



July 17, 2005

Professing Or Protesting

We live in the age of complaint. Everyone has a cause, an issue, political platform etc. Over the past several years these things have continued to grow and polarize our culture in spiritual, political and social arenas. Even those who do not profess to be “religious” many times adopt an aggressive attitude toward those who claim to be Christians. We look around and find that there are churches, stated in a generic sense, that are losing members and closing their doors. It seems that everyone in our culture has been indoctrinated with the pursuit of self to the point that there is nothing else, but then we all are filled with such compassion, or so the media tells us. Christians many times blame the lack of spiritual interest on science, the media, social trends and other things. Scientists, sociologists and others blame religion for the attempted collective guilt that is allegedly forced upon the world. The culture of “I” has become important simply because that has become the most important part of our existence. Religion criticizes the secular world and the secular world attacks the religious ideals that are being forced on a population that does not want them. The end result is that we find that many reject religion based on the fighting that they see. In the meantime, there are those in other countries who are leading lost souls to salvation in numbers that we have not seen in many years here in this country. Why? There are many reasons for this but I believe that part of the answer lies in the fact that we have lost sight of some basic principles that should govern our lives as Christians.

First of all we need to remember that the world is the world. It is filled with the imagination of man and the influence of Satan. This is evil and the evil will get worse as time goes on. Christ stated this to his disciples. ***“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (Jhn 15.18-19)***. Christ shows that there is a difference between those who follow Him and those who refuse to accept the Gospel. In sending his disciples out he told them, ***“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (Matt 10.16)***. Understanding the nature of the world will prepare us for rejection and realize that this is the nature of things around us.

Understanding that the world is evil provides us with a perspective that teaching the gospel is best done through individual contact. We refer to that as personal evangelism. Christ sent his disciples out with specific instructions on how to deal with rejection. ***“And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.” (Matt 10.14)***. Unfortunately, in our day and time, there are those who have taken the attitude that if others will not accept what we find in the scriptures, then we will find some way to push those ideas even when they are not wanted. The example that we have in the scriptures is that we should move on and continue the search for those good and honest hearts that are searching for the gospel and God.

Perhaps the biggest reason for not being able to reach others is that we have done as Christ stated concerning the Ephesians. ***“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” (Rev 2.4)***. Being caught up in the social, political and religious movements of the day has caused many to lose sight of the fact that there is joy in being a Christian. Contentment in serving God and purpose in being able to share the gospel with others. Paul gives instructions for holding on to this when he states, ***“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Phil 4.8)***.

Christians in the first century changed the world by teaching the gospel. Christ changed the world by sacrificing himself for us. The world will continue in evil and ignorance while the few who will listen can obtain mercy from God. We need to practice our faith on an individual, personal level. We need to cultivate the sense of contentment and joy that comes from knowing that we are serving God seek those who are willing to listen to God’s message. We need to do more professing and less protesting.

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