

Mark 11:32

But if we say, 'From men' '--they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed.

In today's devotional verse, the Chief Priests, the Scribes and the Elders came to Jesus questioning His authority, and Jesus responded with one simple question that had two choices of what the answer would be. Almost as simple as a "Yes" or "No" question, where you just answer with "Yes" or "No". So what was the question?

† **Mark 11:29-30** *But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John--was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me."*

This was not a trick question, and a simple answer of, "**heaven**" or "**men**" was all they needed to answer with. No long-winded answer, it's either one or the other. But even with such a simple question, they had to debate the answer among themselves.

† **Mark 11:31-32** *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men' '--they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed.*

They knew the right answer, which was "**from heaven**" but they wanted to give the wrong answer to try and make themselves look good, but the reason they didn't is in today's devotional verse, which was "**they feared the people**". So instead, they came back to Jesus with, "**We do not know.**" **Mark 11:33b** But I want to come back, not to their answer, but the reason for their answer, once again which was because "**they feared the people**".

Some churches nowadays have pastors that actually fear the people more than God. So they only preach the things that people like, or they will not teach certain subjects, being afraid that they will lose some of the congregation if they do. So they give messages that will tickle the ears of the people and make them want to come back because they say, "*Every time I go to church I feel so good about myself*".

† **2 Timothy 4:3 (NLT2)** *For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.*

Yet church is not there to make you feel good about yourself, but rather to equip you in the scriptures and to help you change your life for the better, which means hearing those tough messages that causes you to squirm in your seat at church sometimes, because you know that the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, and it's time to make a change in your life, and to stop doing that

sin. But if you go to church each week and feel good about yourself, and there is no change, then either your pastor is only teaching you upbeat, positive messages, or you are just not listening.

Do you walk away from church telling everyone the joke you heard the pastor say, or are you walking away talking to God about what He (God, not your pastor) just said to your heart, and are you changing because of it? If you think about it, your eternity is not based upon your pastor, but your belief in Jesus, and what God's word says. And when you are standing before God, your excuse of, *"The pastor made me feel good about myself, so I thought I was going to heaven"* just won't cut it.

One of the most well-known verses in the bible is **John 3:16** which says; ***"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*** Jesus says here ***"that whoever believes in Him"*** referring to Himself. It's not believing in your pastor and feeling good about yourself that gives you eternal life.

Jesus also said ***"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."*** **John 5:39** Once again Jesus says that ***"You search the Scriptures"*** not sit there and listen to someone else tell you what the bible says, but you make sure that what you are being taught is true, and by doing so you will find out for yourself that ***"these (the scriptures) are they which testify of Me (Jesus)."***

So, if you want a pastor who does not fear the people and teaches the entirety of God's word in truth, then sit under the teachings of a pastor who teaches through the bible, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, because when they do, when those tough subjects come up, they can't ignore them and they will be able to say, ***"For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God."*** **Acts 20:27**

† **Psalm 119:159-160** *Consider how I love Your precepts; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness. The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*

† **Acts 20:32 (MSG)** *Now I'm turning you over to God, our marvelous God whose gracious Word can make you into what He wants you to be and give you everything you could possibly need in this community of holy friends.*