

**General Topics :: The compromised witness.****The compromised witness. - posted by mguldner (), on: 2011/7/12 7:45**

I have been thinking about this for a while now and the more I study and look at the world around me I find it interesting as my views and thoughts change on certain topics. One being sharing the Gospel, do we take the wrong approach? Where does the line of respecting a culture and their religion become a compromise to the Truth.

I have meet many Christians who feel its necessary to tell others of their error, to point the finger at their false religion and tell them their condemned to hell for believing it.

What is the problem with this Zealot? Is he not serving God by doing such a cheritable thing as perserving truth? I have begun to look at all men the same Sinners in need of a Saviour. All men deserve respect, the problem with respect is th e definition is placed in the eyes of its beholder and culture. In America, pointing out flaws is quite alright we can be loud and boisterous about it, yet in other cultures error is dishonoring and so to tell someone they are wrong is to dishonor or disrespect them and their culture.

May I stay on topic though, There is a difference between the Zealot and the Christian and that is Humility. A zealot has come to some kind of truth they believe is correct and it may very well be but their delivery is off because this new knowledge puffs up their once depraved mind so now they view everyone with that knowledge as such, depraved.

However this is not how a Christian ought to operate, Christianity is built on relationships, Relation to the Father and relation to others around them. They are aware of the fact that they too were lost and dead in sin, but take the path of humility and see themselves even lower than the Gentile (nonbelievers) Oh sure they are depraved but good sir I was worse . I believe we can have an elitist mentality and forget our roots, and forget we too are saved by Grace and not of our works or our doing.

I look at the errors of other cultures and religions and I now try to 1. Understand why they believe that way 2. take the low road, the path to humility and respect their beliefs. My wife has a friend who doesn't believe in Christ Jesus (quite yet anyways) but because my wife respected what she believes, my wife's friend will openly talk about what she believes with no problem. Her curiosity was stirred by the Kindness of God that was moving in my wife.

When you light a candle how much sound does it make? Other than the fluttering of the flame its barely heard but when its dark, its the loudest thing in the room. This is how we should be loud (seen by our action) in the dark, rather than like a crying child when the lights go out. Ultimately your witness is more damaged when you disrespect someone but you can build your witness through building a relationship with the person opening doors for the Gospel but most importantly just Love them.

Re: The compromised witness. - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/7/12 11:12

Agreed. On the other hand many Christians are afraid to call a spade a spade, or sin sin. Many are afraid of telling others that Jesus is thee only way to receive forgiveness of sins. Many oppose the bold preaching of the gospel in the name of "humility" so called. Yet we see throughout the Scriptures that the prophets, our Lord, the apostles and disciples were not afraid to teach and preach the truth to the lost, along with being a humble witness of God's love. Consider for example John the baptist. I wonder if he would be labeled today as a harsh fanatic condemning legalistic preacher if he were with us today. Or the apostles who were bold in telling the gentiles that they should repent from their many idols which they worshipped at the time.

So I see the need for a balance of a good humble witness in our actions and a bold readiness to speak the truth in love with the unconverted.

Many say that all we need is to show God's love in action with our deeds or way of life. But there are many Buddhists, Mormons, and others of false religions who do good deeds in the name of their god and who seem to show a certain "peace" in their countenance. Many times the thing that will separate them from the true Christian is the Christians bold witness to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul said he was not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ for IT is the power of God unto salvation for everyone that believes.

Re: - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2011/7/12 12:31

What appalls me, which I have witnessed more than a few times, is the zealot who has no compassion for one who is deceived and will not pray for such a one so that their blinded eyes might see the truth. They also won't go to the person and discuss the issue in private first (as the scriptures command) but go immediately to discussion boards like this and broadcast to the world the person's evil with an attitude of judgmentalism. This should not be so. People can repent. Let us pray and persuade with Holy Spirit leading so that they might.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/7/12 12:48

by TrueWitness,

Quote:
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With all due respect, this is a public discussion board therefore almost everything discussed here is out in the public for everyone to see. I see this as an opportunity to share the truth in love with a wide audience here sometimes, similar to a public area on the streets where one can reason with more than one person. For the most part, I don't believe the passage in Matthew 18 about going to your brother in private regarding his sin applies here. Sometimes it can apply and I have repented when feeling led to do so. Let us not judge one another's ways of sharing the truth with others, as long as the truth is being shared respectfully. Thankfully moderators are here for the purpose of making sure that enough respect is given despite disagreements on various issues.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/7/12 12:51

P.S, I thankfully receive your exhortation to pray for those we disagree with.

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2011/7/12 14:08

Thank you both for your replies.

Oracio,

Ever noticed Christ was never really harsh with the Gentiles? Sure it was bold but it was also gentle. And the Apostles? were they harsh in tongue? No. Look at Paul, it is said he would spend all day reasoning with the lost Jew and Gentile alike, was this bold? Not necessarily, why? because talking about God was a common thing in the times of the Apostles they had open forums as we have an electronic forum here to discuss and proclaim what they believed was truth.

Ever sit with a group of nonchristians for a meal? Christ did often enough to be called a drunkard and a glutton by the legalist. What was Jesus doing all those times eating with the Gentiles? On occasion even healing them? No he was building a relationship with them, showing them the Kindness of God which leads us to repent. We must do the same, boldness is fine but if there's no kindness in it it's a religious boldness and that must die in the man.

Remember Peter? He was a very zealous man for Christ, they came to arrest Jesus. How could they? Peter thought so he drew a sword and cut off someones ear. We can do the very same, in our zeal for the Lord we can cut off the ear of our listeners and they become even more deaf. Later Peter was the Apostle who had to humble himself before the Lord concerning the circumcision of the Gentiles and the foods they ate, rebuked by Paul who says in 1 Corinthians 9:20-21

"20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law."

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/7/12 14:55

Good points Matthew. I think it sometimes comes down to respecting and appreciating each other's gifts and strengths as witnesses of Christ. I believe some of us are called to be more mild-spirited in their witness while others may be called to be more rough-edged, like John the baptist.

For example, it seems to me that not all men of God are called to preach the gospel in a public setting such as out on the streets in the open air. But others are clearly called to that type of bold frontline evangelism. Also, It seems that John the apostle was more mild than Peter, even after Pentecost.

I agree that we should all try to build relationships with the lost around us and share the gospel with them in that context of a relationship. But I also see in Scripture where there was not time or need to build a long term relationship with them before preaching to them. For example, Jesus went quickly right into the gospel with the woman at the well, reasoning with her concerning her sinful lifestyle and her need for His eternal living water. We also see this with Paul before Felix and many other examples. And notice that Paul reasoned with Felix concerning righteousness, self-control and the coming judgment(Acts 24:25). In other words, right away he reasoned with him concerning the hard truths of God, in hopes that Felix would come to repentance and faith in Christ.

So I definitely would disagree with the view that says we have to wait to build a long term relationship with non-believers before we can share the gospel with them. It is clearly not a biblical view. I'm not saying that's what you are espousing though.

So bottom line for me here is, let's humbly respect one another's ways of speaking truth into other's lives here. To one a certain way may be offensive, and to another it may be an encouragement or exhortation from the Lord.

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2011/7/12 15:37

Aye brother we are basically on the same page then because I to agree we must have balance and respect each others gifts in the body.

I see something that John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and the Apostles all had something in common. That is a reputation of righteousness and Holy living in Christ. It made it hard for people to discredit and ignore a message coming from reputable witnesses. Long term relationship aren't necessarily needed but long term reputation of following and seeking the truth is.

Paul didn't even start his ministry full blown until I think 8 years after Damascus, what was he doing in the mean time? Studing, preparing, and preaching so much as for the Apostles to look to him again and wave off his former reputation of killing.

There are some who when around me change how that talk because they know I don't appreciate it, and then there are some who curse like a sailor around me but are slowly seeing my speech and vocabulary are different. This I think is one of the many silent witnesses we can have, and that is Christ's Holiness in us shining through.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/7/12 15:46

Amen brother.