

**Just the Red Stuff Part 2**  
**Why Churches Are Failing Us**  
**By Wayne Vasilenko**

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My wife and I are having a hard time finding a home church. Hearing me say this, a lot of people would tend to say that we are the problem; after all there are many churches to choose from out there, and yes I know, none of them is perfect. I agree that there are many churches out there, however being an older Christian not only age wise, but in the Christian sense, (I was Born Again in 1972) my answer to that analysis would be to say that there are also a lot of “Boring” churches out there! There are a lot of “Feel Good Churches,” where people go to satisfy their obligation to be a part of a local church body; however, there is seldom any growth among the attendees in many of these churches. There are also a lot of churches teaching either false or watered down doctrines. Just today I was made aware of a new church right in my area that basically encourages people to sit around and drink beer (or your choice of adult beverage) and sing hymns to God! Yes you read that correctly! Their motto on their web sites reads, “**Sing Loud – Die Happy!**” This is not a joke! Oh, by the way, they encourage you to bring the kids along! I mentioned to the person that made me aware of this “church” that I wonder how many people will eventually “Die Happy” on the way home from this “church!” I was listening to a TV preacher the other day and some startling statistics were brought out in his sermon. It seems that more people these days believe in heaven as opposed to those that believe in hell! There is a ton in information on the subject so I’ll just give one as an example here and you can research it yourself. (Just search “Heaven / Hell Survey” or the like)

“According to recent polls, some 81 percent of adult Americans believe in heaven, and fully 80 percent expect to go there when they die. By comparison, about 61 percent believe in hell, but less than 1 percent think it’s likely they will go there. In other words, a slight majority of Americans still believe hell exists, but genuine fear of hell is almost nonexistent.”

**The Disappearance of Hell** by John MacArthur  
<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/disappearance-hell/>

Another interesting tidbit is that the majority of churches these days do not teach about Prophecy! This is confusing as the Bible is said to be approximately 30% prophecy. There are over 8,000 verses concerning prophecy, some fulfilled, some yet to be fulfilled. Think of this; if it weren’t for Prophecy, Jesus is just another ordinary person. One source I looked at shows over 340 prophecies fulfilled by Jesus. The chance of one person fulfilling even 8 of these prophecies is astronomical! You would stand a better chance of being attacked by a shark in your car on the way to work in the desert! The truth is Jesus was anything but ordinary. So why are portions of the Bible being swept under the rug so to speak? As I mentioned previously, one of the main causes of this is that people have stopped paying attention to “The Red Stuff.” I was Born Again in 1972 and being a new Christian at the time, yes - I had a lot to learn, but I realized early on that in order to learn, I would have to supplement what I heard on Sunday morning with some serious Bible Study; that is if I wanted to really learn about God. I am not talking about just having a “Devotional Study,” you know where you read one or two verses before you go to work and that’s it for the day; I am talking about setting aside some time to really study God’s Word. It doesn’t have to be every day, but I believe a couple of days a week of serious study where you really dig into the Bible is a whole lot better than a daily ritual which tends to turn into a religious obligation rather than One on One time with God through His Word. Plowing through a devotional booklet might make you feel good about yourself, but are you really getting anything out of

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it? It is obvious that over time our understanding of the Bible has been distorted through both misunderstanding or by being taken out of context. Another contributing factor is simply neglect... people don't read the Bible at all, or they don't really believe it is true. More people read "about the Bible" than those who read the Bible by itself! This is in my opinion a good reason to concentrate on "The Red Stuff," the teachings of Jesus himself. In Part 1 of this series I left off at Matt 4:4 dealing with the "Temptation of Jesus" which is familiar to most people. What we learned is that things we consider important are not always important as they seem to be. People get so caught up in the things of this world, they neglect God's Word. As I mentioned before, Jesus was hungry when Satan tempted Him to turn the stones into bread, but I think what Jesus was illustrating here went beyond just overcoming hunger. Jesus was pointing us back to God's Word which He expounded on later in Matthew chapter six...

**Matthew 6:25-29 (NKJV)**

**<sup>25</sup> "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? <sup>28</sup> So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; <sup>29</sup> and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.**

Here Jesus is showing us the connection between knowing and trusting God's Word as opposed to just reading a few verses now and then. Satan plants seeds of doubt and worry in our minds concerning our needs all the time, while God says, "Trust Me, I know what you need." Hunger is a big motivator, so when we constantly worry about where our next meal is coming from, we may be tempted to perhaps work more than we have to resulting in us neglecting our spouse and family; this will be the result if we don't really believe that God is the ultimate provider of our needs. This also does not mean that we just sit back and wait for manna to fall from heaven; on the contrary God makes it clear that we should be doing something to obtain the provision He has provided for us. We've all heard it said "Everyone has a price" referring to a breaking point where someone will forego their moral or ethical stand in favor of personal gain or power. This is what was going on while Satan continued to tempt Jesus; he wasn't able to get to Jesus through His hunger, so now he goes after Jesus by challenging His relationship to God the Father.

**Matthew 4:5-6 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: '*He shall give His angels charge over you,*' and, '*In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.*' "

This is a situation every Christian can relate to. Proving your faith through your actions is something that can be easy for someone who is dependent on Religion. We have talked many times in the past about religion and all the rules attached to it. Following the rules of a religion or doctrine is relatively easy as opposed to truly demonstrating one's faith in God. Rules made by man tend to be

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easier to obey in a relative sense as opposed to rules made by the Creator who doesn't grade on a curve. Also, people in general tend to like to see other people "get what they deserve" but think for a moment where you would stand if God, right now, would give you what you deserve! Praise God for His Forgiveness and Grace!

**Ephesians 2:4-5 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...

It is true that there is nothing we can do to earn our salvation, but what about this passage?

**James 2:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

Is there a contradiction here? It sounds like there is some connection between faith and works, but what is that connection? When Satan tempted Jesus to throw Himself down he was in essence saying to Jesus, "Prove your faith." He uses this same temptation on us perhaps more than any other. Many churches and religions tempt their followers in the same way; they come up with all kinds of ways for you to "prove your faith." Some churches challenge people to pick up poisonous snakes or drink poison to prove their faith! They base this on this verse:

**Mark 16:18 (NIV)**

<sup>18</sup> they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

Jesus, when tempted like this answered Satan by saying in **Matthew 4:7 (NKJV)** the following:

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "It is written again, '*You shall not tempt the LORD your God.*' "

This is good advice to all of us! God will protect us from harm if we trust Him to, however this does not mean that we can go around putting on shows for people, demonstrating our "faith." A month or two prior to this writing, a pastor from one of these "Snake Handler Churches" was bitten in the neck by a Rattle Snake. This man was lucky to survive... Apparently his father didn't have the same amount of faith as his son... his father died of a snake bite a few years earlier doing the same demonstration of faith, nor should we say foolishness. The works mentioned in the Book of James refer to the things people do as a **result** of their Love and Appreciation for what Jesus has done for them, not as a means to attain salvation. **Do not tempt the Lord your God!**