

I want to believe, but... 2 Killjoy God

I want to believe 2 Bumper

Welcome back to Redemption Church. We are a mighty Church in Plano Tx. We are the kind of church that believes Jesus can change any situation... Jesus can change your life. We believe in SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION! Before today is over we are going to gather for a time of talking to God. We challenge you to be a part of it and let God Spiritually Transform your life.

Greetings to everyone in the room. And a big God bless Ya'll to all our friends experiencing the Word of God over the internet.

We are the 2nd week of our sermon series "I want to believe, but..."

I want to believe, but...

Believing doesn't come naturally. We often struggle with faith and wrestle with doubt.

Last week we asked a question and had people write in to our anonymous text line. That question was "Tell us what has been the hardest thing for you believe concerning God."

I was moved to see so many people respond. Here are some of the responses.

- I have trouble believing I still hear God..
- I have trouble believing when I see strong faithful Christians walk away from faith.
- I had trouble believing when my father died.
- ..that don't have to and cannot earn God's love.
- Believing that death isn't just the end.
- That God loves me... even when I do wrong.

Anonymous Text Line2

Today I want you to pull out your phones and answer this question. Is there a piece of knowledge or something that happened that helped bring you to believe in God? Tell us about it.

Our anonymous text line is 214 856 0550. And we really mean that it is anonymous. Our text line is available to you anytime you want to talk about faith, life, or even Redemption Church.

Last week we talked about the idea of rejecting God. We asked this question...

Are we rejecting God... or are we rejecting our distorted view of God?

It could be that the reason we are struggling to believe, is that we have wrong beliefs. If this is the case, we need to call these distorted views out and reject them.

Last week we talked about ON-DEMAND GOD. If you missed it or would like to review it can be found on our website REDEMPTION-CHURCH.COM... and by the way we have a podcast and it is super easy to push that subscribe button.

Today it is time to reject... it is time to move one god further from the distorted view of Killjoy God

Killjoy God

I was around 18 years old and was crazy about Jesus. I really loved Jesus and wanted to share Him with all my friends at school. I started inviting my friends from school to church and even started bible studies at school. It was a cool time. A lot of my friends started coming to church! They were saved by Jesus and it was exciting!

One day after a great church service I was talking to some of the other young people in that church. I said "wasn't it exciting that my friend came tonight. I could really tell God was doing something in their heart. I just know God is going to save my friend..."

And a girl in that youth group stopped me dead in my tracks "If she..." I looked up and saw the angriest and scariest face I have ever seen. Pennywise & Jason Vorheese had nothing on the anger and hostility coming out of my fellow youth group member.

"IF SHE DOESN'T FOLLOW THE RULES THEN SHE CAN'T BE SAVED! IF I HAVE TO FOLLOW THE RULES TO BE SAVED THEN SHE HAS TO FOLLOW THE RULES TO BE SAVED!"

The room was so quiet after this outburst.. mainly because we were all terrified. I don't remember saying anything, but I remember my heart communicating something to me... "That's not Jesus."

Have you ever known an angry Christian? “WOULD ANY OF YOU WORTHLESS SINNERS LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT OUR LORD AND SAVIOR!!!?”

Have you ever been overwhelmed by all the rules of religion?

Gotta go to church, pray, wear the right clothes, stand and worship, must think and say the right things...

Can't cuss, drink, smoke, go to the school dance, or hang around anyone who does!

Ever been scared that maybe you are missing a rule that is going to damn you to hell? Ever thought I don't know if I can go to that Church, I need to know what their rules are first...

Angry, rules... and perhaps the worst... boring.

Have you ever felt like church was boring?

Ok here we go. Service is starting. Stand up... ok now we can sit down. Turn to page whatever and sing the song... oh we are standing again. Guy gets up and speaks about stuff that I don't understand... I don't see why it is even important. If it weren't for the rules I wouldn't be here to begin with, because this is boring.

Angry, boring, and so many rules... That is not the kind of life I want to live.

- I don't want to be angry I want to be happy.
- I don't want to be controlled by rules I want freedom.
- I don't want to be bored I want to have a lot of fun.

Have you rejected God, or are you contemplating it now, because you have had enough of this angry, rule oriented, boring, killjoy god?

I have good news for you today. Killjoy god does not exist! You should reject this god distortion... move one God further and embrace the true God.

But before we dive into this good news... I need to tell tell you about the bad news of religion.

Bad news of religion

Religion and God are not the same thing. This is not always easy to understand.

That is why you get a lot of arguments like... “how can you believe in God when religion has many failures.” We must understand that religion & God are not the same thing.

I describe religion like this...

Religion is man’s effort to reach God.

Religion focuses on the external & not the internal.

If you are focused on how you appear on the outside, rather than the truth of who you are on the inside... you are likely following religion and not necessarily God.

Matthew 23:23 (NIV2011) “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Matthew 23:24 (NIV2011) You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

Matthew 23:25 (NIV2011) “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Matthew 23:26 (NIV2011) Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

Can we see that the religious leaders, the Pharisees, were focused on the external & not the internal?

- They focused on carrying out the law externally while neglecting its true purpose to change you on the inside with mercy, justice, & faithfulness.
- Jesus said they clean the OUTSIDE of the cup and not the INSIDE. They appeared clean on the outside yet were full of greed & self-indulgence.

- Jesus instructs them, & us, to clean the INSIDE and then the OUTSIDE also will be clean.

There is a difference between Jesus and these religious people... because there is a difference between Jesus and religion. Our God looks on the heart... on the internal, and not just on the external.

There is a gap between unholy me & a holy God. There is a gap between our sinfulness and God's sinlessness. Religion tries to close the gap through good acts.

The Pharisees human effort was external. They claimed to be holy and preached the rules. On the outside they appeared good... but these same Pharisees lied, stole, and took advantage of people within God's temple.

Jesus said of the Pharisees...

Matthew 23:3 (NIV2011) ...they do not practice what they preach.

Matthew 23:4 (NIV2011) They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

Religion will tell you about the gap between unholy you and holy God, but will direct you to heavy cumbersome loads to close that gap... meanwhile the religious preachers will not lift a finger.

If that is what religion is... it is bad news.

In fact, Judaism took the instruction of God... the instruction that said live this way, honor people this way, honor God this way... they took these instructions and added extra rules to it... why? They added these extra burdens as a way to close the gap. This is what religion does.

Romans 3:20 (NIV2011) Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

The works, the good deeds, the external will not make you righteous in God's sight. But through the law we become conscious of our sin/law breaking/inability to honor God as He commands.

Romans 3:21 (NIV2011) But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

Romans 3:22 (NIV2011) This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe...

The Purpose of the Law is to show us we need a savior!

Paul gives us an amazing revelation. The purpose of the law was not for us to form a religion where we focus on the external and try to close the gap between unholy me & holy God.

Romans 3:20 (NIV2011) ...through the law we become conscious of our sin.

The law was not meant to close the gap. The law was meant to make us conscious that our good works could never close the gap!

Religion and its law keeping causes us to think things like this...

I'm not a bad person.... BUT COMPARED TO WHO? Compared to that murderer over there I'm not a bad person... compared to the person who cheated people out of their retirement... compared to the liars in Washington DC...

But compared to Jesus...? Are you a bad person compared to Jesus?

Raise your hand if you ever... lied... stolen... hated... ...lusted. These are things that Jesus never did.

And Jesus tells us in Matthew 5 that if we HATE, we have actually murdered in our hearts. That means in my heart I am a murderer. Compare that to Jesus... Jesus says if we have lusted then we have committed adultery in our heart. Compare that to Jesus.

I am a bad person compared to Jesus.

Until you see yourself as a sinner, you will not realize your need of a savior.

- Religion wants you to focus so much on the external that you never come to repentance that start from the internal and flows to the external.
- Religion seeks to busy you with trying to close the gap with your own human effort rather than confess you cannot close the gap yourself.

- Religion tries to deceive you into thinking that you are actually a good person, by comparing yourself to other sinners rather than comparing yourself to Jesus.

My righteousness is filthy rags compared to the righteousness of Jesus Christ! I can't earn His righteousness... it is given!

Romans 3:22 (NIV2011) This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe...

Being right with God comes by faith in Christ alone

You don't need religion, rules, rituals, & regulations! You need Christ Alone!

Our scripture memory verse for this month is Colossians 3:1-3. I want to take you to verse 3.

Colossians 3:3 (NIV2011) For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

For you died... might sound morbid. But I want to ask you, can a dead person be sent to jail? Can a dead person be sent to the electric chair? Can a dead man be forced to repay their debt? No. Being dead in Christ is exactly that... No longer imprisoned, no longer doomed, no longer in debt.

For you died, and your life... wait I thought you were dead? To die in Christ is to live. If I have to die, I choose to die in Christ because He is "THE RESURRECTION & THE LIFE", and He defeated death, hell, & the grave.

And your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

- You are hidden.
- Your mistakes are hidden.
- Your sin is hidden.

The devil can't even find you anymore... he has no idea where to send the subpoena... because you are hidden!

Hidden where? With Christ... in God.

If I take something and hide it within something else what will you see?
If I hide this picture of me inside this box, what will you see? You want
see the picture... you will see the box.

Being hidden with Christ in God does what religion could never do.
Religion tried to take care of the external but never could... but when I
leave behind religion and enter into a relationship with Jesus I am
hidden with Christ in God... the Holy God becomes my external and
Jesus becomes my internal.

Jesus closes the gap that religion could not!

Bad news of religion

We need to leave behind the bad news of Religion

We need to embrace the good news of Jesus.

Good news of Jesus

musician

A relationship with Jesus changes everything. No longer are we thinking
“If I obey, then He will love me.” We now think “Because He loves me I
will obey... worship... honor... serve... do anything He asks.”

Jesus is not a killjoy god.

Killjoy god does not exist. Killjoy god is a distortion of religion. We need
to reject killjoy god.

I want the true God to transform angry people into the happy people of
God. I want God to transform pharisaical rule keepers into free
worshippers. I want God to transform boring dead Christians into fiery,
excited, and bold children of God!

Religion focuses on the external... Religion is man's effort to reach God.

Jesus transforms the internal... Jesus is God's effort to reach us.

Thank you Jesus for closing the gap.