

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

When modern evangelists and pastors invite the unsaved to "accept Jesus as Savior," (a phrase and concept never found in Scripture), it usually reveals a fundamental flaw in their understanding of the gospel. When the Philippian jailer, for example, asked Paul what he must do to be saved, Paul did not respond, "Accept Jesus as your Savior." Rather he said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31; emphasis added). People are saved when they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Mind you, they are not saved just because they believe a doctrine about salvation or Jesus, but when they believe in a person—the Lord Jesus Christ. That is saving faith. Too many think because they believe that Jesus' death was a sufficient sacrifice for their sins, or salvation is by faith, or a hundred other things about Jesus or salvation, that they have saving faith. But they don't. The devil believes all those things about Jesus and salvation. Saving faith consists of faith in Jesus. And who is He? He is Lord.

Obviously, if I believe that Jesus is Lord, I will act like he is Lord, submitting to Him from my heart. If I don't submit to him, I don't believe in Him. If someone says, "I believe there is a deadly poisonous snake in my boot," and then calmly puts his boot on, he obviously doesn't really believe what he says he believes. People who say they believe in Jesus but haven't repented of their sins and submitted to Him in their hearts don't really believe in Jesus. They may believe in an imaginary Jesus, but not the Lord Jesus, the one who has all authority in heaven and on earth.

All of this is to say that when a minister's understanding of the most fundamental message of Christianity is flawed, he is in trouble from the start. There is no way he can succeed by God's appraisal, as he misrepresents the most foundational message God wants the world to hear. He may be a pastor of a growing church, but he is failing miserably at fulfilling God's general vision for his ministry.