

Why ‘Cosmetic Christianity’ Won’t Work in These End Times

Note: This is part 2 of a two-part series. [Click here](#) to read part 1.

We all know the word “hypocrite” and what it means in the context of those who pretend to be Christians but live otherwise behind closed doors. The original Greek word meant someone who acts or performs on stage. Today, these would be our Hollywood actors who play characters in movies or on television, but that’s not who they really are.

Even those of us who have been walking with the Lord for years can, sadly, find ourselves playing the role of “Christian.” We go through the formula of walking out our faith. We have the right words and say the right things; we speak the “Christianese.” We come together with others, and we worship because we like how it feels. But we don’t go to God’s house just because we love the Lord and what He’s done for us. Ministers have to be careful, too, because we know what moves people. We know how to sing a song or play an instrument. We know how to preach a sermon.

When the Israelites were in the desert, God provided heavenly food—manna—for them every day, but they began to detest it because they had become accustomed to the food they ate in Egypt. Likewise, we have become so accustomed to gathering together with our formulas and systems in what we call “church” that we sometimes don’t even notice when the “El” is not in the “Bethel”—God is not in our hearts.

This generation is looking for authenticity, and so is God. He wants us to be real and authentic. We may not be oratorically gifted; we may not be able to sing or do other things. But we all have something that God has given us. It’s a deep well

that never runs dry, because it comes from the water source that never ceases—the throne of grace, the mercy seat of God—and it brings healing in and through us. God wants the real to come flowing through us so we can see the harvest we've been praying for.

Understanding the Times

We are not in a season where we can just live life without understanding the times. I believe that the coming of the Lord is sooner than we expect.

Returning to Mark 11, we see what happened after Jesus overturned the tables in the temple:

And He taught them, and said, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

The scribes and chief priests heard it and looked for a way to kill Him. For they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching (Mark 11:17-18).

The religious leaders saw this, and they feared Him. But they were also angry because He was bringing truth to an ungodly situation. This is the same as the world we live in today, where there is a lack of love for integrity and character. People don't love the truth; they're turned over to strong delusion. Even in the church, we've digressed to the point that we allow compromise and we make our decisions based on personal preference rather than what we know is right.

We must each prepare for the coming of the Lord by making sure God is Lord of our hearts. We must be lovers of truth, lovers of the kingdom of God and lovers of His presence so we can make a difference to a world that's desperately in need.

Fruit That Lasts

We cannot continue down the path of institutional formulas and systems, or what I call “cosmetic Christianity.” We need to bear fruit that lasts. We need to routinely examine our lives and our churches to see if our fig trees have fruit or even nodules with the promise of fruit to come—or are we only doing dead works? We need to recalibrate and regroup to get a fresh and renewed revelation of the work of the cross, the power of the resurrection, and the high cost of God’s love so we can bring the Gospel to a world that really needs Good News.

We need a revival of character again, and it starts with us. God has to be the Lord of His church. He has to be back in our worship and our hearts. He has to be the God in our homes and in our families.

I don’t want to be one of those who started with the right heart but somewhere along the way began living out a system of formulas rather than living in a place of faith and relationship. I don’t want my walk with the Lord to become stale. His mercies are new every morning, and I want the fresh anointing of God’s joy and presence every day. I don’t want to be a hypocrite or a performer just acting out a role. I want to be the real deal. I want to be authentic. I want Him to prune my life and remove the areas where I will never bear fruit. I want to go deeper in consecration and higher in expectation. I want to be part of this prophetic generation, a multi-generation of people saying “yes” to God.

In John 21, the Lord asks Peter three times, “Do you love me?” How do we answer that question today? Do we give Him the best of our hearts and our time? Do we show more respect and honor to people and the things in this world than we show to Him? Do we make our decisions based on preference rather than His truth?

If we want God’s best, we need to come back to seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness. And all these other things shall be added to us.

The late evangelist Steve Hill wrote in his book, *A Time to Weep*: “With one ear, listen to the music of heaven, but with the other ear, listen to the cries of hell...”

May we together rescue lives. May we together represent the God in the house, the *El* of *Bethel*. The only hope for our future is to put Him back on the throne—of our lives, our hearts, our homes and the church. Let us never forget to be a people of prayer and presence, so that we can be effective in reaching the world around us. {eoa}

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