

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** The Devil's Religion

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Acts 8:5-24

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1249

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide this outline produced from a sermon preached by Adrian Rogers while serving as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. This outline is intended for your personal, non-commercial use.

In order to ensure our ability to be good stewards of Adrian Rogers' messages, Love Worth Finding has reserved all rights to this content.

Except for your personal, non-commercial use and except for brief quotations in printed reviews, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means –electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other– without the prior permission of the publisher.

Copyright ©2024 Love Worth Finding Ministries, Inc.

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The devil is very much for religion.
  - i) The devil uses religion to oppose the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- b) The theme of the book of Acts is that old-time religion.
  - i) But that old-time religion (the Bible religion) will receive some old-time opposition (the devil's religion).
    - (1) It is old-time opposition that began in the Garden of Eden.
    - ii) The first temptation that came to humankind was a religious temptation.
      - (1) Genesis 3:1-5
        - (a) The devil said to Eve that he would tell her how to be godly his way.
        - (2) It wasn't a temptation to fall down; it was a temptation to fall up and to be like God.
          - (a) It was a perverted religion.
- c) Acts 8:5-24
  - i) There is always joy when there is revival.
  - ii) In verse 9, the word "But" means in contradistinction, over and against that.
- d) If ever a generation needed to be warned against false religion (the devil's religion), then it is this generation.
- e) In the last days, there will not be a lack of religion, but there will be more religion than ever.
  - i) 2 Timothy 3:5
    - (1) They will have religion without reality and form without force.
    - (2) They will not know God, and yet they will be very religious.
- f) Most people don't need more religion.
  - i) They need to turn from religion to Jesus Christ.
- g) Today's message will give us four warnings about the devil's religion.

2) BEWARE OF THE DEVILISH POWER OF FALSE RELIGION (ACTS 8:9-10)

- a) Here was a man who was practicing what the Bible calls "sorcery".
  - i) He had tapped into devilish, unholy, and supernatural power.
  - ii) It was so great that everyone said the power that was on this man was the power of the great God.
  - iii) Everyone in that city had been swept away by Simon the Sorcerer.
- b) Where did he get that power?
  - i) 2 Thessalonians 2:9
    - (1) In this passage, God described the antichrist, the man of sin who will one day rule the entire world.
    - (2) This will be the hallmark:
      - (a) That he has power to perform signs and wonders to deceive people.
  - ii) Revelation 16:14
    - (1) This verse speaks of unclean spirits.

- iii) Simon the Magician worked miracles, but he did it by devilish and unholy power.
  - c) There is a generation that is being swept into Hell by a demonstration of satanic, miraculous power.
    - i) It is the devil's duty and delight to deceive people and keep them out of Heaven.
    - ii) Suppose someone was deceived by one of the devil's miracles and died and stood before the Lord.
      - (1) The Lord asks them why He should let them into Heaven.
        - (a) They answer that an angel of light told them that they had a place for eternity with the Father of Heaven.
      - (2) But the devil appeared and said that it was not an angel, but it was him.
        - (a) 2 Corinthians 11:14
          - (i) Satan can transform himself into an angel of light.
      - (3) If an angel were to come and tell you that you were saved, then how would you know it's not the devil in disguise?
        - (a) He has power to do miracles.
    - iii) Suppose someone else prayed and asked for a sign, and the heavens rolled back and fire came out of heaven.
      - (1) But again, it was the devil.
        - (a) Revelation 13:13-14
          - (i) The devil has power to make fire come down out of Heaven to deceive people.
- d) If the devil can do these things, how can someone know that they are saved?
  - i) 2 Peter 1:19
    - (1) This is the reason why we can be sure.
    - (2) God's Word is more sure than any vision.
  - ii) 1 John 5:13
    - (1) We have God's Word.
    - (2) We need to stand on the Word of God.
  - iii) If you were to stand before the Lord, and He asked, "Why should I let you into My Heaven?"
    - (1) Then you could say, "Because You said in Your Word..."
      - (a) John 5:24
- e) There is a time coming when the devil himself will perform such miracles upon this Earth that he will make us think that up is down and down is up.
  - i) He is a deceiver.
  - ii) Revelation 12:9
- f) It is not just that people are preaching the wrong thing.
  - i) But they will come with a demonstration of power and miracles that we will say that it must be of God.
- g) 2 Thessalonians 2:9
  - i) This is who the antichrist will be.

- 3) BEWARE OF THE DEVILISH PRIDE OF FALSE RELIGION (ACTS 8:9)
  - a) Simon the Sorcerer was egocentric rather than God-centered.
    - i) He was inflated with pride and ego.
  - b) The hallmark of all satanic and false religion is pride.
  - c) Pride is what made the devil the devil.
    - i) Isaiah 14:12-14
      - (1) This passage of Scripture gives us the biography of the evil one.
      - (2) Five times in this passage, the devil said, "I will."
        - (a) He is self-centered.
      - (3) The devil said exactly the opposite of what the Son of God said.
        - (a) The devil said, "Not Thy will, but mine be done."
  - d) All false religion is based in will-worship and self-will.
    - i) This is the way the devil tempted Eve with the first temptation in the Garden of Eden.
      - (1) Genesis 3:1-5
        - (a) It was an appeal to pride.
  - e) All devilish religion is built on pride.
    - i) That is the reason Paul warned Timothy.
      - (1) 1 Timothy 6:3-4.
  - f) There is a generation of people who are religious, but their religion, rather than being God-centered, is self-centered and ego-centered.
  - g) We need to examine ourselves and find out the following:
    - i) Have we repented of our sins?
    - ii) Have we been broken before the Lord Jesus Christ?
    - iii) Have we dethroned self and enthroned Jesus Christ?
- 4) BEWARE OF THE DEVILISH PRETENSE OF FALSE RELIGION (ACTS 8:12-13)
  - a) They believed in Jesus and were baptized because Philip preached the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.
    - i) These verses describe two kinds of believers:
      - (1) Verse 12 describes true believers.
        - (a) They were possessors.
      - (2) Verse 13 describes false believers
        - (a) They were pretenders.
    - ii) Simon never was saved.
      - (1) He was an unbelieving believer.
  - b) The difference was in the object of their belief.
    - i) Those who were saved believed in the Master.
    - ii) Simon believed in the miracles.
      - (1) Simon was interested in power that he could get ahold of, something that he could use.
        - (a) He practiced witchcraft and sorcery.

- (2) When Simon saw that the apostles had the power to lay their hands on people and they would receive the Holy Spirit, he wanted that kind of power in his life.
  - (a) So, he tried to buy that power.
    - (i) Acts 8:18-22
- (3) Simon wasn't a saved man; he was a lost man.
  - (a) His belief was not in the Master but in the miracles.
  - (b) His belief was not in the Person but in the power.
- (4) False religion is egocentric.
  - (a) It is always rooted in what I can get and not in what I can give.
- iii) There are always people who want miracles, not because they love God, but because they love miracles.
  - (1) It is a false faith that will not save, but will condemn and lead to Hell.
  - (2) John 2:23-25
    - (a) In this passage, the word "commit" is the same word for "belief".
      - (i) They believed in Jesus, but He didn't believe in them.
      - (b) Jesus knew that they didn't really trust Him; they only believed in the miracles.
        - (i) They wanted what He could do; they didn't want Him.
          - 1. They were like Simon.
    - (3) They have a self-centered religion, an easy believism that doesn't commit itself to the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - (4) God heals people supernaturally, but that cannot and should not be the focus of any ministry.
- c) The difference between a false faith and a real faith is that a real faith is authenticated by its object and by its objective.
  - i) The object of real faith is Jesus Christ.
    - (1) People will say, "Just believe", or "Have faith".
      - (a) Believe what? Faith in what?
    - (2) Faith is no better than its object.
      - (a) Faith in faith is only positive thinking.
        - (i) It is self-centered.
        - (ii) It roots in man rather than rooting in God.
      - (b) Jesus said, "*Have faith in God.*"
        - (i) Mark 11:22-23
        - (ii) It is not faith that moves mountains; it is God who moves mountains.
    - (3) The difference between Simon and the others was that the other people had faith in Jesus, and Simon had faith in miracles.
  - ii) The objective of real faith is to bring us into a relationship with God.
    - (1) Faith is not some way for man's will to be done on Earth.
      - (a) Faith is some way for God's will to be done in Heaven.
    - (2) Faith is not something that uses God.
      - (a) Faith is where God uses us.

- (b) It is where we come to God, broken at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, and say, "Not my will, but Thine be done."
      - (i) Luke 22:42
    - (3) Faith is for official use only.
      - (a) It is for God to do what God wants done on this Earth.
  - d) Many people would like to have some power, but it is all self-centered.
    - i) They are in religion for what they can get and not for what they can give.
    - ii) They have never repented as Peter told Simon to repent, but they have joined churches and been baptized for what the church can do for them.
    - iii) It is false religion.
    - iv) They are devilish pretenders who have never been saved, and churches are filled with them.
      - (1) Matthew 7:22-23
  - e) The devil will sometimes join a church.
    - i) Simon joined a church.
      - (1) He was baptized, he believed, but he wasn't a believer in Jesus.
        - (a) He didn't have a genuine faith.
  - f) Faith in the Lord Jesus will save, but faith that is not in the Lord Jesus will condemn and take you to Hell.
- 5) BEWARE OF THE DEVILISH POISON OF FALSE RELIGION (ACTS 8:19-23)
- a) False religion poisons everything that it touches.
  - b) Acts 8:19-23
    - i) In verse 23, the word "gall" may be translated "poison".
      - (1) Gall was a poison.
  - c) There are two things that false religion brings:
    - i) Bitterness
    - ii) Bondage
  - d) Everyone who is swept up into false religion ends up in bondage and bitterness.
    - i) They end up in bondage because the devil has ensnared them, and there is no deliverance from their sin.
      - (1) False religion cannot make a person free; there is only bondage in it.
      - (2) There is nothing more tedious and more binding than false religion.
    - ii) They are bitter because they are unfulfilled, unsatisfied, and uncontrolled.
      - (1) They become more and more bitter.
  - e) Some of the sweetest, godliest, and gentlest people we will find are in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - f) Some of the most wicked, cruel, and bitter people are religious people who don't know God.
    - i) They are bitter and in bondage.
    - ii) They are like Simon.
      - (1) Acts 8:23
  - g) All across the world today are wars over religion.

- i) The devil is not against religion.
- ii) The devil is in favor of religion that leaves people in bondage, in bitterness, and will take them to Hell.
- h) Sometimes a bitter person will cause problems in a church.
  - i) He will talk about his rights, but what rights does a dead man have?
    - (1) If he is saved, then he has been crucified with Christ.
      - (a) Galatians 2:20
      - (b) He is a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ when he was born again.
  - ii) An egocentric person talks about his rights.
    - (1) Someone has said that if you teach a man his rights, then you will have a revolution.
      - (a) If you teach him his responsibilities, then you will have a revival.

## 6) CONCLUSION

- a) There is devilish power in false religion.
  - i) It is rooted in devilish pride.
  - ii) It shows in devilish pretense.
  - iii) It results in devilish poison, the gall of bitterness.
- b) The answer is to repent.
  - i) We need to repent of the sins of the flesh.
  - ii) We need to repent of the sins of the spirit, such as not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and not receiving Him.
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16