

26. Defection, deception or determination

March 20, 2011

In last 11 years, many people had visited our church, but didn't stay. One of the many reasons might be because of my heavy Southern Swedish accent, ya?

Our assistant pastor Jack Laverty often told other Calvary Chapel people whom we met at the AZ Calvary Chapel Men's Conference, "Our pastor Joonho speaks in tongue with his Swedish accent and none of our congregation can understand him. So the Holy Spirit has to give us the spiritual gift of interpretation of tongue so that we can understand him." A smart aleck, Jack!

Since we are talking about pastor Jack, do you know what you call pastor Jack in the middle of a corrugated container?

Seriously, even though I don't speak perfect English, if a person wants to hear the Word of God as I teach, he or she shouldn't have a bit of a problem understanding me. Actually, some people have told me that they have to concentrate more during my teachings and they learn more from God's Word.

If the Lord could use a donkey to speak to the people He wanted to communicate with, He certainly can use me.

Back to another reason some people don't stay with our church, maybe, just maybe, they might be uncomfortable with the truth of God that comes forth from this pulpit. It is a typical way for many people to handle the truth – "Avoid the truth at all cost." They think that if they avoid the truth, it would go away or change its way to the way they like.

Though I don't speak perfect English, you have to admit that I don't compromise the truth of God for the sake of popularity or whatever some others go after.

This morning we find that the multitude that was attracted to Jesus as a person and impressed by His ability to spellbind them with His miracles and rhetoric, but when the points of His sermon got sharp, these thin-skinned followers recoiled and retreated to the backside, and the majority of them walked away from Jesus – avoiding the truth at all cost.

A. NOT HARD TO UNDERSTAND, BUT HARD TO ACCEPT

John 6:60-61 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" 61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?

Our Lord Jesus' teaching is not hard to understand but hard to accept once we understand it. The Jewish religious leaders both misunderstood His words and rejected them.

They were offended by what He taught. The Greek word for 'offend' is 'skandalizo' with which we get 'scandal.' They couldn't accept the fact that Jesus came down from heaven; they couldn't accept that His radical illustration of eating His flesh and drinking His blood which was nothing more than a figure of speech, because they already decided in their hearts to reject Him.

Isn't that true? The real reason people don't want to accept the truth of God is that they don't like it and they don't want it. Even if the truth stands right in front of their eyes, they would say, "We don't see any truth," because they don't want to face the truth. They'd rather believe fabricated fairy tales that give them false and temporary comfort than face the truth and do what is right in the sight of God.

People are all for hearing the teachings about heaven, peace, comfort, forgiveness, grace, and the love of God. They are all true and important subjects in the Bible. But when they hear the teachings about hell, sin, repentance, and the judgment of God, they get offended.

B. THE TWISTED-FEEL-GOOD-COMPROMISED-CHRISTIANITY

Here is a good example of the "twisted-feel-good-compromised-Christianity" by Rob Bell. He is the founding pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church located in Grand Rapids, Michigan where 8000-10000 people attend on Sundays. Don't be fooled by the attendance number. You will now hear from his own mouth. Please pay attention.

I am sure that you can recall what he just asked:

"Gandhi is in hell? Someone knows it for sure?"

Answer: With the full authority of the Bible, yes, he is in hell with torment and regret. He probably is the finest man in hell. It is not because he was a horrible criminal, but because he knowingly rejected Jesus as his Savior and Lord. We are not sinners because we sin; rather we sin because we are sinners from the beginning.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Rob Bell continued:

"Will only a few selected people make it to heaven and will billions and billions people will burn forever in hell?"

Answer: Those billions and billions of people individually made and will make their own conscious decisions not to accept the way of Jesus for their salvation. The result is they automatically choose to send themselves to hell.

Bell said: "The primary, the center of the Gospel of Jesus is that God is going to send you to hell unless you believe in Jesus. So what subtly caught and taught is that Jesus rescues from God. But what kind of God is that we need to be rescued from this God? How can that God ever be good? How can that be a Good News?"

Answer: I have to give it to Rob Bell. His talk is really smooth, eloquent, and sleek as a snake. Please don't think that I am going after another poor Christian brother with malice in my heart. I am merely revealing his cunning deception and pointing out the dangerous poison.

Rob Bell made God sound like this vengeful One in heaven who wants to punish these poor human beings for no reason. No, not in a million years. These poor human ancestors rejected the Lord from the Garden of Eden with their disobedience and pride. Thus we all are born with our sinful nature. But because God so loved the entire human race that He sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to rescue them from their own sins and penalty of their sins, not to rescue from this mean and angry God like Rob Bell lies through his teeth.

This kind of anti-christianity is not unusual. They have a form of godliness but they deny its power. They are henchmen of satan and they have one purpose and one

purpose only – leading unbelievers and carnal Christians away from God and doom to hell. Rob Bell and his Emergent Church cohorts are wolves in sheep’s clothing.

Listen, Jesus is not in the “making-people-feel-comfortable” business, rather the “saving-wretched-people-like-us” business. So am I, since I work for Him.

C. THE PREACHER WHO LOST HIS CONGREGATION

John 6:62-66 What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. 65 And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.” 66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

The Jewish leaders had complained that the concept of Jesus’ being the true bread that comes down from heaven and eating His flesh were incomprehensible. What Jesus is saying here is that if they didn’t understand what He told them about the Bread of Life, how they are going to understand Him ascending to heaven later.

It is the Holy Spirit who gives life to new believers. He continually calls us to focus on spiritual realities of Christian walk, not vain fleshly things.

The result of this message was the loss of most of the multitude who followed Him around. They went back to the old life, the old religion, and the old hopeless situation. It was no surprise to our Lord Jesus, because He knows the hearts of all people.

Please note this in your heart. Our God is not impressed with numbers of attendance of a church, unlike many Christians in America. They think that the bigger is the better. If Jesus was really concerned about having a big crowd, He would stop them from leaving by doing more catering service miracles.

Many churches encourage people to follow Jesus for fleshly motives, promoting Jesus as a “product” to “fix” our life. The Seeker-Sensitive churches, the churches that teach the prosperity gospel, and the churches like that Rob Bell pastors are the cases in point. But those who come to Jesus under such a sales and marketing approach will not be satisfied with what they experience in their churches.

The following week these people want more excitement and something new. They constantly look for new things, yet still thirst. Because they do not have the Living Water of Jesus. They are like a man who is lost in the sea and dying of thirst. Once he drinks the salty sea water, his thirst might be quenched for a short time, but the salt would make him crave for more water than ever before. The man would die in thirst even though he is surrounded by tons of water, not drinkable water.

Let me say this again, our God is NOT impressed with large number congregation, rather He desires the depth of our hearts to follow, learn, obey and most of all love Him.

D. THE TWELVE WHO REMAINED WITH JESUS, MINUS ONE

John 6:67-71 Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the

words of eternal life. 69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" 71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

The thinning crowds did noting to thin the determination of Christ's closest disciples. Rather, their conviction became firmer than ever. Of course, minus one, Judas the betrayer.

Do you ever think about Judas? In modern terms, Judas was on staff with Jesus. He went bad. I guess you can call it 'staff infection.' But everybody thought he was right on. He fooled everyone, except God, because He sees everyone's heart.

The Lord still searches the motives of all who follow Him. Ask yourself what your true motive is to follow Jesus? – is it spiritual excitement? Or is it a spiritual prestige? No one can speak for you. You know your heart. And God also know your heart, actually, better than you.

E. ASK YOURSELF

Which category do you fall into? Is your life like the grumbling multitude that ends up in one of open defection? Or is your life like Judas – one of subtle deception? Or is it like Peter and other disciples – one of firm determination?

F. ONE MORE THOUGHT

In one of his many teachings, Pastor Chuck Smith taught the pastors who attended one of the Senior Pastors Conference in Murrieta, CA, "Don't be concerned about people who do not stay in your church. God can move them to different places for various reasons. If a group of them is leaving your church with contention in their hearts, consider it "blessed subtraction."