

John 12:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

Analysis

Nevertheless, many 'even among the chief rulers' believed, but secretly 'because of the Pharisees,' fearing synagogue excommunication. This demonstrates faith that lacks courage, belief without confession. Their fear of man overcomes love for God, revealing immature or false faith. Secret discipleship is oxymoron—true faith confesses Christ (Rom 10:9). Their fear demonstrates how social pressure suppresses truth. Synagogue exclusion meant social, economic, and religious ostracism, a high cost requiring courage. Their example warns against valuing human approval above divine approval.

Historical Context

Synagogue excommunication (being 'put out') meant religious and social ostracism (9:22). This severe penalty explains the rulers' fear. Nicodemus (3:1; 7:50; 19:39) and Joseph of Arimathea (19:38) exemplify secret believers.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What's the difference between genuine faith and secret belief that fears confession?
2. How does fear of man prevent bold Christian witness?
3. In what areas does social pressure tempt you to hide your faith in Christ?

Interlinear Text

ὅμως	μέντοι	καὶ	ἐκ	τῶν	ἀρχόντων	πολλοὶ	
Nevertheless	G3305	also	among	G3588	the chief rulers	many	
G3676		G2532	G1537		G758	G4183	
ἐπίστευσαν	εἰς	αὐτόν	ἀλλὰ	διὰ	τοὺς	Φαρισαίους	οὐχ
believed	on	him	but	because	G3588	of the Pharisees	not
G4100	G1519	G846	G235	G1223		G5330	G3756
ὠμολόγουν	ἵνα	μὴ	ἀποσυνάγωγοι	γένηνται·			
confess	G2443	G3361	put out of the synagogue	they should be			
G3670			G656	G1096			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 51:7 (Parallel theme): Harken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

John 9:22 (Parallel theme): These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

John 7:13 (Parallel theme): Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

Proverbs 29:25 (Faith): The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Matthew 10:32 (Parallel theme): Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

Isaiah 57:11 (Parallel theme): And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?

Isaiah 66:5 (Parallel theme): Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

Acts 5:41 (Parallel theme): And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

1 John 4:15 (Parallel theme): Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

1 John 4:2 (Parallel theme): Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: