

## July 14th – Righteousness Over Ritual

*“To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.”*  
(Prov. 21:3)

Humans are the crown jewel of God’s creation because only humans have been made in the image of God. Though we are the pinnacle of God’s creative work, that doesn’t mean that we are no longer accountable to the Lord. What does God really expect of us? The answer to that question will depend on who you ask, but judging from human activity throughout the ages, humans tend to think that God is impressed with buildings, pageantry, and rituals.

Just stop to consider the things humans have done in an attempt to make themselves “acceptable” to God. Humans have built some of the most beautiful and ornate buildings – we call them cathedrals or churches. Humans have given billions and billions of dollars to what they feel is the work of the Lord. And of course, we have a great deal of rituals – ordinances, sacraments, confessions, etc. None of these things is inherently evil, but sometimes we lose sight of the most important things.

In this case, Solomon was very clear – “to do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.” In other words, we can go through all of our rituals – going to church, giving tithes and offerings, listening to Christian music, etc. But if all we have is ritual without righteousness, then our traditions mean nothing. “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam. 15:22). We thought God wanted our rituals when He was really looking for our righteousness. Be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only (James 1:22).