

Spectator Sport

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The “church” places dozens, hundreds, even thousands of people at the feet of one man as he delivers a speech, a “sermon” or a teaching, that is purportedly the very words of God for mankind. In the Christian book, the Bible comprised of the Old and New Testaments, are many marvelous promises made by Christ or God that the followers of Christ would “become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” (Phlp. 2:15) And while there are certainly many fine examples of people who have done just this in their dark world, consider that many millions, perhaps even billions, of people claim or have claimed to be “Christian” and yet the world grows swiftly darker and more evil. Yet, equally clearly for those who have eyes to see, in the face of the many multiplied thousands of “churches” proliferating around the world, adding more “churches” filled with a majority of spectators, simply cannot be the solution.

Contemporary Christian music places the songs of a relatively small handful of musicians before a vast audience. Concerts are held in which a few musicians and speakers attempt to encourage, instruct and motivate people to follow Christ and God and change their worlds. Songs cry out for the people to “Do Something,” “Move,” “Rise,” “Be a Miracle,” “Be All In” and these exhortations are indeed the pulse beat of the very heart of God for His people. Millions of people attend these concerts and events, yet the world grows swiftly darker and more evil. And again, it is clear to those with eyes to see, that holding more concerts and events filled with thousands of spectators, is not the solution.

How can this be? Are God’s methods actually ineffective and impotent? How could an infallible, all-knowing, all-powerful God fail so obviously and so patently?

The answer to this is not that He has failed but that we have failed to seek His methods. Both “church” and concerts send forth the subliminal message that only the spiritual elite, the talented, the few are those qualified to do “the work of God.” And “the work of God” is seen as being able to stand up in front of a crowd and tell good jokes or sing cool songs. This dual deception about the deeper nature of the Way of following Christ and God presents a nearly undefeatable barrage of misinformation that almost extinguishes the truth of the gospel.

Make no mistake – the message given at “churches” and concerts is reasonably accurate in many cases. Truths, even some possessing spiritual depth and potency, are indeed spoken, some even repeatedly. But they are almost entirely drowned out by the subliminal message that only the elite and gifted can and should be responsible for doing “the work of God.” And the world grows swiftly darker and more evil as “pastors” give lectures about how the world doesn’t need a lecture but needs a picture and as singers cluster for more and bigger concerts to encourage their passive, captivated audience to get out and do more.

No amount of speaking forth, even loudly, of truths from the pulpit or in the lyrics of even the best of songs will rescue the Way of following Christ from its modern status as a spectator sport. Nor will most “Christians” even be able to hear from the mind of Christ that the error churchianity has embraced (so as to become a spectator sport) is an abominable aberration. And the world will continue to swiftly grow ever darker and more evil.

In the midst of all the variations of “Christianity,” is there even any hope that anyone can discover and produce the remedy for all of the chaos and confusion that reigns among those who claim to follow Christ and God?

From the pages of the New Testament and from the Spirit of truth, we can glean four instructions that stand as perhaps the most prominent and the highest of priorities. Surely we could add more but if we would simply do even something of these four, our world will see the light of Christ shine brightly.

These commands are:

- Repent.
- Come Out.
- Hear Him.
- Follow Him wherever He leads.

Repent

John the Baptist preached it. (Mt. 3:2) Jesus Himself preached it. (Mt. 4:17) Jesus' disciples preached it (Mk. 6:12), particularly Peter (Acts 2:38, 3:19) and Paul preached it. (Acts 17:30, 26:20) And Jesus, in His apocalyptic letters commanded five of the seven ekklesias to repent (Rev. 2:5, 16, 21-22. 3:3, 19), showing that even after one has come to know Christ, repentance is still a necessity. Without repentance, one simply does not yet truly believe rightly about who and what the Lord Jesus is. Rather, one believes in a modified "Jesus" who condones or overlooks sin and lawlessness, doing what is right in one's own eyes. (see Jdgs. 21:25) And if one persists in sin after coming to know Christ but refuses to repent, one can even forfeit whatever one has gained, in spite of what many carnal and lawless "theologians" have said and written about "eternal security."

Repentance (Greek, *metanoeo* [3340]) is literally, *with thought*, that is, to think differently or afterwards, to reconsider. When one sees what one is apart from Christ and God, the appropriate response is to repent, to change one's mind about one's previous lifestyle and decide and resolve to seek God's way of living. It is to turn from one's previous life source (one's flesh) and turn to a new life source (God's divine power and mercy, His grace.) One does not change one list of do-s and don't-s for another list – one is truly born again from above (1 Pet. 1:23) and the Word of God, the Spirit of the Christ and God, is implanted within. (Jas. 1:21, Rom. 8:9-11) Apart from this transaction (translation, transference) from darkness to light (see Col. 1:13, Eph. 5:8), one can neither see nor enter the kingdom of God. (Jn. 3:3, 5) If one feels that he has nothing to repent of, he has no need of a Savior and he has no faith or desire that the Savior can rescue him because he has no perception of his need to change anything in his life. Until one comes to repentance, one cannot come to faith, experience rebirth and find the forgiveness and grace (mercy *and* power) that leads to eternal life.

Yet today there are those who will insist that "faith alone" or a simple belief (which almost always amounts to mental agreement or "easy believe-ism") is all that is required to attain to salvation. This deceptive teaching is simply the Scriptures twisted to the destruction of all those who teach and follow these lies.

Come Out

Paul wrote, "But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner – not even to eat with such a person." (1 Cor. 5:11) In his next letter to the same people, he wrote, "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and

daughters, says the LORD Almighty.” (2 Cor. 6:17-18) Clearly Paul is instructing us to come out from among “Christian” people who habitually live in their sins. Even in Paul’s day as in our own, “grace” was and is an excuse for sinful living. (Rom. 6:1-2)

God warns His people, “Come out of [Babylon, the Great Prostitute], My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.” (Rev. 18:4) And the writer of Hebrews instructs us, “Let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.” (Heb. 13:13)

Each of these instructions use the same language as is used of anyone who would leave one place to go to another and as is used when someone ordered a demon to get out of its victim. We are to move from one place or condition and into another.

What are we to come out of? “Christian” idolatry, Babylonish practices and influences and human traditions are the immediate context of these instructions and we would do well to heed them.

“Church” is little more than a mixed multitude of “Christian” idolaters who practice Babylonish and other pagan rituals and methods in the name of Christ and have done so for so long that they are considered inviolable human tradition. Modern churchianity, the apostate form of godliness that has no power to change lives (see 2 Tim. 3:5), is precisely what a genuine believer must come out of. It is no accident or coincidence that “church” primarily produces spectators who do little, if anything, of the real work of God. It is an inherent flaw in its structure and anyone who believes an all-wise, all-knowing, infallible God designed the “church” is ensnared in some very fuzzy “logic.”

Hear Him

Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice,” (Jn. 10:27) and the writer of Hebrews soberly warns us, “See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven.” (Heb. 12:25)

The “church” gives dire warning about the danger of not remaining in faithful attendance and in so doing places more emphasis on hearing whatever the “pastor” or speaker has to say than on what God says. Jesus rebuked the devil by saying, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Mt. 4:4) And John wrote, “The anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things; and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.” (1 Jn. 2:27)

It is vastly more important to hear the words that proceed from the mouth of God than the words that proceed from the mouths of men. It is vastly more important to be led into all truth by the Spirit of truth (Jn. 16:13) than it is to be “fed” by some hireling who is more interested in separating you from your money than he is in your eternal destiny. (Jn. 10:10)

It is to those who hear Christ’s voice and follow Him that He gives eternal life. (Jn. 10:28) Lawless and carnal “theologians” would have us believe that anyone who says and does certain outward things (like say a “sinner’s prayer,” attend “church,” etc. – none of which can be found in the New Testament) obtains eternal life and this can never be taken from us. But this is not what the Scriptures say. Hearing Christ is perhaps the most important skill a genuine believer needs to develop and it is no accident that this skill is perhaps the most neglected, disdained, discarded and ridiculed concept at many “churches.” These “churches” are simply the fulfillment that many “Christians” would abandon the faith (2 Ths. 2:3, Mt. 24:10) and would

deny Christ His right to be Lord and Master over people who claim to be His own. (2 Pet. 2:1, Jude 4)

Follow Him

John wrote, “Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads... These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.” (Rev. 14:1, 4) In the New Testament, Mount Zion stands as a picture of the true way of following Christ. In Zion, the Stumbling Stone who is the Chief Cornerstone was laid. (Rom. 9:33, 1 Pet. 2:6) The Deliverer who turns away ungodliness from His people comes out of Zion. (Rom. 11:26) And the writer of Hebrews tells us that we have not come to Mount Sinai, the mount of the law, but rather that we “have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” (Heb. 12:18, 22), a distinct picture of the bride and body of Christ. This is spiritual Israel, the joining of all branches into the one Root, the Christ, apart from whom we can do nothing. (Jn. 15:5)

It is not enough to know some Bible or gospel facts. (1 Cor. 8:1) It is not enough to hear speeches about the Bible. (Jas. 1:22, Mt. 7:26) It is not enough to attend meetings and rub shoulders with other people who claim to follow Christ. We must actually follow Christ wherever He, by His Spirit, leads us. Only in this way will we be truly sons and daughters of God. (Rom. 8:14) If we follow our flesh – our unredeemed and unrenewed (Rom. 12:2) intellect, will or emotions – in its desire to religious, it is as much, perhaps more so, an abomination as living in the worst of sin and debauchery. It was the arrogant, self-focused, self-satisfied hypocrites whom Jesus rebuked the most – He did not come to found a superficial club that condones selfish hypocrisy just because now it is practiced in His name. Jesus still warns the hypocrites to stop standing in front of the door to the kingdom of God, not going in themselves nor allowing others in either. (Mt. 23:13)

Grace

To these four imperatives we must add the need for true grace. Grace is not merely “unmerited favor” but is God’s power at work in our lives. (see 1 Cor. 15:10, etc.) From the unity or oneness that is God, He gives His manifold grace to people who will then exhibit certain characteristics.

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift... And He Himself gave some to be [traveling] apostles, prophets, and evangelists, and some as [local] shepherds and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” (Eph. 4:4-7, 11-16)

We have viewed this passage through the prism of the “church” paradigm for so long that we no longer see it for what it says and is. There are *five* variations of God’s grace, not just one (and certainly not just “pastors,” a word which truly should not be used here, a word which is used *only* here in English New Testaments!) It is through these five kinds of vessels of God’s grace (power) that the saints are equipped to do the work of service that makes the world a brighter, better place and places them on the path to spiritual maturity wherein the whole body will build (strengthen, improve, expand) itself up in the love of Christ. *This* is God’s method – and it inherently *excludes* spectators – a method which the “church” and concert mentality has abandoned. True spiritual maturity is based in and built up from a proper understanding and usage of God’s grace (power). The enemy of our souls has labored long and hard to keep us from understanding God’s way and his labors are bearing much fruit in the apostasy and abomination that men most often call “church.”

Anyone whose “Christianity” is comprised of sitting at the feet of some man to hear words spoken about the Bible is greatly deceived. Such a one will never be equipped (and at most “churches” will never be allowed!) to do the real work of God. Certainly, one is encouraged (often manipulated and coerced!) to do works that serve the “pastor” or the “church” building – but only the “pastor” and approved staff (and certainly not the other four kinds of leaders, especially apostles and prophets, unless they have been corrupted to practice obeisance to the “pastor” and the “church” paradigm) are permitted to speak from the pulpit (which incidentally cannot be found anywhere in the New Testament). But it must also be stated that equally deceived is anyone whose “Christianity” is based on works so as to earn salvation or to earn God’s favor.

The way of Christ and God is a way of obedience. (Heb. 5:9, Lk. 9:23) It is not self-generated random acts of kindness or superficial gifts of vicarious charity that we choose from a list of available “ministries.” It is each individual personally hearing from the heart and mind of Christ and doing whatever Christ would have them do. It does not get any more complicated than this though this can be a hard way for many because human nature always wants a “Moses,” a “man of God,” to go to God in our place. That we have now had two millennia of very complicated “theology” that only adds to this world’s sickness and darkness should tell us that the devil is a lot more effective in what he does than most suppose. That most fail to recognize this and continue to sit and watch a pitiful few try to do their version of “the work of God” is simply evidence that this is the time of the apostasy, the great falling away from the faith that happens before Christ’s return. (2 Ths. 2:3) The wise one will get to his knees now and seek the Giver of life – and then rise to serve Him in whatever capacity He has given grace. (1 Pet. 4:10-11) Anything else is merely a deception designed to keep us participating in the spectator sport called “church” that prevents us from experiencing Christ’s abundant life and which may one day prevent us from inheriting His eternal life as well.

Let he who has ears hear.

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