

# The Futile Folly of a Feel-Good Faith

*Imagine the public outrage and demands for justice that would ring out if it were learned that a local physician had seen thousands of patients suffering from cancer and, instead of treating them, sent them all home to die with false assurances of hope and health. As horrible as such a scenario would be, an even worse reality plays out each and every week at houses of worship which substitute a feel-good faith for the life-saving message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Many denominations have adopted, or at least been greatly influenced by, the sophistry of man-made doctrines whose aim is to bring in large crowds by appealing to their desire to worship and live in a way that pleases themselves, not God. One well-known evangelical leader of such a denomination in southern California surveyed local neighborhoods to ask the residents what they were looking for in a church. On the basis of that information, not the Bible, he determined what he would preach and not preach, how worship services would be conducted, how one would be admitted to his church, and other aspects of the church's functions.

That church and many others like it have adopted techniques and methods, such as the following, that are intended to please the congregants and keep them coming to worship services:

- Only positive messages are heard from the church's leadership. Much is said about God's grace and love and how He wants His people to prosper financially, have self-esteem, and improve their personal relationships, with little or nothing said about sin and how to overcome it.
- Worship services are contemporary, non-threatening and offer the kind of surround-

ings to which congregants are accustomed in society. Many feature theatrical performances, jumbo TV screens, rock bands, well-lit stages and other trappings of show business.

■ Dress is casual for those leading worship and for congregants; ties, suits and dresses give way to jeans, shorts and t-shirts. A come-as-you-are attitude corresponds to the church's flawed teaching of "God will accept you as you are."

As a result, many denominations now function more as "thermometers," using soothing, false words of comfort based on society's flawed morals, than as "thermostats," which preach not only of God's grace and mercy, but also of His justice and vengeance on those who refuse to repent of sin. "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come. For men will be lovers of themselves...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Jesus saw and condemned feel-good religion. "These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men," (Matthew 15:8-9).

The word "sin" is very unpopular today, even in many houses of worship, despite the fact that it is the spiritual cancer that hurts or kills the body in this life, and kills the soul in the hereafter. Just as an honest and trustworthy physician diagnoses and offers remedies for cancer, so too will an honest and trustworthy minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ diagnose the problem of sin and recommend the Lord's remedy for it, which is sorely needed for reasons such as these:

- Sin's physical effects include weakness, diseases, unnecessary accidents and acts of intentional harm to one's self and others.
- Sin takes a heavy toll on the psyche. "There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked," (Isaiah 57:21).
- Unrepented sin ultimately causes the death of the soul. The prophecy of the Apostle John reveals the end of the sinful soul: "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books... Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire," (Rev 20:12-15).

## THE CURE FOR SIN

The wages of sin (i.e., what we have earned through our transgressions) is death (Romans 6:23). God is infinitely holy and just (Isaiah 6:3; Habakkuk 1:13) and He cannot allow anyone in His presence who is not holy. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord," (Hebrews 12:14).

Therefore, God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to the earth to die for our sins (I Corinthians 15:3, John 3:16), that we may have hope of eternal life. Through His death, and through our acceptance of the perfect gift of salvation, we will not only live healthier and more joyful lives on this earth, we will also gain the eternal glory of a home with God hereafter.

Friends, if you are tired of futile, feel-good preaching, there is still a place where you can hear the truth of the gospel spoken in love. We invite you to worship with us and learn of God's plan for a joyful life, free from the cancer of sin.

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