

Beware Of the Modern Day Church

By Wayne Vasilenko

© 2018 Wayne J Vasilenko / Selah Life Ministries

I had been attending a "Men's Fellowship" that met at 6:30am every Wednesday. We met in a small delicatessen that to my joy also serves breakfast. We had no set agenda or formal study guide; we simply let the Holy Spirit lead the way, and just shared from our hearts while enjoying each other's company. There had been a woman that had been stopping by, who usually sat a few tables away from us obviously listening in on our conversations which at some times got pretty deep into God's word. One day as we were breaking up to go our separate ways, this woman came over to a few of us and stated that she was impressed seeing a group of men getting together seemingly dedicated to God's word and asked what church we attended. It turned out that a few of us had some mutual friends with her and she said that she would like to visit our church. Weeks passed and she had never visited so one member of the group asked her why she had not come to pay us a visit. Her reply was that her child was happy at the church where they were attending and that she didn't want to jeopardize her child's willingness to go to church. Most of us who are parents can relate to this, especially if we have, or have had teenage children. We don't want to exasperate (or upset / make angry) our children, after all, the Bible teaches that doesn't it?

Ephesians 6:4 (NIV) ^[4] Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

As a result, many people seek out a church where their children "feel comfortable" but not necessarily the parents, themselves. When the children are happy and willing to attend regularly, they feel that they have fulfilled that Biblical directive. Satan probably doesn't have too much of a problem with the first part of Eph.6:4, but I'm sure he doesn't care for the second part very much. Ironically, that is the very same part of the verse that eludes most people; many don't even seem to notice it. The reason for this is that we, like our children, work mostly through our feelings or "The Physical Realm." Besides, how many people do you know that actually read instructions, the Bible being the ultimate instruction manual? I guess what prompted what I am about to say is that near the end of that men's fellowship, the topic of tradition came up, tradition relating to the church and pertaining to both worship, and biblical teaching. We live in a social structure sometimes referred to as, "A Free Spirited Society." Nothing seems to be black or white anymore but rather neutral gray. People are being driven by their own feelings and opinions rather than what we call absolutes or laws, or traditions. We are repeatedly told that no one has the right to demand others to conform to another's beliefs and with this, I agree. We cannot demand that of anyone, as do some religious groups so prominent in our daily news reports and newspaper headlines. We cannot demand, but we can try to influence others to explore our beliefs. We can do this by challenging their opinions and teachings through debate can we not? In years gone by this statement was true, however the forces of darkness in this world are challenging this. There have been attempts in Congress to pass laws that could ultimately take Christian Ministries off television and the radio. Because of this trend, "Contemporary Churches" are thriving, however most (not all) are proclaiming a watered down version of the Gospel. They are toning down, and in some cases are eliminating the traditional teachings of the Bible to make the Gospel more palatable...easier to swallow as they say for the "Now Generation", and the government I suppose. Some of these churches have even eliminated teaching about prophesy without which Jesus himself is just another man. After all it is prophesy that points to Jesus as being the Messiah! This is a very dangerous situation. Many of us with our children sit under teachings that while they may be sprinkled with a Bible verse or two, they are carefully worded so as not to offend or challenge ones feelings or opinions. Before going on, read what God said about this.

Beware Of the Modern Day Church

By Wayne Vasilenko

© 2018 Wayne J Vasilenko / Selah Life Ministries

Proverbs 18:2 (NIV) ^[2] A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.

Who is this Fool spoken of here? Is it the people who by their lack of commitment to studying God's word on their own who are willing to believe anything or anyone who sounds spiritual or claims to be full of the word of God? Is it people who go to church just so they "feel" they fulfilled their obligation to God for the week with no real interest in drawing closer to the God they profess to know? Read Jesus' words as quoted in the following passage.

John 8:43-45 (NIV)

^[43] Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ^[44] You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ^[45] Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!

Am I saying all contemporary churches are of Satan; of course not! However, what I am saying is this..."if you are attending a church which doesn't take the Word of God at face value and has resorted to a "Watered Down, Feel Good Version" of the scriptures; if your church gives no credence to the teachings and traditions of the Bible and the early church, then beware!" You are in a situation that is extremely vulnerable to deception and false teaching. Once again, so much teaching today is based on feelings rather than facts. Many churches have nothing but "worship services" that more closely resemble a rock concert, complete with out of control fans, rather than the orderly worship of the true and holy God. Some of our children would find themselves very comfortable in a situation like that with all the up-beat music and hype, but I dare say this; they would probably not be any more enlightened as to the truth and wisdom of God than I was as a child in the Catholic Church listening to countless sermons in Latin. Please don't take me wrong...I am not putting down people who are excited about their relationship with God. Moreover, I am not against upbeat worship services; what I am trying to help people understand is you have to balance it all with wisdom and knowledge that can only be attained by getting into God's word and not just on Sunday, but on a regular basis throughout the week. The danger of having a church based solely on that type of worship is what happens to the people when they are out of that environment and have to face Satan's attacks? If they have no root in God's word, where does that leave them? The Bible tells us how to prepare for such encounters.

Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV)

^[10] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ^[11] Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ^[12] For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ^[13] Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ^[14] Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ^[15] and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ^[16] In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ^[17] Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ^[18] And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

The weapons mentioned above work only with faith so how do we attain such faith? Read on...

Beware Of the Modern Day Church

By Wayne Vasilenko

© 2018 Wayne J Vasilenko / Selah Life Ministries

Romans 10:17 (NIV)

^[17] Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

The Bible also says...

Proverbs 4:7 (NIV)

^[7] Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.

By the way this last verse sounds, God puts a high value on wisdom, wouldn't you say? The bottom line is this...We, as Christians have to stop trying to do things in ways that appeal only to our physical and emotional desires. The Bible also says...

Romans 12:2 (NIV) ^[2] Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

The Bible very clearly states that our relationship with God involves knowing his will, and we can only learn of his will with our minds through the knowledge of His word. The bottom line is this. Feelings are what sets us apart from all of the other animals on the planet. The problem is that we allow feelings to control too much in the way of our response to others and our response to God at times. We are so concerned when we see our children roll their eyes or squirm in their seats in church. Right away, you feel as if you're losing them. "Chill Out" as they say! Don't you remember when you did the same before you became aware of the truth of the Bible? When they are rolling their eyes, that says to me they are listening, and if they are listening, that is a victory in itself! Personally, I judge a "good sermon" by how much it makes me squirm and how uncomfortable I become. This usually means that God is at work on me in some way, trying to get me back on the proper course. Remember, God does not conform to the world...we do.

The best way to instill enthusiasm in our children concerning the bible, God, and the church is for we, as parents to be enthusiastic concerning these things ourselves. So let's take inventory of our own time and practices. How much time do we spend in God's word? How important is it to us to make it to church on Sunday morning? To whom or what do we turn to in a time of need or confusion? The best way for someone to lead their child to a relationship with God is to have a solid relationship with God. Lead by example...be consistent...do not compromise. Also, make sure the church you attend does not compromise the word of God for the sake of filling the pews.

Beware of the New Church.

Proverbs 22:28 (NIV)

^[28] Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers.

Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

^[6] Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

Proverbs 22:5 (NIV)

^[5] In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares, but he who guards his soul stays far from them.