

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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Profession vs. Performance

It's easy to call Jesus "Lord." The real challenge comes when our Lord commands us to live a certain way. That's when the genuineness of our faith is put to the test.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Lk. 6:46).

In an age when followers of Jesus are considered religious nuts, it takes some degree of courage to declare allegiance to Him. “No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3), so we have to give credit to anyone who is willing make that confession.

But confessing Jesus as Lord only gets us started on the life of faith. The confession must be followed by obedience to the instructions of the one we call our Lord. Otherwise, the confession is just empty talk.

Unfortunately, many believers never get beyond the confession stage. They *talk* about God and Jesus and the Bible, but their lives are a glaring contradiction to everything the religion of Jesus stands for. Their performance does not match their profession.

The first letter to the Corinthians was addressed to “all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:2); but the next sixteen chapters were spent trying to get these people who called Jesus their Lord to understand how that confession should be demonstrated in their daily lives. They still struggled with the old carnal attitudes and behaviors from their previous way of life; in some cases, the failures were spectacularly bad. Paul insisted that this had to change. If the Corinthians were going to represent Christ in their community, their lives had to show qualities that made them stand out from their unbelieving neighbors. Otherwise, what's the point of following Jesus?

The problem that plagued the church at Corinth continues to plague Christianity today. Millions of people claim allegiance to Jesus, but their lives are a pitiful reflection of the high standard set by their Savior. The world notices the contradiction, and does not hesitate to rub it in our faces. We can and must do better.

But a word of caution: In highlighting the importance of obedience, we must be careful not to stretch Jesus' words beyond their intended meaning. Jesus is not requiring sinless perfection. Nor is He granting us a license to criticize every flaw and wart in a brother. His words must be reconciled with Paul's warning that “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them’” (Gal. 3:10). In other words, if we begin to think that our obedience is so good that it will earn us our salvation, we're doomed. Try as hard as we may, our obedience will always be incomplete—that's why Jesus died for us.

But the fact that our obedience will never be perfect does not release us from the obligation to *try*. That is what Jesus is looking for: People who love Him so much that they will do everything within their power to honor Him with their lives. They will make mistakes, but they will never give up, always striving to please the one they call “Lord.”

– David King