

Where Is Jesus in This Messy Charismatic Scandal?

There may currently seem to be a purging or a shake-up taking place as there is a church mess to clean up. A lot of people are saying, "God showed me this back (and put in the month, day year of your choice)." Some people are saying, "I knew this would happen with so and so." Or, "Not again, please." And it's all *online*.

These are friends and groups I am not ashamed to say I am part of. The charismatic church is the fastest growing segment of Christianity in history with over 700 million adherents worldwide. And it is growing more every day, especially in the 10/40 window, with abundant spiritual fruit.

But here in the United States, we are pulled into another controversy—or so it seems. And it looks like there are lines of demarcation. One minister posts something, another livestreams a response, a whole bunch of messages go back and forth and "he said" and "they said" and "this was" and "that wasn't." Then there is the nitpicking and people's grieving and emotional responses. And people are burned in the process.

We've all seen this before, but not necessarily like this. This is all currently out there *online*. It is immediate and doesn't take time to be published like similar scandals in the past.

But my question is: Where is Jesus through all of this?

Processes, Procedures, Messes and Love

One side is calling for the removal of a minister, and the other side is saying this has been dealt with. Sure, in time, truth will prevail. But right now, I just see a mess. The past is brought up, processes have taken place, or according to

some, the processes weren't good enough. Or there is new evidence. Investigations. The back and forth, and it's online.

It now seems like everyone has a say, but quite honestly, have we been invited in to offer counsel for anyone in this? Can we just allow the parties that are privy to this figure it out? But it seems like we can all offer something to this because *it's online*. All things are equal online, right? They posted it online, so it's fair game, right? If that's the case we may write a response, post a video, make a meme about it, discuss church protocols and procedures and—argue about it. The whole world can see it whether they wanted to or not.

Can we slow down a second? Breathe.

Okay. I am adding this to the mix: We can have an opinion and a biblical interpretation, but at the end of the day, are we checking our own heart and spending time with Jesus? Let's not burn one another through this.

Celebrating the Drama in the Body of Christ?

And then there are Christians celebrating the drama they are observing from the outside. If that is you, please *stop*. Look into your own heart, dealing with sin in your camp first in whatever way you choose to do it. And sure, your view on Matthew 18 may be different than mine, but that's OK, because we both love Jesus. Or, if you'd like to question my sincerity or think that charismatics don't have the real Jesus, then that's your view. I still love you in Christ.

But let me address the reverse, too. If you're a charismatic, thinking that certain Christian camps don't have the "real Jesus," please *stop*. Can we at least love one another no matter what? These views are not a matter of doctrine but of relationship with Jesus and His children. The world that is looking in on all of us should at least see love, according to John 13:35. And we are to love God and love others (and that also means loving those who don't know Jesus or those some may

think don't know the real Jesus). Whether you think your church discipline process is better doesn't matter, because this isn't your problem. Or is it, because it's posted online?

The Celebrity Syndrome

I've been part of messes in churches and ministries and have had to deal with my own. Within the charismatic church world, I can honestly say we have been too enthralled with the celebrity of the hour. I don't know how many men and women of God I have seen come and go. They're anointed and appointed and then vanish for one reason or another.

One thing I have learned is that character is key before charisma. It doesn't matter how "anointed" someone is on the platform. Character is what sustains us in the long run. Although I am speaking directly to the charismatic church world I am part of, this is true across the body of Christ. There have been other things recently brought forward in other church movements I don't need to mention specifically here (I can hyperlink it for you if you'd like, but I won't).

Besides the "Church Celebrity Syndrome" we suffer from, at times we put people who are too young on a pedestal. Quite honestly, I'll see a young minister who is gifted and on-fire and pray for them. I've been in their shoes—and burned out. In time, I returned refreshed, but many don't. And that is a crying shame. Maybe we should be considering how to help them grow and be humble or how to restore them to ministry. But if they fall, they'll post it online, too.

Dreams and Visions, Ultimatums and Money

Another thing we should consider is to stop sharing our dreams, visions and revelations in church discipline situations. One guy going public against another says, "God showed me this," and the other person says, "God showed me that," in response to what the other person said. Then another person says, "My dream revealed ..."

Seeing these social media posts and responses on every aisle with the dreams and visions thrown in there in cases like this gives me a headache. I want you to know I love Jesus, encouraging the exercise of all spiritual gifts for the greater good. But when there is church discipline and drama, or potential processes and procedures, we need to be careful to not overspiritualize things. You're muddying the situation more when you do. Let facts be facts and don't pit people against one another with your "revelations" in cases like this. A private investigator wouldn't consider these as evidence. Ministry boards shouldn't either.

Whose revelation are you going to believe at the end of the day, anyways? The one with the most Facebook followers or the most Twitter fans? The one who can give a name to an angel when the other person can, too? (Besides Michael and Gabriel, I don't see other names of angels in the Bible unless we want to count Lucifer in that, but we all know what happened there). Can we stop being so wacky, church?

And then there's the, "I have nothing to gain from this whatsoever, and I am not in it for the money like they are, but I am releasing a book on all of this ..." (Sigh).

And the ultimatums—dare I say it?

Let's pause there.

How far have we come from Jesus? Will you stop and pray for a moment before continuing to read this article? Thank you.

Relationship With the One Is Key

To protect your heart from getting hurt through all of this or anything similar to this, you need to have your trust in Jesus alone.

In my honest opinion, this just shows how messed up we are and how much we need Him. Let me share God's honest truth—God can

speak to anybody whenever and however He wants. And just because He speaks to us the way He chooses doesn't make us more special than anyone else. He loves all His kids, no matter how messy they may be. And whether we're in sin or not, God can still speak to us.

That's not just me saying it. It's in the Bible. Relationship with Jesus is the key throughout our lives when the world or the church seems to be going crazy. He does correct and rebuke us out of love, but we need to be willing to listen and obey Him. And when it's all said and done, that takes personal responsibility .

Is This God's Judgment?

Honestly, through what is taking place in the body of Christ online in all of this, what is needed is a biblical response of repentance on all sides. The truth is somewhere in that mess and will emerge. But sifting through the real and the false, emotions and conjecture, pain and grief takes time. However, it also boils down to those involved. Will they make things right or decide to go rogue? Many people do which is a dangerous place to be in. And there are many rogue leaders in the body of Christ in every church movement who lack any form of accountability. This is something that should be discussed when overly controlling leaders have all power and authority are still in leadership (I will write more of my personal experience in these matters in the near future).

Some people may think, *This is it! God's judgment is coming to His house first!* Well, it may seem like that, because thousands of people are being affected one way or another. But things like this happen every day in small churches throughout the world and have for the last 2,000 years. Most of them just aren't posted online. But we live in a day and age where there are really few secrets. Any text, tweet, post, email, conversation or backroom meeting is seemingly fair game now because of technology. And that can be good and bad—but also

intrusive and at times illegal. Wow. Or whoa.

At this moment, we need a sense of reverence and holiness, because lives are at stake. We need protocols for privacy and technology, too, don't we? That's another thing we need to be addressing soon, church. Technology is only going to accelerate. And we should be using it for God's glory, spreading the gospel and not scandals.

What a Mess We Have Made

What a mess we have made. Perhaps it can become a beautiful mess we can clean up where we admit our weaknesses and call on Jesus while loving one another to put it back together again. Time will tell. And I am pretty sure we can watch it on social media—unless people decide not to post about it.

Jesus is the most beautiful person who came to clean up our messes.

After reading this article, will you do me a favor? Would you mind prayerfully reading through Matthew 7, spending time with King Jesus? Allowing the Holy Spirit to do a work on your heart?

This article originally appeared at GodTV.

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