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Following Our Own Counsel: The Deception Of Immorality

Psalm 81:11-12 (ESV), ***“But My people did not listen to My voice... So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels.”***

Back during the Trial of the Century known as the O.J. Simpson trial, as the evidence mounted against O.J. and as he continued to deny his guilt, I remember asking myself; “I wonder if he really believes that he is innocent?” Let me say at the beginning that I believe O.J. Simpson was guilty of murdering his wife Nicole and her friend Ron Goldman. I believe this despite the fact that he was found “not guilty.” I believe this because the evidence against him was overwhelming. This was not an easy truth for me to digest because as a little boy O.J. Simpson was one of my favorite football players. The thought occurred to me that in order for him to sleep at night he must have begun to believe his own lies. Sometimes when we are confronted with the overwhelming nature of our own guilt we lie to ourselves and we then begin to believe those lies. The old adage that if you tell a lie enough times people will begin to believe it applies to us as individuals as well.

This past week there has been quite a bit of coverage concerning the Kansas House of Representatives passing a bill that would have made it legal for a business (such as bakers, photographers, and florists) to deny services to same sex couples. The intention in my writing this today is not to debate the merits or demerits of this piece of legislation. The intention of this is to address the underlying issue here. The underlying issue is not (as the media would have us believe) an issue of rights or freedom the real issue is truth vs. deception.

I am constantly astounded at how in just a few short years our culture has accepted same sex marriage and therefore redefined marriage. The issue isn't just homosexuality and same sex marriage, the issue is that we as a people (God's people not Americans) have quit listening to God and we stopped listening a long time ago.

In Psalm 81:11 it says, “But My people did not listen to My voice...” Today in churches all across this nation of ours there is precious little serious Biblical preaching. Instead what many of our churches proclaim each week is a feel good message that is centered on us instead of centered on the righteousness of God, our sin, and our desperate need for Him. In far too many pulpits a god is proclaimed that is a god of our own creation.

What is the result then of our consumption of these false teachings and the construction of a god in our own image? Psalm 81:12 says, ***“So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels.”*** What is really going on in many churches is the worship of self. We created and worship a god who does not confront us in our sin but rather makes us feel good about ourselves and gives us some keys to successful living. When this happens then we begin to believe anything no matter how contrary to Scripture and common decency (and sense) it might be.

In Romans 1:22-23 Paul wrote of this very same issue; the abandonment of truth for a lie: ***“Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and***

crawling creatures.” We are truly fools if we believe that we can ignore God’s Word and ignore the fact that sin is sin.

The common mantra that we hear almost daily now is *“but I’m born this way.”* Rosaria Butterfield on The Gospel Coalitions website in an article entitled “You Are What- And How – You Read” writes of how she was caught up in the sin of homosexuality before she was a believer and she says this about that argument: “From God’s point of view, homosexuality is an identify-rooted ethical outworking of a worldview transgression inherited by all through original sin. It’s so original to the identity of she who bears it that it feels like it precedes you; and as a vestige of original sin, it does. We are born this way. But the bottom line hit me right between the eyes: homosexuality, whether it feels natural or not, is a sin.”

Let’s not kid ourselves; sin often feels right and it makes us believe on some level that this is *who* we are. We are all *“born this way”* because we are all born with iniquity in our hearts. We all like to believe that the ultimate measure of our humanity is whether or not we are “happy.” Just today I was speaking with a fellow pastor and he was relating how he had spoken with a young man who was suicidal recently. This young man had left his wife three years prior and moved in with his girlfriend. Now this same girlfriend had *left* him and moved in with someone else. The question he asked my friend was, “I thought God wanted to me to be happy and I was happy?”

To this man his sin felt right and for a season he was no doubt very happy; but what of his wife and children? Were they happy as well? Just because something feels good or feels right does not mean that it is not a sin. We are all stained with the natural inclination to sin and sin feels normal much of the time but that does not make it right in the eyes of God.

The issue of homosexuality and same sex marriage has been dominating the headlines now for most of this past year as it seems that almost daily same sex marriage is being legalized in yet another state. So what is the Christ follower to do? The Christ follower will have a sincere desire to befriend the homosexual and share the truth of the gospel with them. The Christ follower wants the homosexual to come to their church so that they will hear the gospel clearly and openly proclaimed. The Christ follower will love the homosexual just as our Lord and Savior loved so many sinners in such radical ways.

What does it mean to “love” someone who is in sin? It means that we will lovingly but uncompromisingly share the gospel truth with them and the truth is that we are all sinners and sometimes the truth hurts. But despite our sin John 3:16 says that ***“God so loved the world, that He sent His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him shall perish but have eternal life.”***

Let us not shy away from the truth in love because the truth is what saves the sinners soul. Romans 1:16 says, ***“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”***