

Pleasing Men

Mark 15:1-47 This passage in Mark gives the details of what led to the crucifixion of our Lord. Pilate was warned by his wife in a dream not to harm Jesus, but Pilate was a man pleaser. We hear these chilling words: "And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified" (Mark 15:15, KJV).

Pilate listened to the people, and he put their desires above anything else. He wanted to be popular with the people, and so he gave into their demands. One might say that Pilate was subject to peer pressure.

Peer pressure is one of the main causes for teenagers to get into drugs. Our youngest son, Ray, got into drugs because he wanted to have friends. He was rejected in his late grammar school days because of his faith in Jesus. When he reached high school, he found a group of friends who accepted him, but unfortunately they were drug users. It was not long before Ray got into drugs. Even though he knew the Bible and had been raised in a Christian home where prayers went up for him daily, he got into drugs. Why? The answer is that he wanted to be popular with the people. When Pilate chose to please man over pleasing God or his wife, the result was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

When we choose to please men above God, we are in a sense crucifying Christ afresh. We are exhorted to crucify our own flesh or reckon it dead daily so that we might be alive to Jesus Christ. Just the opposite happens when we choose to please men rather than God. We reckon ourselves alive to sin and dead to Christ whenever we willfully please men rather than God.

The good report is that God is a redeemer and restorer, and He

sent Jesus Christ to make a way of escape when we are tempted. God in his mercy redeemed and restored Ray, and he now is serving Christ in Budapest, Hungary as a missionary with his wife. The fear of the Lord became evident in Ray's life when he wanted to please God more than himself or other people. Could it be that "peer pressure" is one of the reasons for America's steady moral decay? The Bible speaks about how in the last days men will be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God and they will seek their own rather than the welfare of others. Some politicians are even willing to sell their soul for the almighty vote.

There is only one vote I am concerned about in this life, and that is God's vote. Is He for me and will He support me when the campaign of life gets rough? The answer is "yes," because He said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." Even though Ray for a season was seeking the vote of acceptance from his peers, God was giving him His vote of confidence. God knew that Ray would turn back to Him, and God was with Ray even during his rebellious season of life. Whose vote are you seeking? Are you seeking God's approval or man's approval? The truth is that God already approves of you. After all, He gave His only begotten Son to save you. If you were the only person living on the earth, God would still have sent His Son to die for you.

**READ: Numbers 15:17-16:40; Mark 15:1-47; Psalm 54:1-7;
Proverbs 11:5-6**