian does not say, “That’s just what I believe.” A true Christian says, “I believe everything God says in His Holy Word.” A true Christian does not argue on the basis of his/her personal opinion. A true Christian allows God’s Word to argue for him/her. And, when it is pointed out to a true Christian that he/she is holding a belief that does not agree with Holy Scripture, he/she will gladly accept reproof, for he/she desires to conform to God’s Word.

That’s not just what I believe. It is the clear teaching of Holy Scripture. And, that just ends the matter, like it or not.

In Christ,

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