

BIBLICAL VS. RESPECTABLE CHRISTIANITY

There are two kinds of Christianity that exist today, especially in America. You have Biblical Christianity and Respectable Christianity; or as Ian Paisley calls it, and rightfully so, Fundamentalism vs. Apostasy. As any one that believes the Bible "as it is written" knows, the church age ends in apostasy like all other dispensations before it (2 Thessalonians 2). The church does not gradually get better and better and then the Lord returns. In all actuality it has waxed worse since the first century with the exception of the Philadelphian age.

Now during every time in history there is always a small remnant that has not gone into apostasy. Consider Noah's day. He was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). The Scripture says that he built an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world (Hebrews 11:7). Only eight souls were saved and the rest God destroyed with the flood (1 Peter 3:20). Remember in Kings we read about how Elijah tells the Lord how they have slain the prophets and that he alone is left and they seek his life. And what did the Lord say to him? He said that he reserved for himself seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19). Paul says that in his day there was a remnant left (Romans 11:2-6). And so it is on our day, that there is a small remnant left that believes the Book, God's word.

When any man reads the Bible there are several things that become apparent: the righteous suffer, are persecuted, are cursed by others, suffer reproach and shame, have trials, tribulations, problems, are afflicted, tormented, beaten, and killed. As the Scripture says, which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted (Acts 7:52)? And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). The fact is that our portion is not in this life as it is with the wicked (Psalm 17:13-15); our portion is in the next life (Hebrews 11:13-16, 39-40). Praise the Lord.

But in the mean time as we sojourn here, we can expect what was listed above if we decide to live godly in this wicked world. But the Lord said we are blessed when men revile us and persecute us and say all manner of evil against us falsely for his sake, for our reward is great in heaven (Matthew 5:11-12). And sadly, it is likely that we will suffer these things from other Christians. This brings me to the point of this article: Biblical Christianity vs. Respectable Christianity.

What is Biblical Christianity? Well it is characterized by several things, and mainly is characterized by belief in the Book and an adherence to it, and places God's word as the final authority over his life. Biblical Christianity goes by the book, the Bible, in all matters of the faith. In other words, the Scriptures are what inform him on how to conduct his life and what he is to believe. Biblical Christianity is absolutely despised by the world. They can't stand it! That has always been the case. Consider the life of Paul; was he highly esteemed among men? He had so many problems in his life, and he said his life was to be an example to all believers to follow (1 Timothy 1:16, 1 Corinthians 11:1). Biblical Christianity suffers the reproach of Christ, and stands firm for the truth without compromise. This is Biblical Christianity.

Then you have Respectable Christianity. What is that? The best way to summarize Respectable Christianity is that it is friendly with the world and compromises. It has a form of godliness but denies the power thereof. It is highly esteemed among men and is abomination in the sight of God (Luke 16:15). It is accepted by the world, even praised by it sometimes, and not often mocked or scorned or persecuted, nor suffers shame or reproach or suffering for Christ's sake. It has cast away truth and adopted fables, and adds to and takes away from the Bible, and minimizes or alters its doctrines so they don't offend anyone. Respectable Christianity along with the world also abhors Biblical Christianity. They can't stand it! For Respectable Christianity it is all about the people, and the community, and making the world a better place and trying to bring peace on earth, and bring the world to another Jesus. It is all positive and it will shy away from the negative just like the false prophets of the Old Testament, always preaching a positive message without the negative.

These are the two Christianities that exist in our day. Both are contrary one to the other. By the standards of Respectable Christianity, Paul would have been condemned, for he was offending people and preaching in the streets and going into synagogues and preaching Jesus! He was not "properly representing the Lord" or "presenting the Lord in a way that would appeal and be relevant to that age group and culture." They would have said he was unloving and harsh and judgmental, since he called people names. And by the way, Jesus Christ did the same things that Paul did.

You might ask why would Respectable Christianity despise Biblical Christianity since it is following in the footsteps of all the prophets, John the Baptist, the apostles, and Jesus Christ himself? Because their Jesus is another Jesus, and their gospel is another gospel, and their spirit is another spirit. The Jesus of the Bible is contrary to what the majority of Christians think he was and is! When you tell them when Jesus Christ comes back he will make war and slay thousands and thousands of people, they flip out! But that is what the Scriptures say. The Jesus of the Bible was a Man! People said he was like John the Baptist or Elijah who were hard preachers! They did not say he was like a Joel Osteen or Joyce Myers. You see Respectable Christianity is making a Jesus in their own image because they don't like the Jesus of the Holy Bible, just like they don't like the LORD God of hosts of the Bible, so what do they do? They change his words, and doctrines, and precepts, to make God into whatever they want him to be. This is wickedness and idolatry! It is just as bad as making a graven image and bowing down and worshipping it! Make sure my friend that you are conforming to the image of his Son according to God's word, and not conforming to the image of God's son according to your deceitful heart and imagination.

This temptation to compromise and be friendly with the world is great because if you adopt a respectable Christianity, all the persecution, suffering, reproach bearing, name-calling, and shame ceases to exist. That's the temptation. That's what happens. People don't want to go without the camp and bear his reproach. It is a tuff thing to do, but it is worth it and he'll reward you for it.

After I got back one day from street preaching with some of the saints, I started to think about Respectable Christianity. During public ministry, we ran into a Christian that was handing out free samples of food for the place he worked at and he desired to speak

with us. I kept preaching the gospel and we continued to walk down the street. At first we avoided him and then on the way back when we had stopped preaching, he called again for us so we went over to him. After about 2 minutes of giving us praise, thanksgiving, and more praise, he finally said the word, BUT. I knew this was coming. You can always tell these types of Christians. He said that we shouldn't talk about hell or sin in our preaching. He said, "we find people are more responsive to God's love." You see the problem they have is with Bible preaching. I preach the gospel, and the gospel includes Christ dying for our sins (1 Corinthians 15). I preach that a man needs to be saved and I tell them what they can be saved from if they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is hell fire and God's wrath and judgment. Now the man agreed people would go to hell without Jesus Christ, but he didn't want us to tell them about that. Well I appreciate your opinion brother, but I won't follow your unbiblical advice. I'm going to warn them.

And then as we were heading back to the cars, while I was preaching, two young men came up to us and handed us a card that invited us to a "Celebration." It was a card that invited us to "Celebration Church" for an encouraging uplifting message (concerning what?) with a time for worship (it didn't say what was worshipped there) and more Pentecostal foolishness (It didn't say that on the card but that's what goes on there). On the card there was absolutely no reference to Jesus Christ, God, the Bible, Salvation, Sin, Heaven or Hell. What are these people doing? They could be handing out Gospel tracts but instead they are inviting people to a "church of celebration" which is just like the world. My, my, whatever happened to Christianity?

As I sat at lunch with my wife after public ministry I realized another axiom of Respectable Christianity and the world. Not only do they abhor Biblical Christianity, they also have another thing in common: they look to the other for justification. The world uses Respectable Christianity to justify itself and Respectable Christianity uses the world to justify itself. Here is what I mean by that.

The world will tell the Biblical Christian, "my church doesn't do what you're doing," "keep it in the church [building]," "you are going about it the wrong way," "get an education," etc. They will point to Christianity and say, you see, [Respectable] Christians don't believe, act, or speak the way you do. They'll say, "Well I'm a Christian too and I think" and they never quote Scripture to back up what they are saying but give their useless vain opinion. The world looks to Respectable Christianity in order to justify their continued unbelief and ignorance of the truth of the word of God, and boy is their crutch that they lean on getting bigger and bigger!

Respectable Christianity looks to the world in order to conform more to the world's image in order to win them to their Jesus, in other words, do evil that good may come (Romans 3:8). They will look at statistics and look at worldly sayings and compromise and alter biblical doctrines and the biblical way to evangelize "to be relevant" and "to reach a particular age group and culture" by changing or altering or diminishing the truth, God's word.

One of the funniest things I ever saw in my life was at a "Christian" bookstore. I forget the title but I remember it was written by some Christian Rocker and he talked about

what the world says about Christianity and that we need to change in order to reach those people (Romans 3:8). He referred to this infamous line, “We like your Christ, but we don’t like your Christians.” You see this slogan on bumper stickers and in the mouths of the wicked. That is the biggest lie and excuse you have ever heard in your life! The world won’t come to Christ and believe on him because of Christians? Ha ha ha, that is funny, nothing could be further from the truth. They won’t come to Christ because their deeds are evil and hate the light, and love their sins, or don’t believe what God said in his book – it’s one of those. That line is an alibi for rejecting Jesus Christ. If you truly want to be saved, and be forgiven, NO MAN would stop you from calling upon the name of the LORD!

But Christians, that is Respectable Christians, look to the world to justify their unbiblical and unholy ways of doing things. Kids like wicked music (rock, rap, etc) so let’s include that in our worship to bring them in and tell them about our Jesus. The world likes wild parties and rock concerts; let’s have a “rave for Jesus” and “rock out for Jesus” (believe me they do it)! The world likes entertainment, let’s put on shows, and skits, and plays, and dances that we might bring them in and tell them about our Jesus. The world doesn’t like preaching, so let us water down our preaching, let us compromise our message, let us only preach for 15 minutes and have a rock show for 30 minutes, that we might bring them in and tell them about our Jesus – we don’t want offend anybody. That is what they do! Respectable Christianity compromises so it can conform more to the world and be reduced to its likeness for the sake of reaching the world.

It’s an unholy alliance, the world and Respectable Christianity; they both use one another to justify their sins. And they always use one or two verses that they don’t understand and think they are proving a point. How about this one, “the Bible says not to judge anybody,” or “God is love” etc. The Bible does say the saints can judge and if we are simply quoting the Scriptures, we are not speaking but the oracles of God are speaking. That is what a preacher is to do, if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11). When a man is simply preaching God’s word, it is powerful and reveals the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). That’s what people don’t like, it reveals who they really are, and most of them are haters of God and love not the truth (You don’t believe me preach in a public place). And they’ll say “God is love” and you are preaching hate and condemning people. They forget that we are preaching what the Bible plainly says and that book will manifest what is in your heart. They forget that charity rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6). True love doesn’t rejoice in sin. The world and Respectable Christianity’s definition of love is an unbiblical one, as usual.

You see it goes back to that Book again! People don’t like that Holy Bible. That’s what it comes down to always. They don’t like what God’s word says. So the world goes to Respectable Christianity for an alibi against God’s word, and Respectable Christianity goes to the world for an alibi against God’s word: they both don’t like the Scriptures! That is they don’t accept and believe and agree with *everything* that Book says and teaches. They pick and choose what they like and don’t like as if it were a buffet. They have preferences; they have likes and dislikes – as if that ever alters the Scripture of Truth (Daniel 10:21). But they think that if that Book contradicts their feelings, emotions,

beliefs, and ways the Book is in error, but if that Book is in line with their feelings, emotions, beliefs, and ways the Book is truth. Again my friends, it will always come down to what people do with that Book, the Holy Bible.

Biblical Christianity is becoming harder and harder to find these days while Respectable Christianity is on the rise. But the Scriptures said this would happen 2000 years ago. Thank God he foretold us of these days in his book. And who can know this is true? He that believes God's word. Make sure all your beliefs about the Lord Jesus Christ come from that Book and make sure all that you do is in concert with that book: if you do that you have nothing to fear and will come out good at the judgment seat of Christ.