

EXHORTATION: Pick 'N' Choose Gospel?

As a child I learnt a valuable lesson while observing the native hen rear her hatchlings. Once the chicks hatched, they began to feed in earnest under the mother's diligent guidance. I observed that the hen would make semi-purposive pecks at food and the young chicks would follow suit knowing that mommy wants them to eat that stuff. Surprisingly, every now and then, she would make the same motions towards tiny rocks, sand and other indigestible debris. When a chick takes in such particles, it may wonder, "that sure was hard to swallow, I wonder what mommy is doing." Yet, it knows that mommy is right because the last time the ugly hawk dove down, it took off only with their stubborn little brother who refused to do what mommy had said. Later on, I found out in my biology class that the stones lodged in the chick's muscular gizzard and helped to grind the food particles during the process of digestion. It became clear that if the chicks were to be adequately nourished, they had to swallow the stones.

What if the chicks decided that mommy did not know what she was doing and picked up only what was soft and easy to swallow? Your guess is as good as mine. The scripture (2 Timothy 4:3-4) indicates that in the last days men will not receive sound doctrine (i.e. the deep truths of the Word of God) but will pick and chose that which they find comfortable. Isaiah prophesied (Isaiah 4:1) that seven women (i.e. professing Christians) will hold the garment of a man (i.e. Christ) and will say to Him, "we will eat our food (i.e. imbibe our doctrines) and wear our own apparel (i.e. maintain our ways of life); only let us be called by your name (i.e. Christians) to take away our shame." When one reads this, the tendency is to think only of homosexuals in the Church, however, this spirit has tainted expositions on a fundamental truth such as God's love. God's love is often presented as always soothing and accommodating, irrespective of our failures to attain His expectations. However, God's love is not just affectionate, forgiving, and constant, but it is also corrective (Hebrews 12:6). It is goal-oriented with the purpose to bring the Church (just as the hen does to her chicks) from infancy to spiritual maturity (2 Corinthians 3:18; Hebrews 6:1-3). The marks on a true and upright servant of God also come from rebukes, chastisements, and scourges. If God's corrective hand has never scourged someone, then such a person needs to go to Calvary (Hebrews 12:7-8).

How does partial gospel come about? Christ said (John 16:33) that in this world we will meet trials but we should be encouraged and remain full of joy because He has overcome the world for us. Yet, if in the midst of intimidating situations, we yield to unbelief, then fear takes over and leads us to make ungodly compromises, and we become slaves (Romans 6:16). While slaves to this world, we lose the liberty that the gospel of Jesus Christ provides (Galatians 5:5), and further become ridden with guilt. If we do not repent of our sins and seek God's deliverance, our need to find peace and to resolve the conflicts within us leads us to make adjustments in our prior values. From then on, we attempt to rationalize our new behaviors by emphasizing only aspects of the scripture that do not conflict with them, and partial gospel is born. Worse still, we proceed to look for people who hold similar views and teachers who teach them. Our greatest demise in this decline from the truth is when we find a version of the Bible that was translated in such a way that the true meaning of those "uncomfortable" passages of scriptures are lost.

Apostle Paul declared it, and I whole-heartedly agree that we should not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is the unabridged or the *uncut* gospel, the "eat of my flesh and drink of my blood" gospel (i.e. putting on the Lord Jesus Christ [John 6:53-56]), the "cut off your foot and pluck out your eye" gospel (i.e. self-denial [Mark 9:45-48]), the "neither do I condemn you go and sin no more" gospel (i.e. being compassionate without ungodly compromise [John 8:3-11]), and the "be ye therefore perfect even as your heavenly Father... is perfect" gospel (i.e. sticking to God's standards [Matthew 5:48]). Because, this gospel is the POWER of God that is available to save, sanctify and establish men in His kingdom. The whole truth of God is what will bring us fulfillment!

PRAYER TOPICS

1. Glory be to God for His great patience towards us His children! Because of His longsuffering love, we who desire Him are confident that we will attain the deepest level of communion with Him.
2. Are we caught in the strong grip of ungodly compromises? This is yet an opportunity for deliverance. Tell the Lord that we have sinned against Him and have turned from His ways. Let us make sincere decisions to turn away from our besetting sins, and then seek His deliverance. Cry out, "Lord, forgive me, deliver me, save me, for I am yours!"
3. What has the devil stolen from us while in bondage under him? Has he stolen our peace, our marriages and our dreams? It is time to get them all back. Take authority in the name of the Lord Jesus and bind the devil. Then command his grip on you, your family, health, finances and other resources, to be broken (see II Corinthians 10:4-5, Ephesians 6:10-18.)
4. Pray that the susceptibility to false or partial doctrines be stemmed in our lives. Let us bring ourselves under subjection to Christ and render the ineffective fleshy lusts, pride, and the seductive influences of this world on us. Ask the Lord to fill us with a hunger for His truth at the turn of the year, for it is when we abide in Him that we can truly prosper.

5. Pray for those who have derailed from the truth, and whose lives have been destroyed by ungodly compromises and deceptions, that the Lord would intervene and open their hearts to the life-giving gospel of Jesus Christ.

God bless you.

Dr. Mfon Cyrus-David, MBBS, MS
The Newfoundland Foundation Inc.
Sugar Land, TX.