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NOVEMBER 2019 – ITCHING-EARS CHRISTIANS

Dear Friend,

Recently during a time of prayer the Lord spoke to me and said, “*One of the hardest things to do is separate the personality from the message. This is why many people (Christians) end up deceived.*” Immediately after He said this, He reminded me of the story in the Old Testament of Absalom, King David’s son. I will use scripture to share with you the part of this story the Lord brought to mind.

But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. (2 Samuel 14:25)

¹And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. ²And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. ³And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. ⁴Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! ⁵And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

(2 Samuel 15:1-6)

¹⁰But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. ¹¹And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing. ¹²And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom. ¹³And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. ¹⁴And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. (2 Samuel 15:10-14)

Over time, Absalom used his outward appearance and personality to influence the people. He effectively got them to forget many truths about his father, David, such as:

- David had been the one divinely appointed by God and anointed by the prophet Samuel to be Israel's king.
- David single-handedly defeated the giant Goliath which led to the defeat of the invading Philistines.
- David had restored unity to the nation of Israel.
- David had brought the Ark of God back to Israel.
- David had taken Israel to the place of being a great military power.
- David was able to bring great prosperity and peace to Israel.
- David was the man through whom prophecy had gone forth.
- David was the apple of God's eye.

In spite of everything David had accomplished, the people over whom he had reigned so wonderfully were now turning against him. They had been swayed by a deceptive message delivered by a man with a charismatic and winsome personality that was coupled with striking good looks. The message was wrong, it was not of God, but the people still fell for it because of how it was delivered. The result was a time of strife and chaos in Israel which led to many deaths, including that of Absalom.

This story is repeated over and over in the Body of Christ. Christians refuse to leave churches *even when they know the pastor is preaching wrong doctrine!* While Jesus and the need to be born again may be preached, many other aspects of the messages are wrong, yet the engaging charisma of the pastor influences people to stay.

Popular evangelists and pastors who divorce for no true, scriptural reason explain it away with phrases like *"we drifted apart over the years"* or *"incompatibility,"* and dismiss the standards God has established in His word with an enigmatic use of scripture. Yet these ministers are overwhelmingly supported by their congregations and followers to stay in the pulpit without any time off for restoration. Some of these preachers have even remarried within weeks or months of their divorce and there is no demand for accountability!

There are many other examples I could give, but what it comes down to is that far too many Christians seem to be persuaded by a personality rather than a rock-solid, scripturally based message of pure, Biblical truth. They are, if you will, judging the book by its cover. I have been around Christianity all my life, and based on what I have seen over the years, I am firmly convinced that many churches and ministries have been built on the magnetic and captivating persona of the preacher rather than a genuine move of God united with accurate, contextual use of the Bible.

I began to wonder why these things are so common. Why is it that Christians will allow themselves to be enamored by the appeal of the individual instead of the maturity of the person's spiritual walk with God? The answer is basically three-fold with each part being somewhat intertwined with the other two.

First is the fact that most Christians have a deep inner need to feel secure in their spirituality. In order to fill this need, the natural tendency is to trust what one can see, not what one cannot see. This means putting an almost totally blind faith in an individual instead of God. Thus, the more personable the individual, greater is the degree of trust extended toward that person. If it turns

out that the person is wrong in areas of doctrine, it is easier to overlook the error than it is to break away from the security.

Second is the fact that most Christians are unbelievably lazy when it comes to studying things out for themselves. My experience has been that it is rare for a Christian to search the scriptures to find out if a teaching or doctrine lines up with truth. They allow the charm of the messenger to define their belief system.

Third is the fact that most Christians honestly do not grasp that they will be judged by God for the doctrines they have believed and taught. They do not take seriously that we are here to serve God and build His kingdom, not placate ourselves by seeking blessings while awaiting the Lord's return.

I believe that each of us needs to introspectively examine how we have come to accept what we believe is spiritual truth. Were we persuaded by the polished style and professionalism of the preacher? Were we enamored by the pastor under whose ministry we were raised from childhood? Did we jump on a doctrinal bandwagon because the evangelist stirred our emotions with his fervent and fiery delivery? Have we ever really taken the time to study the Bible concerning the things we believe?

In John 8:32, Jesus said, ***And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*** Therefore, the amount of freedom we live in is directly proportionate to the level of truth we know. This means we can know and understand the truth of God's Word. He has made it possible for us to live our lives free from doctrinal error. He has not only given us His Word, but the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, has the assignment to teach us all things and guide us into all truth.

I encourage you to spend time with God. With an open heart and mind, ask Him to show you beliefs which need to be corrected. Be willing to receive any correction He gives and change whatever He shows you that needs to be changed, even if it conflicts with what is popular or what you have believed for a long time. I am convinced we all want to be pleasing in His sight because we love Him so much. In closing, I will share with you a word of prophecy the Lord gave me during a time of seeking His presence.

I am coming with a vengeance to judge sin, but My judgment will be in love, not as the world judges. This judgment will not be of the sin in the world, but of the sin in My church. It will not manifest in the way man would imagine, but in a way to bring conviction and save souls. Yes, I said save souls; the souls of my children who are headed in a direction that would take them from Me.

One of the greatest things I could do for a person is remove My blessings and anointing from those in ministry who are not walking in truth. I will always honor truth, but many have created their own type of "anointing" through their personality and works. My heart grieves for My children who have been misled by such ministries. When My children are misled by that non-truth and works-based false anointing, I call it sin.

"Would you like to know what I look for? I look for the same doctrine and teaching that I gave to the church; that which was preached by the apostles and

was recorded in My Word. This includes what I have said about healing, prosperity, righteousness, holiness, justification, callings, and all else that will enable you to conform to the image of My Son.

Compare what I have said to what is preached and taught. When you find a discrepancy, you have found a works-based doctrine contrived and developed by man. Why would you want to be a part of such a church or support such a ministry? Why would you say that I bless that which takes my children down a path of lies and away from Me?

“My children are too willing to accept anyone who preaches that My Son is the way to salvation. My children, most of My Church, are not living at a spiritual level of even that of the Corinthians when Paul wrote to them. I say this to My Church: reject anything which does not line up with My Word. Learn to be selective about what you see, hear, and receive. You have put up with, and willingly accepted, too much junk that cannot be supported by truth.

What I see is a bunch of undisciplined children chasing after anything that gives them a religious sense of pleasure. Don't you understand that you are going to be judged over this? It's time you stopped playing your self-centered religious games and started living a Christ-centered life.

When you compare My Word to what is preached and taught by churches and ministries and see a discrepancy, you have identified a problem in My Body. Remember, a cancer in the human body is still a part of that body. But if left untreated, it will work to destroy healthy cells. I see any doctrine which does not line up with my word as a cancer in My Body. And yet, many of My children are willingly introducing this cancer into their lives.

Judge yourself and deal with this now. Listen to Me and get in the church where I want you. Don't worry about distance or inconvenience; I can make the inconvenient convenient. I can change your circumstances, but you must change the attitude of your heart. Did I not say in My Word that I would give you shepherds after My own heart, those who would feed you from My table? Listen to Me and give to the churches and ministries I tell you. Stop supporting those which spread the disease of wrong doctrine.

You have not yet figured out the fullness of what I can do or how I can move. This is why many of you do not obey in these things: you are afraid and fearful of hardship. There are those who will hear these things and reject them. Their security is in their religion and not in Me. I love them, but they are hurting themselves. Do not confuse My love with approval of wrong. For those who hear and receive these things, begin to take action. Do what I say and dwell where I am.

It is not God's will that any perish or be led astray. Don't let yourself become an “itching-ears Christian” described by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy chapter four; those who refuse to endure sound doctrine, turning to what God calls fables. There has been a tremendous increase of preachers delivering blatant error, and it is heartbreaking to see how many thousands of

Christians are flocking to their houses of heresy they call churches. Do not allow yourself to be drawn in by personality, dynamic sermon delivery, children's programs, facilities, choirs and praise teams, outreach programs, and so on. Not only will we be judged for our actions and behavior in this life (2 Corinthians 5:19), but also for what we believe (1 Corinthians 3:10-19).

A contextual study of scripture, coupled with the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, is a no-fail method to protect ourselves against deception and endure to the end. Then, when we stand before the Lord in judgment, our robe of righteousness will not be stained with the error of wrong believing...we will be holy and unblameable in His sight!

May God richly bless you with His love and grace!

Jim

Here in the United States, we celebrate Thanksgiving each year on the fourth Thursday of November. Though many have drifted away from its original purpose, it started out as a day to thank God for His blessings, provision, protection, mercy, grace and love. But along with this special day of celebration, we should be thanking God all year long. In fact, the Bible reveals that giving thanks unto God is His will. If you would like a CD of a special sermon wherein I teach about the need to and benefits of offering thanks unto God, please use the order form below to request, *Giving Thanks: God's Will*.

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☐ Check this box to receive a CD of the sermon, *Giving Thanks: God's Will*.

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