



SAFE HARBOR

A Publication of Cove Fellowship Ministries
William E. Lang Jr., Director

VOLUME 14.3

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2016

The Message the Church Projects

There is a church that I pass by which like many churches has a message board sitting out on the road. This is by no means extraordinary. In the time that I have resided in the area there has been three pastors at the church. What I find somewhat disturbing is the short messages that are posted there. Some are nice. Some are questionable. Some are funny. Some are sad.

While the sign boards' messages are often witty, they obscure the message of the Gospel. Jesus died for our sins. He became the perfect man while also being the perfect God. He wept, cried, laughed and loved even up the hill to Calvary. His message to his followers was to take up the cross and follow him through the trials and tribulations of life as well as the joys of knowing that we are doing the Master's will.

Contrary to many beliefs the message of the church is not one of political position whether it be liberal or conservative. It is not a message of wealth or prosperity because one believes in Christ. Nor is it a message of acceptance of behaviors contrary to Scripture under the guise of a faulty definition of the word love. Nor is it the results of a faulty construct by non-Christian philosophies.

You see we generally want to be liked and fit into the world we live in. So as a church we decide to separate our faith from our day to day existence. To do this we excuse ourselves and often refuse to speak the message of the Gospel or even to hide faith in the closet of a church building.

Consider the third world nations where persecution is the norm as Christians are ostracized, tortured, imprisoned and martyred because they have taken the title of Christian and the life which sets them apart. Can the same be said in our western culture? It is so easy and even acceptable to claim a faith and then live as we wish.

The message that is the peculiar property of the Church is found in The Word "who was with God and who was God". This word became flesh and lived among us not as an emanation or

manifestation of God but as God becoming human in every way except for the absence of sin within. The appellation “Second Adam” is most appropriate. For as Adam as the primogenitor of the human race was created in the image of God, the image that was lost when he sinned, so Jesus came to be the primogenitor of a holy people in whom the image of was restored. “In him was life and the light was the light of men.

This is the message that is meant to be shouted from the mountaintops. Jesus Christ is the very word of God made flesh to bring about the salvation of God’s Creation by establishing His Kingdom of which one becomes a member when the Living Christ is allowed into their hearts through faith and repentance. The promise is a new life in which the hope of glory, Christ, is within us by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

Our message should be for all that are laboring in this life to find the rest that Jesus gives. Let the lives of the believers be the message we give to the world.

Reflections

In our world we find that Christians are being persecuted, oppressed and enslaved in many cultures. This includes the United States where spineless politicians, compromising preachers, all forms of media assail the beliefs of the Christian. Unfortunately the reaction of many is to hide in the sanctuaries of the church building. Yet our world moans about the lack of decency, moral responsibility and a decadence decline of principles and order.

We forget that this world has not returned to any sort of Edenic perfection but rather continues to disintegrate as we witness the daily news stories highlighting the depravity of mankind. I would liken our present day to the time of the Judges that we chronicled in Scripture. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. The people forgot the God who had brought them out of Egypt and gave them the land flowing with milk and honey. They chased other gods of wood, gold, silver whose worship was contrary to the worship of the Living Lord. Sexual misconduct abounded along with unbridled greed for that which was forbidden. Power was given to the most corrupt and a chaos settled over the land.

As the people cried out against the oppression of cruel nations, The Lord sent judges to bring a salvation to the land. However human saviors, even if God ordained are only human. They err and eventually pass away. When that happened the people reverted to their previous perversions.

It is only by returning to God, repenting and seeking the power of the Holy Spirit that the American church can stand up, witness to the truth and lead the nation to a recovery of faith. You see the persecuted in the third world understand the power of the Holy Spirit to strengthen and encourage them in the most horrible of trials. To stand strong requires the will to be strong in living a life that glorifies God every moment of the day.

Words of Promise

Isaiah 40:28-31 English Standard Version (ESV)

²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
²⁹ He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases strength.
³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
³¹ but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.

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