

“There isn’t a person anywhere who isn’t capable of doing more than he thinks he can.” **Henry Ford**

“Self-discipline begins with the mastery of your thoughts. If you don’t control what you think, you can’t control what you do.”

Don’t forget our Gospel Meeting, May 22-25 with Russ Bowman of Beaumont, Tx.



MAY 1, 2011

Hypocrisy Wears a New Dress Jim Stauffer

Jesus said in Matthew 6:1, **Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.** Jesus says people who practice their religion or righteousness to be seen of men are hypocrites. We see this from time to time from some who go to great lengths to have people see their generosity or humility. These are as easy to see as people praying on the street corners in Jesus’ day.

Rarely do we actually apply it to people of “respected” large religious movements when they make appearances on radio or TV for no other real purpose than publicity.

Recently a well known TV evangelist was interviewed on another TV program about the President’s choice of where to worship on Easter Sunday. Apparently past sermons preached by the preacher for this church had dealt with his interpretation of racism against the President from his fellow Americans. The purpose of this evangelist in this interview was to comment on whether he thought the President was a Christian or if he simply went through the motions to give that impression. He intimated he thought the President was just going through the motions of Christianity for political reasons or he would have chosen a church that taught more traditional Christian values.

My purpose in bringing this up is not because I am trying to defend the President or indict him for I too, may have wondered about his choice of places to worship if he were truly desirous of worship. But a serious person who had the ability to speak directly to the President, as this man has, would have contacted him privately

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Send a Copy to a Friend

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MEETING TIMES
Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM
Worship Services 10:20AM & 6:00PM
Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM

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and had the discussion with him personally. He may have accomplished something then.

Now what is the point of bringing this up? My real dissatisfaction with many such religious leaders in our time is they have no real sincerity in their efforts. Jesus tried to teach us our worship is between us and God and is for the purpose of praise and adoration of the Almighty. It is not church or religion building. The building up of the church in numbers and strength will take place when its members do the job to which they have been appointed. (Eph. 4:11-13) The same is true of correcting one another.

Had this evangelist used his exposure to teach the truth about the gospel, it would have been much like the Lord when he was confronted by the scribes and Pharisees. He would have made as many enemies as friends. The fact is, the program he was on and he himself had no use for that. They wanted sensational criticism of the President and he was happy to be their tool.

It was great that he had the opportunity to speak about Christianity on TV, but it could have been used more effectively in teaching the truth. It should not have been used for political purposes.

Furthermore, his criticism of the President could just as easily have been directed at himself because he, as opposed to the President, has publicly stated what he believes about the gospel. His expression, "those who have named Christ as their personal savior", falls short of the command Ananias gave Paul to, "rise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." You see, he does not believe baptism is for the remission of sins, which exposes his lack of faith just as he was trying to do to the President.

So, what should we learn from his mistakes in this venture? We need to remember the lessons of Jesus when He taught concerning such public efforts at publicity for our personal religious causes. ***When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. (Matt. 6:2)***

Our worship of Jehovah and our service as disciples of Christ is not a business, contrary to the practice of TV evangelists. It is not a game to see who can be the biggest, most popular or have the greatest following. Christ's following received a message containing the hard truth from him, ***Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. (John 6:26)*** Their motives were not spiritual enhancement but simply for the nice picnics Jesus had provided.

Not only must we practice pure religion, we must not be deceived by those who do not.

We must conclude this man has received his reward, the praise of those he sought to please.

Little Things

One of the intriguing stories of the book of Judges is the death of Abimelech, He murdered his rival brothers at Shechem and ruled Israel for three years. He got his just deserts when, while seeking to expand his dominion, he was killed by a woman at the city of Thebes.

The city had just been defeated by Abimelech and his troops; the remaining citizens, men and women, gathered in the city watchtower, seeking refuge from Abimelech and his warriors. The army surrounded the tower and was positioned to burn it and destroy all its fear-stricken residents. A woman spied a millstone nearby, picked it up, dropped it from the tower, and it struck Abimelech on the head and crushed his skull.

Abimelech remained conscious long enough to call on a fellow soldier to finish him off so it would not be said, "A woman slew him" (Judg. 9:54). When Abimelech's marauding army saw their general was dead, each man departed for his own home. "Thus God," by a woman who had little prowess as a soldier, "requited the wickedness of Abimelech" (Judg. 9:56).

The same God killed a nine foot giant with a single rock from a sling wielded by a small lad whose only professional training was watching sheep. He also used a man with a stammering tongue to lead his people from bondage in Egypt, organize them into a mighty nation, and lead them to their land of promise. This God, Jehovah, warns us through His prophet that we must not "despise the day of small things" (Zech. 4:10).

The simplest of deeds that show interest and concern; the least eloquent words that express love and care; the sparsest of talent directed toward a desperate person; a smile and a handshake or a warm hug at the right moment; any of these, all of these, or a thousand other tiny deeds can effect great results when our love or service for God is behind them. No limits can be set on God, His providence, and His use of men in accomplishing His purposes on earth.

Jehovah, our God and Father, does not demand powerful and moving sermons, flamboyant and ornate displays of service, educated and magnetic personalities, or talented and important people. God needs men and women of faith, of hope, of love, and of prayer; disciples who are moved with passion to serve at every opportunity; Christians who regardless of their talent respect God's will, seek to follow it, and labor to share themselves and His will with others. Large or small, big or little, brethren -- plant and water and leave the results to God (1 Cor. 3:5-9).

By L A Stauffer