

Why You May Not Be Serving the Real Jesus

The real identity of the church is in proportion to her identity with the real Jesus. But, too often, the believer's identity is with things pertaining to a form of Christianity based on doctrinal fads and theological biases or a leader's personality—shaped within a “Christian” subculture built on its own ideals, philosophies, and traditions, combined with a particular brand or flavor of God created in our own image, and not with Christ Himself.

“It seems to me that, if we get one look at Christ in His love and beauty, this world and its pleasures will look very small to us.” —D.L. Moody

“Much of our difficulty as seeking Christians stems from our unwillingness to take God as He is and adjust our lives accordingly. We insist upon trying to modify Him and to bring Him nearer to our own image.” —A.W. Tozer

“There is a God we want, and there is a God who is ... And they are not the same God.” —Patrick Morley

“As a child, I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene. No one can read the gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.” —Albert Einstein, *Saturday Evening Post*, Oct. 26, 1929

“The wicked have fashioned a god who will not hold them accountable.” —Carter Conlon

“Too many Christians want a manageable, domesticated Jesus who makes no demands on their time, money, words, social life and sexuality. In the midst of this great and growing deception,

God is looking for uncompromising believers who are committed to proclaiming the truth of the gospel and not the counterfeit Jesus of Western Culture.” –Anonymous

“Too many of us have constructed a “god in a box,” a god whose job is merely to pander to our needs, desires, and ambitions.” –Anonymous

“We offer a motivational, pep-talk, feel-good, self-help, personal-empowerment Jesus rather than the Jesus of the Scriptures, and, in doing so, we damn our hearers rather than deliver them.” –Dr. Michael L. Brown

“Sadly, I think many in the community of believers cling to an Americanized gospel which equates what is biblically true and reliable with being part and parcel of various right-wing political agendas. Actually, Christianity itself in the U.S. and many other nations has been interpreted (and by virtue of this) rewritten to gel with sentiments and ideas that actually run contrary to what the Messiah taught and advocated (Torah-based Judaism), e.g., unbridled capitalism and the greed it is predicated on and the corruption it engenders and promotes. I dare say if Yeshua HaMashiach physically visited most American churches, He would not recognize what was being taught and advocated as being remotely like what He articulated and lived.” –Dr. Anthony G. Payne

In order to have the true image of Christ built into your spirit, you must consider the entire body of His life, example and teachings. For instance, if you focus only on the account of Jesus going into the temple and overturning the tables of the moneychangers in a fit of righteous indignation and driving them out of the temple with a whip, you would be led to believe that Jesus is angry with people day and night. Your image of Him would be that He is looking for a reason to punish you instead of bless you. Having this mindset of the Son of God would make you think of Him as a religious fanatic filled with rage, which puts Him closer to being a candidate

for anger-management classes. This image does not inspire love, faith and praise in the human heart.

On the other hand, and this happens much more frequently, if you focused your image of Him on His encounter and exchange with the adulterous woman whom the scribes and the Pharisees wanted to stone, you probably would come to the conclusion that Jesus never gets angry, never judges, and is just the sweetest, most gentle person. This image would probably cause you to act presumptuously, believing that Jesus always understands you and your sinful issues and will let you get away with anything. This mindset would eventually lead you to believe and live in an unscriptural mercy. In the West and nations that have been influenced by the false Western gospel, this is the image of Jesus most are familiar with, and their conduct is derived from such a one-sided perception.

Yet neither conclusion would be right within itself, because both sides are Him, and we can know Jesus and His person only as we study the full body of His life and teachings.

If most Christians represented the real Jesus, many people would more easily believe in Him, for, when He is presented in the true light of the Scriptures, the average human heart would be irresistibly drawn to Him.

What we behold is what we eventually become.

When we behold the glory of the Lord as in a mirror (this means, at least in part, to behold Him in the mirror of His Word and by the Spirit's unveiling of Him to your spirit), we will be gradually transformed by the Holy Spirit into that same glory and reflect the brightness of that image out to the world.

"But we all, seeing the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, as in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18).

Many are convinced that they are faithful Bible believers but, in fact, worship a feel-good, self-help, motivational, and manageable Jesus – one which the Bible refers to as “another Jesus” (1 Corinthians 11:4)–one contracted from an idolatrous image they’ve built up in their minds, based on sentimental Western values. This counterfeit Jesus makes no demands on their time, money, words, social life or sexuality. In the midst of this great and growing deception, God is looking for uncompromising believers and real disciples who are wholeheartedly committed to proclaiming the real Jesus.

Are you serving the Americanized version of Jesus or the real, biblical Jesus?

When we see Jesus as He is, glorious and altogether worthy of our deepest loyalties and affections, deserving of our total focus and supreme attention, we will catch fire inwardly and burn with holy fear, as the two did on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:31-32). Then a holy hunger for the Word will grip our hearts, and we will proclaim Him as He is.

This is an excerpt from the fourth book of a compelling tetralogy called The Real Jesus. {eoa}