

114.1 Action Speaks

After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, many Jewish leaders believed in Him. That seems like a normal response since they could visit the formerly dead man. The Bible doesn't say, but people must have asked him what dying was like.

The Jewish religious leaders began taking note of Jesus' words and actions and compared them to the scriptures. They realized He fulfilled messianic prophecies and believed. However, due to the enormous pressures of the Pharisees, these leaders would not acknowledge their faith in Jesus. They did not want to be expelled from the synagogues. Let me read the text.

⁴²Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.¹

We quickly criticize the Jewish rulers for failing to stand up to the religious bullies of their day. After all, God is more significant than people, and we should want His approval more than theirs. We are not much different from them.

Peer pressure and bullying are influential in our national crisis. Conservative people tend not to speak because the brainwashed drown out their voices, even with violence. The lone voice of sanity silences to "get along." That is what the Jewish believers did.

The scenario is not limited to a secular university or woke corporation. It is also throughout most churches. Truth is taking a beating even among those who quote, "**And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**"²

Knowing the truth is more than an exercise in mental comprehension. It is having an intimate relationship with it. Since Jesus is the truth (**John 14:6**), we know the truth by interacting with Him. That is why the previous verse is essential: "**If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. . .**"

Our relationship with Jesus and the truth is not a "one-and-done" exercise. It is ongoing, a continual abiding. **Charles Banning** made a pertinent observation:

Too many of us have a Christian vocabulary rather than a Christian experience. We think we are doing our duty when we are only talking about it.

The Lord's half-brother reminds us of the intricate relationship between belief and action. He said:

¹⁴What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? . . . ¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! . . . ²⁴You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.³

¹ John 12:42-43, NKJV

² John 8:82 (NKJV)

³ James 2:14, 18-19, 24 (NKJV)

The adage is correct, “talk is cheap.” Actions, on the other hand, paint a picture of faith that is worth a thousand words. There comes a time when we must act on our beliefs and not talk about them. The demons believe Jesus is who He says He is and have even spoken with Him. We call that prayer. Their beliefs and words alone won’t save them. There is more to it. The early disciples believed, prayed, and acted, turning the world “**upside down**” (Acts 17:6).

In 1776 our forefathers and mothers acted on their faith. They repeatedly corresponded with the king for a peaceful solution to their dilemma regarding his tyrannical actions. When all attempts failed, they broke fellowship with the crown and declared independence. The evil empire attacked its citizens, demonstrating intimidation, not protection. The colonists defended themselves, their families, and their property. Self-defense was their last resort, not their first.

Eighteenth-century Pastors and their congregations from the Great Awakening onward set the pace for liberty. Patriot Pastors like **Peter Muhlenberg** rallied their churches and took their faith out of their sanctuaries and onto the field to face the challenges of war in defense of God-given ideals.

Our ancestors wanted God’s approval more than that of the English homeland, their Tory neighbors, or the king. The Lord sanctioned those patriots with His providence and hard-earned victory while outnumbered and outgunned. We, too, must not forget to seek God’s approval instead of men’s in our crises. Imagine what thousands of Christians could accomplish if they fully committed to God instead of people’s erratic whims. Paul wrote:

For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.⁴

As we close, let’s remember to . . .

Keep The Light of *Seeking God’s Approval* Burning!

GodNAmerica.com GodNAmerica@gmail.com 405.361.3123

⁴ Galatians 1:10 (NKJV)