

Have We Departed From the Simplicity of Christ?

Recently I heard a pastor say the following: “When I was pastoring and saw little fruit, I began to call those with potential to reach others for Christ to our home and to mentor them one on one. That’s where massive growth happened in the people.”

Local pastors and elders need to start thinking outside of what happens only in their Sunday service. So much of our time, thoughts, planning and preparation revolve around our Sunday gatherings. We’ve all heard it said that “good” is often the enemy of God. Thank God for all the good that happens on Sunday morning, but check your heart and spirit and pray for fresh vision, wisdom and strategy from Jesus, and then listen. Go back to the Gospels and strengthen your foundation in who Jesus is and what He did.

How can we ever continue in the apostles’ doctrine (see Acts 2:42) without immersing ourselves in the Gospels? Jesus is the head of the church and knows exactly what you should do. You and I both know that there must be more fruit than what we are presently seeing in and through our local churches.

I think many of you will agree with me that far too much effort is being consumed with preparing for a meeting on Sunday morning. And we translate that same mindset to our assembly of saints. We are so consumed with meetings and programs that we have little time to equip and disciple others in what is necessary and pertinent.

Take a fresh look at the ministry of Jesus. He is the pattern Son! His life and ministry and example are the blueprint for all we do. Contrary to the popular church mindset, Jesus did not come to the earth to start a new religion called

Christianity. He came to reconcile men to God. He modeled how to do it, and then He told us to do the same thing in what is called the Great Commission. A majority of the church has gotten away from this simplicity.

The Church at Ephesus

There are many things that will rob, steal and plunder our love and affection for the Lord Jesus and the simplicity of His work. It is not just sin and carnality and disobedience that keep us from the nearness of His presence and moving in His simplicity, but it is the good and acceptable things, which while having their proper place in the Christian life, have a tendency to make one devoid of the real mind of Christ. Such things as meetings, Communions, baptisms, buildings, programs, doctrines, finances or other things that concern the church system, apart from the mind of Christ, will dry up the real heart of the Christian life and His church. Just look at the church of Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-5) as a primary example of "good" vs. God.

We are so consumed with the busy-ness of the church system that we actually have no time to fulfill Jesus' main commission to make disciples. We talk about it. We preach about it. We develop new programs. But honestly, even many modern-day pastors and church leaders don't know how to make disciples. We tell our people to go out in the world and bring in the lost and disciple them, but we are missing the big step: Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus demonstrated discipleship before He charged us with the task. He called His followers to be with Him—because He knew that example is the most potent element of discipleship and its the starting point. Unless we are the example of what we teach and tell the saints, much of our work will be in vain.

Do you see why we need all the ministry gifts impacting the local saints? This is the simplicity of Christ, and we have departed from much of it.

“And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed 12, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons,” (Mark 3:13-15, NKJV).

Go back to the first step. Find your real Jesus-followers and start spending time with them in some fruitful way. In fact, follow Jesus’ example and take them on an outreach.

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