

Why Have We Embraced a Watered-Down, Feel-Good Worldly Gospel?

This is a guest column by my friend, Shane Philpott.

With the naming of his second son, Ephraim, Joseph made this statement, “For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction” (Gen. 41:52b). Joseph lived out the remainder of his days in his land of affliction. The word “affliction” means many things. It means suffering, difficulty, burdens and problems. It means hardships, pain, troubles and misfortunes. It also means misery. This “land of affliction” is the land in which Joseph ministered for his God and to his people, because this is the land to which God sent him. It was also the land in which God made him very fruitful, this “land of my affliction.”

Joseph’s experience is the polar opposite of the mentality that has become prevalent in this present hour among many Christians. Today, many have a “convenience lifestyle” mentality. It is a thought process that encourages comparing our life to other lives and our successes to theirs. It is a state of mind that views difficulty and hardship, trouble and misfortune, as some kind of failing. It is another gospel.

This convenience message somehow always finds the exit door that ultimately leads to another state, another city or greener pastures. This backwards gospel promotes conformity over conviction, ownership over stewardship and quantity over quality.

The value system of too many Christians has suffered a great onslaught. While it is true that many today tell us it is “gospel evolution” or becoming “culturally relevant,” it is really something quite different. It is the altering of our

value system. What is even more frightening is that the major Christian media outlets in our country are constantly feeding this mentality. Much of mainstream Christian television and magazines promote the latest conferences on prosperity, expanding your influence, marketing yourself or whatever is popular at the time. Christians pine away their existence, running to and fro desperately searching for the formula that will make it all work. Meanwhile, the Father watches on, seeing it all for what it really is: a watered-down, feel-good worldly gospel. Another gospel. And those celebrity ministers whom unsaved Americans have crowned as our spokesmen peddle this modern-day Gnosticism without a conscience. It's gospel lite: Less filling, tastes great.

May God cause our eyes to see and ears to hear the difference in this hour.

In this costly rush to reach the world by looking like the world, acting like the world and becoming friends with the world, we have become the world. Like a weary driver on a long journey, we have fallen asleep at the wheel. Just like Samson fell asleep in the lap of Delilah. And, like Samson, it has cost many Christians their strength and their vision. Remember Joseph. Remember Paul. Remember Jeremiah. Remember Jesus Christ. They did not allow their value systems to be so altered.

Believers who succumb to the gospel of convenience will never rest in the secret place. They will never know the beauty of the backside of the desert. They will never be led to the rock that is higher than I. But any of you Christians who choose to fight the fight of faith in your appointed land of affliction will discover that the experience has been chiseled upon your soul. It will change you and it will make you into something that you could have never become without "the land of my affliction."

While it proved ultimately true that Joseph's destination was

one of incredible rank and honor, it cannot be ignored that he arrived at God's promised destiny only by traveling through "the land of my affliction." {eoa}

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