



## Set Your Affections.....

In our last teaching we had quoted the text in Colossians 3:1 which states, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Referring to our stand as a child of God, the point to be made was the difference in being someone who is "Risen with Christ" whose life is one of which is "Seeking those things which are above". As I scan the landscape of recent events, it is all too clear that verse 2, of this same chapter, is more of a fleeting thought than an active pursuit. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth, this is MORE than just a suggestion if you are risen with Christ. These are marching orders.

These are steps that we need to take every day. How else will we be able to grow and positively affect the world which is constantly and consistently sliding down the path of unrighteousness. It seems that more and more of those who are supposed to be "Salt and Light" have, as Matthew 5:13 said, lost our savor. It talks also of hiding our light under a bushel, however, my question is what light are we shining to begin with? We are supposed to be salt and light, but it looks as if the world is winning on every hand and at times with help from the church. I know that some of this is my perception, although, statistically there are some things that will validate my belief, (please do research, it's out there) but I only have a short space to state my argument.

I know it may seem that I am being legalistic, judgmental, and hard on folks; and yeah, I am, but it is in light of the Word of God. Look around and see what the church has done and is doing in our society. Not every church but a great many have fallen away from the doctrine of Christ. We are not setting our affections on things above, not at all! Churches at times look like and act like the very world that we are supposed to be separated from. How can we shine the true light of Christ and win them resembling them? We have decided that it is acceptable to mimic the things that look like everyone else with an obligatory "WEAK" spin and inclusion of some sort of gospel. We are not supposed to act like, look like, smell like, or even have a shadow of what the world is and what it is doing. So..... I am not against moving forward or being progressive, I am, however, against doing it outside of the gospel and leading of the Holy Ghost.

We are supposed to be different, so why are there leaders who are constantly trying to find ways to look like a dying world? When we get away from the basic tenants of the Word, we end up trying to make it work using chicken wire and duct tape. When there is no Holy Ghost, it's just whatever we can come up with in order to make a name, fill the pews, fill the offering baskets, etc. with enough salvation to feel good about it.

What's funny is we were told to be separate from the dying world in order to bring life. I have never seen the world trying to look like the church unless it was to mock it. So, how can we with good conscience continually find more ways to look less like Christ and more like the clubs, organizations, bands, etc. and still say we hold the integrity of the Gospel? It ain't possible! Jesus wanted a distinct bride, not one who keeps running back to her old ways like Hosea's wife. When we as leaders introduce or allow activities, program or methodologies to be included in the church, they had better have a true ministry purpose. Most of the time a good idea by someone is so easily accepted without even considering the cost. Yeah there are lots of things the church can and should do, we just need to make sure it lines up with the Word of God. Not lining up after we have hammered the square peg into a round hole.

Ambition seems to be more of a guide and not the vision of God. So consider as a leader what your ministry has allowed and, what has become the norm that didn't require the Holy Ghost. Of course, most will say they were led by the Holy Ghost to do what they have done, however, if the lines are blurred, I would be concerned. Let me explain; if you started a drama ministry "to the glory of God" and to "keep it real" there are compromising situations and the use of foul language, then is it really to glorify God or showcase your talent and ability to slip SIN in. A ministry of music should not contain that which is not bringing glory to God. I don't have a problem with any of these ministries, but I do have a problem when they mix it up with doses of "keeping it real" and still stating it is from and for God. I know we want to be all things to all people to win some, but I guarantee you, Paul didn't play a little smooth jazz on the pulpit nor did he have to keep it real by using foul language.

So what is wrong with us today who don't have any issues with these types of ministries? Better do a heart check! Be ye holy for I Am holy never ended. Presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice is not out of style, nor does God

need our contribution of worldly activities, ideas, practices or the like, in order to win souls.

As we let things go on as they are, I see why there is a statistic that says the church in America has grown by only 1% over the past 20 years. So, does the world need more of the world seasoned with Jesus, or as a drug user may demand, does it need the un-cut, straight stuff! Therefore, when we keep dumbing down the church by our continual evolution into a religious, yet worldly entity, how can we make or be the needed change?

I will catch flack simply because someone will be wise enough to refute what I say in a believable way. I do caution them, because anyone who can support, the lack of commitment to God, the turning away from the things of God, the transformation of the church into a carnival, needs to check their priorities. These are harsh words, but when I last took a look, there was someone out there with the assignments to kill, to steal, and to destroy. This assignment is not necessarily coming from outside the church, but it was introduced at the door, welcomed in, got acquainted with the folks and now resides in the church. Blindness has prevailed and because of the things that were gained by selling out, it blocked the accurate view of godly reality.

I don't know how much more time we have, but by the rate which we are going, there are great days of sorrow ahead for the church. It will be hard to stand in the day of adversity because we have let go of the real reason we are here. We have lost our way and some are not trying to find a way that we can all get back. It has become a great comfort for some to not be under the hard core outdated rules of the dictatorship known as Christianity. Therefore, a look-alike, a knock-off has been in operation and has taken prominence in the modern church,

The constant demand on our time internally and externally has commanded other means by which we pursue God or even run His church. In the place of prayer and fasting, there are countless conferences that claim to have the answer to your problems and promise blessings. There's no issues with conferences, concerts or special guests when they fall in line with the local church's vision; when they take the place of clear and direct guidance from the Holy Spirit, that's an issue. I realize that if I am not praying, studying and/or fasting, then I can't hear from God and that leaves me to my own devices. I can imagine or manufacture a "good idea" that I introduce to the church. My desperate actions are the result of either not hearing God because I am not waiting on Him or, I am not in position to get direction from Him. Either way,

we look like Saul when Samuel was late. He took it upon himself to conduct the sacrifice in the place of the priest. (I Samuel 13:1-13)

To sum it all up, we need to be seeking God continually about every aspect of our church, ministry, calling, etc. What is God saying or not saying to us about everything? When He is not speaking, wait. Stop before you mimic the world and try stuff that has no heavenly value. Get into the word of God and let Him guide you. Do not rely on the set pattern of mega or micro churches, but rather seek God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. He does so much, want to operate in our meetings collectively and individually. We have to get rid of the hindrances and rely on God alone for everything. So, "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col 3:2). No better place to be!

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