

September 6, 2016

The False Gospel of The American Church

Isaiah 3:8, “For Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their deeds are against the LORD, defying His glorious presence.”

The book of Isaiah is full of prophetic statements like the one cited here. This verse is a prophecy concerning the fall of Jerusalem which occurred in 586 B.C. and this was only a partial fulfillment of this prophecy. The final fulfillment awaits the times just prior to Christ’s Second Coming. But I also believe that this verse unfortunately has application to the church in America today.

Recently I have been reading a book entitled “Homespun Gospel: The Triumph of Sentimentality In Contemporary American Evangelicalism” by Todd M. Brenneman. This book is a sociological study of modern American Evangelicalism and has confirmed many of the concerns I have about the church in modern America.

My concern for some time now has been that there is much that goes on in the American Church that has precious little grounding in Scripture. Yet, we just accept many of these practices as Biblical when in reality they are merely traditional; and there is a difference between the two. The result has been a church that I believe is largely lost... Yes I mean “lost” in the unsaved way. And because the church is lost we are largely ineffective in our culture.

For years, at least in my life time and certainly longer, the church has declared a watered down version of the Gospel that has led to untold numbers of false conversions. What is the evidence for this? Well let’s just use the convention which I am a member of which is the Southern Baptist Convention. The SBC is the largest protestant denominational organization in the world with 15-16 million people being members in SBC churches in the United States, North America, and all over the world. Yet on any given Sunday there are only 4-5 million people in attendance at SBC churches? You see I believe one of the evidences of genuine salvation is a deep and abiding desire to be in fellowship with other believers, to worship God in song, and to sit under the faithful proclamation of God’s Word. It’s very difficult to do that when you are not in church, have no fellowship with believers, rarely if ever open God’s Word, and never hear a gospel sermon.

We have substituted emotionalism and sentimentality for the truth of God’s Word and this is nowhere more evident than in how we evangelize. Most evangelical Christians believe that a simple profession of faith whether that be the recitation of “the sinners prayer”, or walking forward at the end of church or at a revival is enough for salvation. This is why if you have ever had the experience of evangelizing you find that most people when asked what makes them a Christian will say something along the lines of: “I prayed the sinners prayer” or “I was baptized when I was 10” or “I filled out a card at Billy Graham Crusade” etc... Yet there lives bear no evidence whatsoever of the marvelous changing power of the Holy Spirit. This is why we have

to be very careful (while not discouraging) with a child who makes a profession of faith. It is very easy to get a child to make some sort of profession of faith.

Unfortunately we have taught far too many “believers” that all it takes to be saved is to believe a certain set of facts about Jesus. The Bible tells us otherwise, in fact in James 2:19 it says, **“You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder!”** Satan and his demons believe the very same facts about Christ that most evangelicals do but they do not obey Him. You see obedience always follows true saving faith. Ephesians 2:10 says, **“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”**

We have in large measure created a god in our own image rather than worship the God of the Bible. My prayer for us as Christians is that we will return to the God of the Bible and that we will begin to govern our churches and evangelize the lost in the Biblical model and not by what we think “works”, or by what makes us feel good, or by what we have always done. Our God is a rational being and we must return to that if we are to be faithful to His Word. 1 Corinthians 14:33 says, **“For God is not a God of confusion but of peace...”**