

Tuesday, December 31, 2002

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HE CAME AND WE DID NOT RECEIVE HIM!

One more Christmas day has now passed. All of the noise, the busyness, the clamor, the frantic shopping, the begging, the special music, the one time giving, and the stuffing of the stomach - all of this fleshly activity has once more passed us like the passing of a spring storm. The Griswald-like lighting of our homes, along with the manger scenes and a Santa Clause holding court in the department stores, restaurants, schools and even the Churches - all of this worldly, temporal activity, has now been put away until, once again, in nine or ten months, we will begin the entire process all over again. For the unbelieving pagan the Christmas season is a time to receive, a time to get a few days off work, time to increase their social activity, and to increase their sales. For the believing Christian, the Christmas season is about all of these same things, but we proudly declare that we have joined in with the rest of the world as they celebrate the season of Christmas, and we do it all in the name of JESUS. We do not have one minutes trouble tacking the name of JESUS on our gluttony, our covetness, our receiving, our busyness, our overspending. We have no problem whatsoever in tacking the name of JESUS on our activity that GOD will one day destroy. I have heard numerous Christians say that they know all of this fleshly religious activity is wrong, but they do it for the children. May GOD have mercy on us!

To those of you who may be taking offense at what I am saying, please bear with me. My wife Judy and I have just come through all of this foolishness like many of you have. We had a Christmas tree, gave and received gifts, took a few days off from the office, have eaten more than we should have, and we have been busy in the process. I do not believe there is anything inherently wrong with our taking a holiday from work! I do not believe there is anything inherently wrong with giving and receiving gifts or spending time fellowshiping with each other during a holiday season. Our sin is tacking the name of our GOD onto our fleshly activity. That is our sin and be assured, for having done so, we will miss our FATHER'S fullest blessing.

May I remind you that we are in a spiritual war. May I remind you that Christian leaders in high places are now falling like fall leaves. May I remind you that plagues and pestilence are now sweeping the earth? May I remind you that the same children that we say Christmas is all about, can now obtain condoms in many of our middle schools. May I remind you that we Christians now exceed the secular world in our divorce rate? May I remind you that Christians are now going bankrupt at the same rate as non-Christians? May I remind you fellow Christians that we have sisters in the Lord Jesus, who live in Sudan and are having their breasts hacked off because they will not deny JESUS? True Christians are being persecuted and butchered all over this planet while we in America tack the name of JESUS on what we call Christmas. As far as I am concerned, this is one more proof that we have absolutely no fear of a holy GOD. Those few Christians who do realize our spiritual poverty have, for the most part, become so timid that they will not speak out. But I tell you that as long as I can draw a breath and FATHER gives me the grace to do so, I will speak out. And if every last friend that I have deserts me, never the less, I will speak out. This is not a time, nor season, for warm, religious fuzzies. This is not a time, nor season, for

chasing every wind of doctrine that blows through the Church. This is not a time, nor season, for chasing after signs and wonders. This is not a time, nor season, to go hopping from one assembly to another in search of spiritual chills and thrills. This is not the time, nor the season, to follow some man who can entertain us and promise us what ever our heart desires. No! No! No! This is the day - This is the time - This is the hour to return to JESUS CHRIST alone! Everything else will betray us. Everything else!

A.W.Tozer, in his book entitled “Christ the Eternal Son”, made the following statements.

“There is nothing being advertised in the catalog, being sung about or pushed over the radio, appeals from Wall Street or Hollywood or London or Singapore or Rome, not a thing in the whole world that will not turn out to be a coiled serpent in your boot if JESUS CHRIST does not get into it!”

“We have been betrayed by every prospect that man creates.”

I agree with Brother Tozer’s statements. Unless JESUS CHRIST Himself is found in the midst of the activity, and unless He is receiving the preeminence, the activity is temporal at best, and a waste of time, energy and talent. To tack His name on something that “we” create out of our own fleshly desires is nothing less than using His name in vain. It may look good, feel good, smell good and even agree with a verse of scripture, but if JESUS is not in the midst of it and receiving all of the glory, then it is only the vanity of man’s heart, and as far as I am concerned, it is an absolute waste of time. Our time here is so short and we waste so much of it. May GOD have mercy on us.

Our problem today is no different than it was over 2,000 plus years ago. GOD entered into the human race through His only begotten Son and literally walked among us. The world did not know Him, and His own, the religious ones did not receive Him. It is no different today. The world still does not know Him, and the religious ones still refuse to receive Him. The church, for the most part, makes up the religious ones of today's society. Oh, we quickly take up His name, but when it comes to His message, well that's a different story altogether. We prefer a JESUS today that is not as straight and narrow as the JESUS of the Bible. We prefer a JESUS today that will allow us to follow the dictates of our own hearts. We prefer a JESUS today that will make room for our fleshly lusts, sexual perversions and spiritual idolatries. We prefer a JESUS today that will entertain us with all sorts of signs and wonders and warm spiritual fuzzies. We prefer a JESUS today that is a little more like us and a little less like the GOD of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We get all excited about a JESUS that will heal our sickness, deliver us from our enemies and fill our bank accounts, and while He is at it, save all our family. Oh that’s the JESUS we prefer! Not the JESUS of the Bible who promised us persecution, death to self, trials and tribulations and warned us of the fires of hell. We don’t want the JESUS that preached the Sermon on the Mount and certainly, we do not want the JESUS found speaking to the churches in the Book of Revelation. NO! NO! NO! Not that JESUS! We will not receive Him today anymore than we did in the days of John the Apostle! May GOD have mercy on us in these final days.

“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”

(John 1:10&11)

JESUS CHRIST, God in the flesh of man, “came” - came to His own! He came to His disciples. Notice this verse is not talking about the world. It is not talking about pagan unbelievers. No! The 11th verse of John chapter one and John chapter six clearly states that He came to believers, those who were considered disciples of His. These were considered to be His own. And when this God Man called JESUS

CHRIST spoke to them they said of His word:

“This is a hard saying, who can understand it?” (John 6:60)

and

“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”(John 6:66)

His very own disciples refused to receive His word and deserted Him. JESUS was O.K. as long as He was healing, delivering and blessing them, but when it came to His hard word, that was unacceptable then, as it is today! If we go on to verse 67 we hear our Lord, after being rejected by His very own, turn to the twelve remaining disciples and say; “Do you also want to go away?” I can almost hear the heartache and hurt in His voice. “Do you also want to go away?” The word of GOD was rejected, not by the world but by His own. “He came to His own and His own did not receive Him.”

Dear reader I pray that you are not one of those who call themselves a Christian but who rejects His word. Those who do not receive His word, His every word, reject Him. They do not receive Him. JESUS CHRIST and His word are one and the same.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1&14)

In John chapter 14 verse 9 and 10 JESUS tells us that He and the Father are one, and that the words that He spoke were the same as the Fathers. He never said or did anything that He didn't first hear Father say or see Father do. (See John 8:28, John 3:34 and John 8:26) JESUS states plainly in the 14th chapter of John verse 23 and 24 that if we love Him, therefore fulfilling the first and great commandment, (see Matthew 22:37&38) that we will keep his word.

“If anyone loves Me, he will Keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”

“He who does not love Me, does not Keep My words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent Me.”

When we reject or refuse to receive FATHER'S word, we are refusing to receive JESUS just the same as His disciples refused to receive Him when He walked the earth. If we say that we love Him and do not receive His word, we are calling Him a liar. But the truth before God is that we are the liars not God. Listen to John

“He who says, “I Know Him”, and does not Keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”(John 2:4)

Dear saints of God, when our God came to the earth, He came in the person of JESUS CHRIST and He came with a word. That word, all of that word, is life to those of us who receive it. (See John 6:68) When He came in person, His word was not received. Oh some of it was, but when our Lord began to preach holiness, righteousness, repentance, death to self and separation from the world, then He and His word were rejected. He was not received because of the word that He spoke. Not only that, but He was ultimately beaten and slaughtered as an animal, because of His word. The word of God has never

been popular with we humans. The pagan unbelieving world just laughs at God's word, but the religious ones will kill over their own interpretation of it. Today we have added to His word, and we have taken from His word until we have a word that suits us. Those of us who call ourselves Christians have separated into our own little religious Kingdoms. The Baptists, the Catholics, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Independent Church, etc. etc. etc., all have some form of their own word and they are quick to tell you that they have the truth. The Catholic Church even claims that theirs is the only true church. But they all have one thing in common - they have not received, embraced and kept the wholeness of His word. They have claimed His name and some of His word but in truth, they have denied Him. They for the most part, have deserted Him except in name only. They no longer fear Him. They no longer reverence Him and they certainly do not believe Him. His is a hard word, who can understand it? And He turns to you and asks, "will you also leave ME?" He has come to His own and His own have once again refused to receive Him. We may think that we can receive Him and at the same time not believe Him, but that is the same lie that Lucifer seduced Eve with in the Garden of Eden. Again, listen to the truth;

"For He who God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:34-36)

"Not everyone, who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:21-23)

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; The statues of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward." (Psalm 19:7-11)

"For assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:18-20)

"My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips." (Psalm 89:34)

That dear friends, is the truth! And no man, regardless of how religious he is, regardless of how spiritual he may seem to be, or regardless of his position in what we call the church - even if he is a priest or prophet, pastor or the Pope - no man nor demon of hell will alter the word of God and not suffer for having done so. May God have mercy on us for what we have done with His word! May God have mercy!

Listen, saints of God - religion is leading untold numbers of people into outer darkness and into the fires of hell. For the most part, those who are in places of leadership are not only not warning the people of the wrath to come, but they are denying our Lord by not receiving and keeping His word. Many of them preach doctrines of demons the same way that Lucifer tempted our Lord. Many of these false prophets are not even aware of what they are doing, as they are just the products of their religious background. Many of these are like the scribes and Pharisees that the Lord spoke to in Matthew 23:15, where it is recorded that He said:

“Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”

Hell will be well populated with human beings that thought they were saved, but who denied JESUS and His word. Listen - “But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 10:33) To those in leadership positions within the church who would teach that you do not have to receive the words of JESUS, nor obey Him to be saved, to that one who has turned a deaf religiously educated ear to the living Word, I would say; Sir, you are a liar and the truth is not in you. Repent from your rebellion and turn from your wicked ways before you plunge headfirst into the eternal horror of hell. JESUS said of you in Mark 9:42, that if you cause one who believes in Him to stumble, that it would be better for you if a millstone were hung around your neck, and you were thrown into the sea.

Today religion, much of it practiced in the name of JESUS, is betraying us and leading us away from JESUS. Listen, again, to A.W. Tozer;

“Only JESUS, the Christ, the eternal Son of God, is enough. Man has to face up to the fact that religion is not enough - and it never will be.

Oh, it is amazing how many things religious people want to do to you. They will manipulate you, maul you, and sweetly massage your soul all the time - and when it is all done you are just what you were.

When religion has done all it can, you are still a sinner who either went to the temple or did not go to the temple. If you attended church you are still a sinner who attended church. If you did not go to church you are still a sinner who did not go to church.

Measured in any direction and approached from any point of view, we are still sinners if all we have is that which religion has offered and tried to do for us. Religion can put us on the roll and educate us and train us and instruct us and discipline us; and when it is all over there is still something within our being that cries, “eternity is in my heart and I have not found anything to satisfy it.”

So you will be searching and searching forever until you find Christ; for only Christ is enough to satisfy the eternal longing in our souls.”

Many of us are not following JESUS today. Many of us are following a denomination or some teacher, preacher or prophet. Some of us are following the latest religious trend. Many of us are not following the red letters of JESUS CHRIST, but rather we have accepted as truth and are following some man’s or some denomination’s interpretation of God’s word. In so doing, we have betrayed JESUS, refused to receive Him, and openly mocked Him and called Him a liar by our very actions. These are strong words, but they are true - as true as His word is. If you think that I am wrong, that I am being too critical and even judgmental - if you think that I am overstating the problem, then I challenge you to begin to lift up JESUS CHRIST and His red letter words above your denomination, above your Pope, your pastor, above your favorite Bible teacher - you begin to speak JESUS, JESUS, JESUS, and confront those who say “yes, but” and I tell you, you will find out whether or not I am telling you the truth. The religious

demons of hell and Lucifer himself, disguised as an angel of light, (see 2Corinthians 11:14) will rise up against you and if you persist they will even attempt to kill you. Religion hates God and is out to destroy and remove His word from the face of the earth. But all of the demons of hell combined cannot stop the Truth. NEVER! As soon as one voice of truth is stilled, FATHER will raise two more. If every church in America and around the world refuses to receive Him and the entirety of His word, that living Word will break out, as it now is starting to do, in living rooms, basements, in the market place, in the forest and on the seashore. Man cannot- he cannot kill TRUTH because JESUS is the truth. (See John 14:6)

My message is simple and very personal. It is for you and for me. Get to JESUS! Forget all else, especially your religion and devote yourself to JESUS! Not to your good works, not to those around you, not even to your family, just JESUS. Your works, your church, your pastor, your friends, your denomination, your Pope - none of these things or people can forgive your sins, or keep you out of hell. None of these things or people can heal you, or deliver you from Lucifer's agents. They cannot do one single, solitary thing for you that has any eternal value in it. Sooner or later you and I will be faced with the reality of this truth.

Listen, once again, to A.W. Tozer, from his book entitled "Christ the Eternal Son".

"I can stand and assure you without any embarrassment that no matter who you are, either now or later in your life or at death or in the world to come, you will find that only JESUS CHRIST is enough."

If we continue on this religious path that many of us are on, and we stake the future of our souls on the word of man rather than the living Word of God, we are certain to be counted among the "many" that our Lord warned us would be lost forever. If that is where you are, I share with you one last quote from brother Tozer.

"My friend, your odds are not that good - you do not even have a chance. If your relation to JESUS CHRIST is not a saving relation, then you are on your own without a guide and without a compass. It is not a chance you have: it is suicide that you are committing. It is not a chance in 10 times 10,000. It is either be right or be dead; in this case, be right or be eternally lost."

Dear sons and daughters of God, we were created in His image and in His likeness. We were created by Him and for Him. We have been clearly called to walk just as He walked. (See 1 John 2:6) In 1 Peter 1:15 & 16 we are called to be holy in all of our conduct. JESUS has warned us in Matthew 7:13 & 14 that "the way" to eternal life is narrow, difficult, and that few will find it. The word of God is clear and easily understood for all who will receive it. In the end, when life here on earth has been completed, our future will depend upon JESUS alone and the word that He spoke. Our FATHER is now drawing us back to JESUS. He is not drawing us to an institution, nor to a man. Many of us cannot say that JESUS alone is our Lord and Master. The love that many of us have for each other is dependent on our commitment to a church or ministry, rather than our commitment to and love of JESUS CHRIST. We quickly defend our own ministry, our own church, our own denomination, because that "thing" is our first love. This attitude of heart is not of God! You cannot receive JESUS and reject Him at the same time. I pray that you will not leave Him also.

GOD BLESS

Tom

