**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

**On KTTR (99.7 FM) Every Sunday at 8:30 a.m.**

**Rolla, Missouri**

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**Why Do People Not Believe? Pt. 2**

Thank you and good morning. Welcome to our program.

Last week on our program we emphasized the fact that God can be “clearly seen” by looking at the things He has made. Paul said in Romans 1:20, *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”* Psalms 19:1-2 says, *“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge.”* The universe and the world around us are speaking to us that there is a God and this speech can be heard by anyone who chooses to hear.

And we also emphasized last week that God requires us to believe in Him. Hebrews 11:6 says, *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”* If we choose not to believe, God will hold us accountable. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 teaches that those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ *“shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”* There is also evidence that Jesus is whom He claimed to be, the Christ, the Son of the living God, and He requires us to believe in Him. Jesus said to the Jews, *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”* (John 8:24)

God is a just God and He has never required of mankind what he is not able to do. Therefore, every accountable person is able to see the truth concerning God and concerning Jesus Christ.

So, why do people choose not to believe in God or in Christ? We can be assured that it is not because they have genuinely sought for the truth and as a result of their honest investigation of the truth they came to the conclusion there is no God and that Jesus is not the Son of God. No, anyone who honestly seeks for the truth will believe. There are other reasons why they do not believe.

Last week be began looking at some of the reasons why people refuse to believe in the existence of God, and in the deity of Jesus Christ. We mentioned that some people do not believe because they have closed minds, and they refuse to look at the evidence. They are determined not to believe. We just ask of these people to be open minded to honestly look at the evidence for faith in God and in Christ. Another reason why people do not believe is what is called secularism. Secularism is an overemphasis on this natural world as opposed to the world to come. Last week we encouraged the secularist to consider the evidence that there is more to this life than just the physical and natural part of man. Man is a spiritual being with spiritual longings. There is a world beyond this world. The question we would ask the secularist is the question Jesus asked in Mark 8:36-37, *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”*  And then we talked about scientism, another reason why some people do not believe. Scientism may be defined as the worship of science. It is the thinking that science will answer all our questions and solve all our problems. We mentioned that science is not a bad thing. Science involves the finding of facts through observation and experimentation. Facts are a good thing. People of faith are not opposed to facts. We would say to those who worship science to let science lead you to see the evidence for the existence of God.

Today we want to look at two other reasons why people choose not to believe in God and in Jesus Christ.

Some people choose not to believe because of religious division. When they observe that those who claim to serve the same Lord and receive their teachings from the same Bible are divided in their religious beliefs and practices, they become confused and disillusioned. Perhaps they are wanting to believe, but they reason “if those who are already Christians spend most of their time fighting among themselves, then how can we ever know the truth? Surely if there is a God, He would not produce such confusion.” And so they choose not to believe.

But it is important to understand that the cause of division among those who profess faith in God and in Christ is not God, but it is man. God desires that His people be united. Jesus, in His prayer in John 17 prayed for unity. God has made provision for unity. Look with me in Ephesians 4:1-6, *“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”* We are told here to endeavor *“to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* Notice, this unity is *“the unity of the Spirit.”* It is unity that is enjoined by the Holy Spirit and that is provided by the Spirit. Unity is made possible by the Spirit. But the Holy Spirit does not zap us into unity. The Holy Spirit provides the unity and tells us how we can have it and keep it, but He doesn’t force us into it. In this passage He tells us *“to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* If we are going to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace WE must develop and have these qualities. The reason we don’t have unity is not because God didn’t provide for unity, it is because of man’s choice not to walk worthy of the calling with which he was called. It is because of man’s choice not to be lowly and gentle, not to be longsuffering, and to bear with one another in love. And notice, after the apostle Paul says, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” he then states the unifying facts. He says, *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”* The reason there is division among religious people is because they believe in different gods, follow different lords, heed different Spirits, hold to different faiths, practice different baptisms, have different hopes, and therefore, they are divided into different bodies or churches. If we all believe in the one true God, follow the one Lord, Jesus Christ, heed the one Holy Spirit as He has revealed the will of God to us in the Bible; if we will hold to the one faith, the one set of beliefs and practices, understanding there is only one baptism and practice only the one baptism, and have the one hope, we who are believers could all be united in the one body, the one church. God has made provision for unity. Division in religion is not God’s fault. The reason there is division is because of what man has done. Many professed believers in Jesus have pursued their own ideas and agendas rather than God’s, and that is the reason for division. Let us not reject the evidence for the true God, and the evidence for the deity of Jesus because of what man has done in bringing division in the religious world. Do not blame God for what man has done.

Fifthly, another reason why some choose not to believe is the ungodly living among professed Christians. Christians are supposed to live a godly life. Paul says in Titus 2:12 that Christians *“should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”*  Christians, among a crooked and perverse generation, are to shine as lights in the world (Phil. 2:15). Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 5:14, *“You are the light of the world.”*  In verse 16 He said to them, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”* When professed Christians do not shine their lights, but reveal darkness, the world sees the inconsistency. All too many who claim to be Christians use the same foul language and nurture the same vile habits that are characteristic of men who make no claim of faith in Christ. And how does the non-Christian regard this gross inconsistency between profession and performance in the lives of their neighbors who claim to be Christian? Some of them view it as confirmation of their already suspected notion that there is nothing really vital about the religion of Christ. He is more devoted to doing good than the Christian is. So he discounts all the claims of the Christian’s religion and remains an unbeliever. In such a case as this the life of an unfaithful believer has become a stumblingblock to others, and God will hold him accountable. Jesus said to His disciples in Luke 17:1-2, *“It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come; but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble.”*

However, we need to point out, that the failure of some professed Christian to live as he ought will not excuse the unbelief of any man. The unbeliever may look for ungodly Christians to whom he can point an accusing finger and say, “If that is what it means to be a Christian, I don’t want to have any part of it.” But we need to remind him that there are many in the church who are faithful servants of Christ, and because of their faith they live righteous, godly lives. Why point to an occasional hypocrite in the church and overlook the noble lives of the others? I’m afraid that many who claim unbelief because of the hypocrisy of Christians are really using that as an excuse for their unbelief. The fact is each person is personally responsible before the God of heaven and will be justified or condemned by his own acceptance or rejection of God’s revelation, and not by the failures or successes of other men around him. Paul said in Romans 2:6 that God *“will render to each one according to his deeds.”* The unbeliever must understand, he will one day stand before God in judgment and give an account of the choices he has made regardless of what others have done.

We have been talking about reasons why some people choose not to believe in God and in Christ. The fact is there is no justification for refusing to believe. God has provided ample evidence for anyone who wants to know the truth. Whatever reasons people may give for their unbelief, there are always flaws in their reasoning. Dear listener, if you are an unbeliever, we urge you to honestly look at the evidence for faith. Do not allow anything to hinder you in your search for truth.

Our time is gone for today, but before we close, I want to announce a special series of meetings beginning today, Sept. 29 and continuing through Friday night of this week. The lessons presented in this series of meetings will be on the theme, “Growing to Spiritual Maturity.” The Christian has the responsibility to grow to spiritual maturity. These lessons will help us learn how to do that. Norman Sewell of Harrison, Arkansas, is with us and will present these lessons. This series of meetings is sponsored by church of Christ in St. James. Our meeting house is located at 685 Sidney Street in St. James. We will meet this morning at 9:30 and 10:15, and this evening at 5:00 and then Monday through Friday of this week we will meet at 7:00 PM. Come and be with us.

We also want to invite you to check out our website. On this website you are able to hear sermons on a variety of Bible topics, and you also are able to hear previous Bible Talk radio broadcasts and download transcripts of the programs. The web address is sjchurchofchrist.com, that’s sjchurchofchrist.com.