

No Ritual?

READING
2 Kings 5
Matthew 6

What is it about rituals that makes us feel like something spiritual is happening?
What is it about rituals that if there is no ritual we think nothing spiritual is happening?

Man made religion is all about rituals and “show”...

Remember Naaman... He was a big army commander in Babylon but somehow he caught leprosy. He travelled down to Israel to meet this prophet whom he had heard could heal people, and to see him work a miracle and heal him.

He was sure that Elisha would come out to him, and stand there, and call on the name of Yahweh his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal him, (the leper).

And Elisha didn't even come to see him! He just sent a messenger who said, “go and wash in the Jordan 7 times and you'll be healed”.

He couldn't accept that all he had to do was bathe in a river... and not even a fantastic river like the ones back home in Babylon.

But if Elisha had performed some fancy ritual he would have believed it. And he even expected that he would have to make a massive donation, and to perform some special religious act himself... but just bathe in an ordinary river! No way! He's thinking for sure the guy's a fraud.

And actually it was 100% the opposite. All the other people he had ever been to. All of them, had done their fancy rituals, and they had all ~~taken his money~~ accepted his donations. And gotten him to do special rituals himself.

But none of them had healed him. Otherwise he wouldn't be here asking some foreign God as recommended by a slave girl they had capture from here when they invaded.

All the ritual based ones were just selling snake oil.

This guy, the one with no ritual at all, was the genuine prophet. He was the only one who actually could do miracles. (Read them in 2 Kings, he did some amazing miracles).

The guys doing their fancy rituals were the frauds.

Christianity has no rituals. It's **so** not about ritual. All you have to do is trust in Yeshua. Period. You're saved.

Even baptism was more like Naaman's experience. Just get someone to dip you in a river, a lake, a bath, anything wet. And you're baptised. Doesn't really matter who does it for you, or how fancy their clothes are, or if they have a special title.

The water is just a token really, what really matters is, “Are you committed to following Yeshua the rest of your life?” Did you get wet somehow, (submerged is better, but not absolutely essential)? Then, you're baptised.

And the one we call “Communion”... when we're already constantly in communion with our saviour through his spirit.

We drink some wine, we eat some bread. Doesn't matter if someone gulps down a bit and someone else just sips it. And if someone breaks off a big chunk of bread and someone else just takes a crumb.

Are you remembering what Yeshua did for you? When it was his blood, and his body on the line. Laid down so you could be saved?

Or are you turning it into a ritual and not even paying attention? Thinking more about Warcraft, or this afternoon's football match?

And when you/they pray in church... do they love to stand and pray to be seen by others? Yeshua says that makes them hypocrites. They have their reward. They have their glory. But their prayer won't be answered the way ours will. The way the prayer of someone who quietly prays at home, from the heart, will be.

Do you fast? You probably should, (unless you have some medical reason).

Does anyone else know you fast? They shouldn't. (Maybe your partner, or your parents if they prepare meals for you, or with you).

Or do you let everyone know. Do you stand up the front and say “let's fast together”, so they all know you're doing it?

Sometimes we should all fast, if it's something which affects us all... but do what you can to keep your fasting secret.

Just like your prayers.

If your Christianity is all about rituals, then it's probably fake. It's probably man made. If your Christianity is all about doing things in front of others, in fancy clothes, in fancy buildings, then it's probably fake. It's almost certainly man made.

If your church is like that, then ask God at home by yourself, and then read the Bible for yourself, and you decide whether rituals are important or not.

You decide whether they're for you. Whether they're for anyone really.

Or have you been missing the point, and getting caught up in something which has no power at all?

Something which looks impressive, but which really, leads people further away from Yeshua, instead of closer to him?

Read Matthew 6.

Don't be a hypocrite.

Behold, I thought, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Yahweh his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leper.'