

Itching Ears

A.W. Tozer:

In the church many are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. If you do not like what I am saying, I want to ask you something. Think about the company you run with. What do they talk about most? God and the love of God, or other things? You decide that. Many Christians today will not endure sound doctrine. Paul described these people as having "itching ears" (2 Timothy 4:3). They did not like sound doctrine, but they were Christians. They called themselves Christians, but their ears were itchy. A commentator I read some years back explained this. In Paul's day the pigs had a disease called "itching ears." The symptom was that their ears got inflamed and itched terribly. The only way they could get relief from these inflamed ears was to go to a pile of rocks and rub their ears earnestly and vigorously. The stones scratched their ears for the time being. Paul saw that, smiled a sad smile and said, "I am running into Christians here and there who are just like that. They love pleasure more than God and will not endure sound doctrine. They have itching ears so they will be eager for something else beside the sound doctrine and holy ways. They will pile up teachers everywhere and rub their ears for dear life." That is a most dramatic and colorful illustration. A lot of so-called Christians have to have piles of rocks to rub their ears. They will not endure sound doctrine. I think that is a description of the churches, Protestant and evangelical. In the light of New Testament predictions, teachings and standards, is what I just said about the prevailing religious mood untrue? Is what I have said about the prevailing religious mood uncharitable? Is it extreme? I do not think it is, but I only ask you to do one thing: Look around you and look in your own heart. See which of these pictures describes the churches you know.