Preaching Another Jesus

(by Craig Thomas)

Paul warned early Christians that some were preaching ***“another Jesus whom we have not preached”*** (**2 Corinthians 11:2-4**). Today many are not preaching the whole truth from God’s word concerning Jesus. Please consider how some are preaching “another Jesus” today.

They preach the baby Jesus without the Lord Jesus. Many pay homage to a Jesus that remains a plastic baby. Never speaks, never acts, never commands, never demands, remains passive and silent. This is the kind of Jesus they desire to “serve.” The real Jesus did not remain a baby in a manger. He grew up, taught us the truth, was crucified for our sins, ascended into heaven and was given ***“all authority”*** (**Matthew 28:20**) as ***“both Lord and Christ”*** (**Acts 2:36**). We must confess and obey this Jesus to be saved! (**Philippians 2:9-12**; **Hebrews 5:9**)

Some preach the compassionate Jesus without the angry Jesus. Jesus was the ultimate example of compassion (**Matthew 14:14**). But some serve a Jesus who never gets upset and angry. This is not the Jesus of the Bible. The real Jesus was angry at wickedness, sin, false teachers and their doctrines! On one occasion when dealing with wicked people it is said that He ***“looked around at them with anger”*** (**Mark 3:5**). On another, His disciples remarked that ***“the Pharisees were offended”*** (**Matthew 15:12**) by what Jesus said. On another, He was angry enough to call people ***“Hypocrites!,” “blind guides,” “Fools,” “whitewashed tombs,” “Serpents, brood of vipers”*** (**Matthew 23**).

They preach the tolerant Jesus without the strict Jesus. Many view Jesus as ever tolerant of anybody and anything. The Jesus of the Bible showed great patience, but He never gave unquestioning acceptance! Jesus said, “***Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it”*** (**Matthew 7:13-14**). He also said that religion alone, regardless of how sincere, will not save us (**Matthew 7:21-23**)! But, we must do the will of His ***“Father in heaven,”*** otherwise on the day of judgment He will say to us, ***“I never knew you; depart from Me”*** (**Matthew 7:23**). Not presenting this aspect of Jesus is to preach “another Jesus”!

Some preach the saving Jesus without the judging Jesus. Many people only want to know a Jesus who saves (**John 3:16**). Undoubtedly the news of salvation is the most wonderful news ever heard. But, the real Jesus is not just a Savior; He will one day also be our judge. Paul said, ***“the Lord Jesus Christ… will judge the living and the dead at His appearing”*** (**2 Timothy 4:1**) and ***“we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad”*** (**2 Corinthians 5:10**). Is it any wonder then that in view of this Paul said, ***“Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men”*** (**2 Corinthians 5:11**)?

What It Means To Serve Christ

(by Dee Bowman)

Serving Christ is what Christianity is all about.  Jesus said, ***“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.  If any man serve Me, let him follow Me”*** (**John 12:25-26**).  To serve Christ means that you actually give yourself to Him; you follow Him.  It means you subordinate your will to His, give Him the command of yourself.  He thus becomes the main focus of your life.  And believe me, that’s not easy. The implications of that service to Christ are several.  May I cite a few for your consideration?

**To serve Christ is to make Christ your personal manager.**  This action of service relates to every area of a man’s life.  If he is a Christian, he must necessarily be a good father.  And if he is a good Christian, he is a good neighbor, a good worker, a good citizen.  You can’t pick and choose, either.  Leave one off and you’re no longer serving Him like you ought.  Christ’s religion cannot be partial; it must entirely transform man (**Romans 12:1-2**).

**To serve Christ is to make your life like His.**  When you read about Jesus in the gospels you are immediately arrested by His greatness, His goodness and benignity, His total dedication to His mission, His love for all.  To know Him is to love Him, and to love Him is to live Him, too.  To love Him is to want to be more like Him.  And isn’t it so that if you love someone sincerely, you want to be near them?  Regular worship, regular association with His word, a burning desire to serve Him and His people– all are indications of seeking to reproduce the example of Christ in our lives.  These actions will result in your handling life’s activities as He would – even in times of difficulty.  All that comes of a revolutionary act of self-denial.  ***“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me”*** (**Luke 8:23**).

**To serve Christ is to recommend Him to others.**  How can we say we are dedicated to Him and His teachings when we seemingly have little inclination to recommend Him to others?  It seems to me unthinkable that we could consider ourselves to be His disciples if we are not willing to confess Him before our fellows (**Matthew 10:32**).  We are always anxious to recommend to others what we use and what we think is best– our car is the best, so is our brand of cereal, our kind of iPad or iPhone– but what about Jesus?  Are we somewhat timid about recommending Him to others, about inviting them to a service where His life and His word are to be discussed?  How can we truly be servants when we are embarrassed about Him whom we serve?  Listen to Paul.  ***“For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day”*** (**2 Timothy 1:12**).  If you would serve Him, you must recommend Him.

**To serve Christ means a separation from the world.**  There can be no middle ground with Jesus.  If we don’t give Him our all, we don’t give Him anything.  Is that not the meaning of His saying in **Matthew 6:21**?  ***“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.  The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”***  The point is single-mindedness.  If the eye is focused on Christ, the illumination needed for such service can proceed from it; if not, there can be no real service.  In fact, in the next verse He says, ***“No man can serve two masters...”***  Please note that separation from the world does not imply isolation, for such is not possible; but it does mean a sanctified heart, a mind set apart from the mundane, a focus that is higher than mere fleshly satisfactions.  No person can serve Christ who is not willing to be different from the world; it’s part of who and what he is.  ***“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God”*** (**Colossians 3:1**).  In verse 3, he cites the reason.  ***“For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.”*** Dead to the world, alive to Christ!

**To serve Christ, you must have your eyes fixed on heaven.**  This world is not fit for much dedication. ‘Tis foolish indeed to place undue affections on it, ***“for the world passeth away with the lusts thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever”*** (**I John 2:17**).  Hope of heaven is a permanent fixture to the Christian.  It propels him.  It delights him.  It excites him.  Hope means he will not let go.  It means he knows what’s over there.  He understands that life here is but a sojourn; but there’s something infinitely better over there.  No person is the true servant of Christ who has his hopes fixed on what’s here and not on what’s there, for what’s there is far superior to what’s here.

***“And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ”*** (**Colossians 3:23-24**).