

WHOSE JESUS DO YOU LOVE? (BY JOHN FAST)

Buzzwords are the new trend in the church today. Words like “authentic, missional, relevant, and radical” are used by churches to let people know that they are on the cutting edge; that this is not your grandmother’s church, and it is definitely not that old-time religion. People are promised “Spirit-filled messages,” whatever those are. But buzzwords do not transform lives or save souls, and sermons that are devoid of Scripture or butcher Scripture are not Spirit-filled. They may be full of something, but it is not the Spirit.

The principle means by which the Holy Spirit transforms lives is through the teaching and preaching of God’s word. The church does not need new buzzwords, it needs the Bible. It doesn’t need polished performances, it needs preaching. It doesn’t need gimmicks, it needs the truth. **The church is not about being relevant, it is about being biblical.** The Christian life is not about becoming less self-indulgent, but dying to self, crucifying the flesh, dying to the world, and walking by the Spirit. There is nothing “radical” about being less hedonistic and more ascetic. Being “radical” still feeds the flesh and leads to spiritual pride,

These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence ([Colossians 2:23](#)).

A person can be motivated to give up his stuff by something other than a love of God. He could just as likely be motivated by a love of self. Most people would gladly give up their possessions rather than die on a cross.

Mankind has always found a way to exploit, mar, and pillage God’s blessings for his own personal profit, to desecrate what is holy and corrupt what is pure, and by so doing demonstrates that he actually despises rather

than venerates and esteems God's blessing. *“And I brought you into the fruitful land, to eat its fruit and its good things. But you came and defiled My land, and My inheritance you made an abomination”* ([Jeremiah 2:7](#)).

The institution of the church and the person of Jesus are no exceptions to this rule. Materialistic and worldly people have succeeded in turning most of the church into something it was never intended to be – a commercially viable and highly profitable enterprise, a multi-billion dollar industry, a source of entertainment popular with the masses, and a place where the unregenerate can comfortably congregate to worship their idols of the culture and be affirmed in their sin. **The pulpit has been prostituted for personal gain, truth sacrificed on the altar of commercial success, while at the same time people perish for a lack of knowledge.**

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH

The true church will always persevere and survive, but it won't be found where truth has been replaced by human wisdom, syrupy sentimentality, emotional manipulation, ego boosting pep talks, party atmospheres, gimmicky entertainment, gutter humor, and crass language; where people are told they, like God, can will something into existence and create their own reality and determine their own destiny. The true church will not be found making friends with the world or serving another master. The true church follows the true Shepherd because they know and love Him. The true church is characterized by a love of God and a love of His word.

About six months before He was to be killed, while He was attending the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus told some Jews who had professed a belief in Him, *“If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;”* ([John 8:31](#)). A few verses later, after they had demonstrated they had no intention

of abiding in His word, Jesus tells them the reason they have rejected His words, “*But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me*” ([John 8:45](#)). Did you catch that? The reason these people, who only a few moments earlier had professed a belief in Jesus but now reject what He says, is precisely because what He says is the truth. This is because the unregenerate mind has a natural loathing for spiritual truth, just as darkness has a natural aversion to light. This is usually the way it is with people who make superficial professions of faith. **They believe in Jesus, until Jesus begins teaching and making demands, then their initial profession turns to intense hatred.** But this hatred is not expressed directly against Jesus; they still love Jesus – their Jesus. Rather, their animosity is turned to the one who teaches Jesus as He is, just as Jesus said they would (cf. [John 15:18-20](#)).

THE AVERSION TO TRUTH

It is precisely these same types of people who make up the majority of the professing church today – people who have an aversion to truth. Their aversion is not necessarily for the Bible per se, but for what the Bible says about God, about salvation, about us, His will, sin, marriage, divorce, children, morality, money, the world, and the Christian life in general. Many will turn to God’s word, but only to find support for their own ideas and opinions – not to have their thinking shaped by Scripture, not to submit their mind to the truth, not to love God with all their mind.

When people turn to Scripture simply to find support for their own opinions – or for some pet theology, or for the god they love – they will typically find it every time, and in so doing, simply prove that what they love is their own opinion, not the truth of Scripture. And when they stumble across passages

that contradict their own opinion, they will reject, ignore, or reinterpret them, thus revealing their natural aversion to truth.

God's word is clear on everything pertaining to life and godliness ([2 Peter 1:2, 3](#)). Scripture is completely sufficient to provide all the answers for all the problems of life. The problem is not a lack of clarity, but a lack of receptivity, a lack of love of God as He is and a lack of love for His word. **You cannot love who you do not know, and who you love you want to know better.** So, who do you love; the God of the Bible, or a god of your own imagination; Jesus as He is, or Jesus as you want Him to be? The church has had to deal with false Christ's almost from its inception. They are as limitless as man's imagination to invent them. At the close of His Sermon on the Mount Jesus warned, "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven...Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord' ...And I will declare to them, 'I never knew you...'*" ([Matthew 7:21-23](#)). Notice Jesus says "many," not some, but "many." Will you be among the many? How do you know if you do not know Him or His word? If you do not know His word and love His word, you cannot know Him.

You can only know God through a personal knowledge of and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, "*All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him*" ([Matthew 11:27](#); cf. [Luke 10:22](#)). And to whom does the Son will to reveal God as He is? The weary and heavy-laden ([Matthew 11:28](#)); weary of sin, weary of trying to be good enough, weary with your own effort to earn salvation, weary with carving out your own leaky cisterns; and heavy-laden with guilt, with despair over your own inability, and with all

the gods of your own imagination. Learn from Jesus; study Jesus; not the Jesus of someone else's self-serving imagination, not the commercialized Jesus, but Jesus as He really is, the Jesus of the Bible. If you love Him, you will want to know Him as He really is. My prayer is that you will.