

The Huge Problem With Feel-Good Church

I remember walking into to church for the first time after purposely staying as far from it as I could for 10 years. The music was loud, the crowds were big and the environment was inviting. It was unlike any other church I could remember going to as a kid, and the people who made up this group were overwhelmingly kind to me. “This place is awesome,” I remember thinking to myself. And I remember feeling something I had never expected to feel at a church: welcomed.

But the story doesn’t end there. No. As quickly as I had stepped into an environment that felt accepting and welcoming, the tides began to change, and I was met with a sermon from a charismatic pastor that made me feel like I had just been slapped in the face. Not because he was speaking ill or being rude, but because he was telling me things about myself I didn’t want to hear. This pastor was preaching things out of the Bible that opposed the way I was currently living my life. He said things I didn’t like. He said things that made me get defensive.

But guess what? As uncomfortable as it made me feel at that very moment, his words were exactly what I needed. This type of discomfort is something all of us need to experience. To be reminded that a life lived outside of the narrow-road, reliant on flesh and personal desires is not the life God has destined us for.

Imagine

Imagine with me for a second if I had stepped into that church only to be given a “feel-good” message that validated and approved everything I was currently engaging in because the pastor didn’t want to ruffle any feathers, offend someone or

ruin the opportunity for gathering someone's tithe. How on earth would I have been expected to change? I wouldn't have. I would have left the church with no inclination that the way I was currently living was leading me down the path of emptiness. The conviction I felt is what led me to repentance, and the repentance is what led me closer to a life that reflected Jesus.

The Bible is clear that an encounter with Jesus will bring on a new life, an experience that places our old life behind us (Col. 3:3-14). If your life looks the same after you claim to have encountered Jesus, did you really?

The church wasn't meant to always feel good. In fact, often times I've left church even more aware of the brokenness that I was when I first walked in. I'm left with hope, but that doesn't mean I'm happy about what I have to sacrifice in order to get there. We often see pastors preaching messages that illustrate Jesus as nothing more than the feel-good genie whose only job is to give you what you're looking for. You know, feel-good church:

- Jesus will provide you with the job.
- Jesus will provide you the finances.
- Jesus will provide you the blessings.
- Jesus will provide you the healing.
- Jesus will provide you with a spouse.
- Jesus will provide you with a promotion.

Unless He doesn't.

Do you see where I'm going with this? Can Jesus provide all that I mentioned above? Yup. But that doesn't mean He will. And it's not the job of a pastor to promise things to people that the Bible doesn't, especially when it comes to providing the way you and I specifically want. God will often contradict our personal expectations for our own benefit. It's about His will, not ours. The church was not designed to be comfortable,

but instead, confronting of sin and a dispenser of hope.

Sure, a feel-good church might attract celebrities, mass crowds, sell books, get air-time on television, and bring a good tithe number each week, but that doesn't mean it's right. That doesn't mean it's biblical. And that doesn't mean that what one's doing is being blessed by God.

Can church feel good? Of course. But there's more to the story here. The purpose of the church isn't to make you feel good, but to magnify the name of Jesus through worship and teaching of His Word. There will be times of feeling good, but there will also be times of conviction and sacrifice that will undoubtedly bring on major life-changes. It's not always easy, but it's definitely worth it.

"if My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

If the church never calls its people to turn from our selfish ways, what good is it? I'll take a Jesus church over a feel-good church any day of the week. {eoa}

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