

Seeker-friendly Adulterers

May 10, 2021

“As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? or do I seek to please men? For if I still sought to please men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

Gal 1:9-10

I read yesterday, an article about the seeker-friendly movement that swept through the churches (all denominations) during the mid to late 1990's, then became more prominent in the early 2000's, and is now largely ingrained into most denominations and churches.

Seeker-friendly, or seeker-sensitive churches and pastors would take greater care than ever before, not to say things in a way that might drive away the seeker, or cause them to be offended. Such great care was taken to present only how Jesus could save people, help people, even prosper people that went to Him for help, but not otherwise offend the seeker. Preaching about the cross of Christ or topics that could offend (“Do I offend?”) could include anything that would make the seeker not feel comfortable, such as talking about sin, the cross, or talking about sin in such a direct way, perhaps say we are all sinners (often omitting that we Christians have repented of our sins, and been forgiven, and have/are being changed by God to a new man formed in the image of Christ), or the demands of God that a man confess his sins to God and repent prior to the wrath of God which is to come. It was discovered we could fill churches with seekers (there were lots of them, more than genuine Christians), and if we were careful not to offend them by speaking the truth of the Word of God, sin, Hell, and the cross of Christ, they would stay and even give in the offering. I had a pastor tell me not to share the gospel with them (the seekers), lest they might get offended at the Word and leave before making friends with the church members-- they were using a technique called “friendship evangelism”, which is a form of seeker-friendly. Somewhere in the pastor's heart, he knew the seekers would be offended by the gospel message- the fact that our sin cost Christ Jesus' death on the cross. Sunday after Sunday, the seekers stayed and the pastor was careful not to share the Word completely, as to not offend, or prick their conscience. The pastor had in mind how they might respond poorly if that were to happen, so adjusted his message accordingly.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts/desires shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” 2 Tim 4:3-4

Seeker-friendly churches and pastors are become aware of this verse well, but they don't use this Scripture in a good way. Rather, knowing these “seekers” are the people this verse is talking about, these pastors also join-in, and become the subjects in this verse, they become the type of teachers that are heaped-up, that is, seeker-friendly, non-offensive, not sharing the whole counsel of God (see Acts 20:27).

Then this evening, while I was doing my evening Bible reading, I happened to be reading in Mark chapter 8, and though I have understood it well in the past, today I saw it in a fresher way:

Mark 8

29 And He saith unto them [His disciples], "But whom say you that I am?" And Peter answered and said unto Him, You are the Christ.

30 And He charged them that they should tell no man of Him.

31 And He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And He spoke that saying openly [not in a parable like He usually did]. And Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him.

33 But when He had turned about and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for you savor not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."

34 And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, "Whosoever will follow after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

35 "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

36 "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

37 "Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

38 "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Peter, by revelation from the Father (Matt 16:17), had just confessed that he believed Jesus was the Christ, the foretold and expected Messiah. Then Jesus confirmed this as true when he charged them (v.30) not to tell others about who He was, not that He was Jesus (everyone knew that), but that He was the Christ, the Messiah.

Now that they (the disciples) knew He was the Christ, He began to teach them about what He, the Christ, would have to go through, the suffering of many things, the rejection by the various religious and political leaders, and be killed, and then rise again on the third day.

So, right after Peter, by revelation from God confessed Jesus was the Christ, he began rebuking Jesus Christ for saying He would have to suffer and die. Peter was being seeker-sensitive (man's sensitivities-aware), had man's feelings, sentiments, sympathies, and interests at heart instead of God's, and Jesus rebuked him for it:

"He rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get thee behind me, Satan: for you savor not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.'" (v.33).

God does not conform to man, man must conform to God. God's ways are not our human ways. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death" Prov 14:12; 16:25)

Our Lord would do no differently today. In fact, He is coming very soon, and His reward is with Him. In light of this fact (that He is coming very soon), let's consider the next verses:

"And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, 'Whosoever will follow after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'" Mark 8:34-37

In conclusion,

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." Mark 8:38

We are in a more adulterous and sinful generation than Jesus was in. When He comes, how or in what way/manner will He speak to us? What gospel are we preaching -- The true gospel, or the seeker-friendly "gospel" ? Are we seeker-friendly adulterers and adulteresses? Do we betray Jesus by not preaching the straight truth of the gospel for money, tithes, offerings, and "seekers" to fill the pews?

"You adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do you think that the scripture says in vain, the Spirit that dwells in us yearns jealously?" James 4
and,

"As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Gal 1:9

"Do I offend?"

"But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are

being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ." 2 Cor 2:14-17 ESV

Seeker-friendly does not only affect pastors and churches, it affects families and individuals. Do we hold back from telling the truth in love to others, because we are concerned they won't take it well, or we may suffer consequences because of it? If we are, we too have sold-out the truth of person and message of Christ, and His cross, for the sake of temporary, worldly things. The message of the cross of Christ is an offense to many still, even those in the church, but to us who are being saved, precious (1 Cor 1:18, 1 Pet 2).

It many ways, the current situation where hostilities towards God and God's word being so prevalent today is because of the seeker-friendly movement in churches that began about 20-30 years ago. Yes, because many pastors and many true Christians were afraid of offending some with the message of the cross of Christ, they withheld speaking the truth in love. Perhaps for the sake of money or so Seekers would stay and not leave, today we are facing cancel culture and other current forms of persecution- because we did not face it on the front side, we now face it on the back side, not being loyal to God, we became loyal to man.

We cannot lay the responsibility for this solely upon the seeker-friendly pastors and leaders. Just because many pastors and leaders were corrupted to not speak the whole truth, doesn't mean the rest of Christians should. Are we disciples of the pastor or are we disciples of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, and who wrote the Scriptures we all should be reading? (1 cor 1:12-13). Whose sheep are we? (John 10:1-16). I'm not saying the pastor is not necessary, or that pastors are not responsible to God of how they represent and preach Christ, but all Christians must follow Jesus, regardless of any others.

The church is made of individuals and families of Christians, and we Christians are to be salt and light in this present dark world. If the salt loses its savor, it's difference from the world because of the presence of Jesus Christ in our heart and life, we are of no use to other Christians nor to the world.

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet." Matt 5:11-13

People today need to hear the truth of gospel, no matter how they will receive it. We need to remain true and loyal to Jesus Christ above all others, without considering how someone will take it, but rather only considering whether we are being loyal to Jesus, how we are pleasing to Jesus or not. Or will Jesus be openly ashamed of us when He soon returns with His holy angels? Are we seeker-friendly adulterers? Do we love Jesus more than this present world? (2 Tim 4:10)

"This is what I mean, brothers: See the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away." 1 Cor 7:29-31 ESV

"But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" 1 Pet 4:13-17

I pray we be found faithful upon His soon return (2 Pet 3:14). Amen.

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Just a note:

Preaching the whole counsel of God, and speaking the truth in love, is not to be confused with the coarse brashness that some have taken to in Christendom. An example of this shocking coarseness and crudeness would be Mark Driscoll. Jesus was never coarse, He was direct, straight to the point, cutting to the heart by the Holy Spirit, but never coarse and never crude. I wonder sometimes, what spirit people are of. This conscience-shocking crude coarseness is not the Spirit of Christ, but a counterfeit to the work of the Holy Spirit Who cuts between the division of the soul and spirit to reveal the truth with conviction. It is loving to tell the truth. It is not loving to be crude and defiling.

Holy Spirit, Truth in love, Scripture, Prophecy, Conviction.	Conscience Shock-jocks, false prophets, counterfeit conviction
Cuts to the heart, the dividing of soul and spirit.	Shocks the conscience, often starkly.
Pure and Holy	Crude, vulgar, or defiling,
Fear of God, Reverences God most highly, never speaks about God or His Word in a cavalier way.	Sometimes treats God or God’s Word in a cavalier way. Glimpses of a lack of the fear of God.
Discerns between holy and unholy, keeping a difference. Avoids worldliness. Holy talk. Somber/serious, sober.	Sometimes mixes holy with the profane/perverse language. Sometimes curses/swears, crude joking, Tattoos.
Upsetting but right	Shame and somehow wrong
Brings conviction	Brings condemnation
Focus is on reconciliation with God. Get right so you don’t perish.	Focus on shame, man-focused, no reconciliation to God. Muddle in your sin.
Fruit: The Word brings you to a crossroad- You either get right or you go further wrong- you don’t stay the same.	Fruit: You muddle in guilt and shame, you stay right where you were- the same, unchanged.
Loving to tell the truth, gentle and kind if possible.	Mean and coarse, cold and loveless, cruel.
“For it is shameful to even speak of the things that they do in secret” Eph 5:12	Shamelessly speaks of things done secretly that should never be spoken of publicly.
A work of God, The Holy Spirit	The work of demons, Satan.
A work of the Spirit, holy.	A work of the flesh, demonic, sensual.
Normal gentle and respectful biblical gender roles.	Warped gender roles (muchness) in both sexes. Manifests as unloving macho men who run over or degrade women, or domineering women who run over men and take authority.