

Calling the Bride

“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” – John 8:32

A Ministry of CafeLogos.org

Like A Diamond

For the time will come that they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears: and they shall turn their ears from the Truth, and they shall be turned to fables. – II Timothy 4:3, 4

This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. – II Timothy 3:1-5

The Apostle Paul says that there will come a time when people will not endure sound doctrine. “After their own lusts” they will seek teachers that will tickle their ears and turn them away from the truth. Someone once said that when the church is in apostasy, the truth becomes heretical. In other words, the absolute authority of the word of God will not be the final authority over people’s lives. The precepts of men will be preferred above the Holy Scriptures, and the Scriptures themselves will seem to be in error.

In II Timothy 4:3-5 Paul lists the spiritual conditions of the people in the last days, and just as we are thinking, “Yup, that’s the world alright,” he lets us know that these are not just unbelievers but that they have a “form of godliness.” These are apparently “religious” people who are “denying the power” – that is the cross. Can we come to the cross without the humility of repentance? No. Can lives be changed without it? No. The cross is accessed by repentance which is an acknowledgement of sin and a willingness to turn from it, - and where there is no repentance at the foot of the cross; that is, a recognition of sin and a willingness to turn from it, the grace that changes lives cannot be accessed and there is no power.

So here we have churches filled with unrepentant, unregenerate, carnal people seeking only what they want to hear.

My question is, how do we know that we are not one of them? How do we know that this picture we are being shown in these Scriptures is not a picture of our own hearts and spiritual conditions?

Let’s examine these Scriptures and ask some honest questions.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.” Sound doctrine comes from the Scriptures themselves. They were written by men that God handpicked to be the administrators of His word.

How much time do you spend reading the actual word of God? Do you spend more time listening to other teacher’s versions of the word? Are you a good “Berean?” (Acts 17:11). The Bereans were commended for checking out the Scriptures for themselves to see if what they were being taught lined up with the word of God. Do you check the word against what you are being taught through the mouths of men?

Several years ago I had a dream. Two men were sitting at a table together. One of the men manufactured a large pizza from his mouth then handed it to the other man to eat. That was the dream. Now, I ask you, would you eat that pizza knowing from where it originated? Yuck, no. This dream represented people who ate doctrines that originated from the mouths of men and not from the word of God. It is a pretty unappetizing thought. And what would happen to your body if all you ate was pizza?

“Unholy” - The Bible emphasizes holiness and righteous living. Is this an emphasis in the church you are attending? If your pastor is teaching repentance and turning from sin as the natural response to the Gospel, can you “endure” it or will you start looking for another church? Does hearing about righteous living and turning from sin, especially sexual sin, make you uncomfortable?

“heady, highminded” - If you experience conviction during a sermon, what is your response? Anger? Indignation? – or self-examination? What do you think your response should be? We all need humble, receptive, teachable spirits. “A measure of conviction within the human heart is like a grain of sand in an oyster shell – it is the necessary irritant that grows the pearl.”

“Men shall be lovers of their own selves.” It’s all about us, or is it? Any casual browsing through the average Christian book store is going to reveal an abundance of literature that will help you achieve your goals, your interests, and your prosperity. We are self-focused, not focused on others the way our God desires us to be. Christ came not to be ministered to, but to minister. He told us to deny ourselves, pick up our cross and follow Him. Are we doing that? Or are we consumed with acquiring our own best life now?

“Covetous” – we want to hear how God wants to make us all rich. How did the Apostles teach prosperity? Very simply – “*And having food and raiment let us therewith be content – I Timothy 6:8.*

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction

and perdition – I Timothy 6:9.

Jesus gives us the Biblical “formula” for success in this world – “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and these things will be added unto you.”- Matthew 7:7

Put God’s stuff first and He will take care of you.

And if He should say to you the same thing He said to the rich young ruler – Sell all you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me (Matthew 19:21)– what will your response be? Is materialism or an inordinate attachment to things keeping us from following God wholeheartedly? This was an important lesson that I had to learn.

“Boasting, pride, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, fierce, despisers of those that are good.” – What is the common denominator in all these things? What is lacking? – Love. Love is not proud, it’s kind and good. This list describes people who have no love. Let’s read I Corinthians 13: 4-7 - Charity suffers long, and is kind; charity envies not; charity vaunts not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

This list seems to be the exact opposite of the list that Paul gave to Timothy and all of us. Is this the key to the problem? The love that can change people into new creatures in Christ is absent, and it is absent because it is not being sought. It’s not being sought because men love carnal pleasure more than they love the things of God. The love of God is what starts turning a heart around.

How much time do you spend seeking the presence of God in prayer, praise, seeking Him in the sanctuary of inner worship?

You are His temple. How often do you meet Him in the temple of your heart? Are you in daily, hourly minute by minute communion with His spirit within you? Or do you spend more time watching television or playing sports or whatever. Are you a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God?

The actual presence of God’s Spirit is very sweet, very pleasurable and very satisfying. People who have taken the time away from the distractions of this world to cultivate an intimate relationship with God, begin to experience what David meant when he said, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want” – because he was satisfied with God.

We have to ask ourselves, are we satisfied, content and fulfilled because we are experiencing the inner peace that only God can give through Jesus?

It seems the picture that Paul is painting is of a world

and a church filled with people focused on everything else except God, and the scenario keeps getting worse and worse – but it doesn’t have to be that way, at least not in your world.

I’ve asked some simple questions, they only require some honest answers and if you can answer them honestly in these last perilous times, you’ll find yourself set apart from that carnal crowd Paul describes – set apart like a diamond.



You Shall be with Me in Paradise

And he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, today shall you be with Me in paradise." - Luke 23:42, 43

All the world's religions, with the exception of Christianity, have one thing in common; none of them guarantees salvation to their followers.

The Hindu believes salvation is ultimately achieved through the transmigration of the soul. If the soul is reincarnated enough, it may achieve perfection, but how many times in the reincarnation lottery do you have to be recycled before you finally reach your goal – then whoops! What if the planet is hit with a meteor and disintegrates right smack dab in the middle of someone's transmigration leaving him stranded in the outer darkness of the universe without a body?

The Buddhist believes that if you do everything “right”, right speech, right action, right thought, etc., then salvation can eventually be attained. So what if you die before you've mastered your theology? There are no make-up courses in hell.

The Muslims are in the same insecure little boat. Nobody is ever assured they'll be good enough to please Allah. Even their religion's founder has admitted, "Save yourselves from hellfire, as I cannot save you from Allah's punishment...Nor do I know what will be done with me or you..." (Sahih Bukhari Vol. 4, book 51, #16 and the Koran: Sura 46:9).

Then I see a thief hanging on a cross next to Jesus, God manifest in human flesh (I Timothy 3:16) the One who paid the penalty for all of mankind's sin and rebellion.

He looks at the thief with the repentant heart, who knows he's blown it; he's nailed to a cross, he can't move, he can't do a thing to save himself and suddenly he's given the free gift of eternal life.

Jesus says the same thing to all who have the humility to receive Him as that repentant thief, “You shall be with Me in Paradise.”