

MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Can You Be Politically Correct On The Narrow Path?

Dear Friend,

It's interesting how during the course of an everyday conversation simply mentioning anything spiritual can bring an otherwise normal conversation to a screeching halt, like a speeding car slamming on the brakes. Why is that? Everything can be fine and then out of the blue someone interjects something spiritual and immediately the atmosphere changes and tension fills the air. Let's imagine the thoughts of one of those shocked people in the group; "What! Why did they have to bring up something spiritual? Who do they think they are? Don't they know how offensive that is to me?" Well, I don't know about you, but it seems to me that eternal damnation is much more offensive. We can talk about the weather, the kids, the dog, the color of the grass, but please, under no circumstances are we to even think about mentioning the wonderful Name of Jesus, or anything spiritual for that matter. Something is very wrong with this.

Picture a conversation with a coworker or perhaps with friends at a gathering or a neighbor across the fence and imagine all the various reactions. Suddenly, without thinking about it, a spiritual comment just happens to slip out and immediately the looks change. Smiles give way to frowns and eyes that were connected and engaged now stare off into the distance or up to the sky or down towards the ground. Tiny beads of sweat appear across their foreheads and race down their faces, like someone drenched by a spring shower.

The conversation ends quickly, each one going their separate ways, almost running to escape and all because of what? Someone happened to interject words of real importance into what was otherwise just another trivial conversation about something mundane like the weather that, in the eternity of things, really doesn't matter anyway.

What should matter to us? What's supposed to be the most important, most valuable treasure of our entire lives? Isn't it Jesus? Shouldn't He be welcomed into our daily conversations, even at the risk of alienation from our peers? Yet, so many times He is relegated to Sunday mornings between 11:00 am and 12:00. Other than that, don't talk about Him or even mention His Name or some dear heart might be offended. So what! So what if we are categorized as "one of those fanatics"! Bless God, isn't that the group we should want to be in because that's the group Jesus is in. It's time we stop thinking Jesus came here to just "fit in", you know, be "politically correct". That is so far from the

truth, especially in light of the marching orders Jesus gave to His twelve disciples before sending them out. (Matthew 10:34)

(Jesus speaking) ***“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: but a sword.”***

What? How can that be, considering what was said by the angels in Luke 2:14?

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Doesn't it seem like Jesus contradicted the angelic proclamation? Of course He didn't! God did send "Peace" into the earth in the person of Jesus, but God did not send Jesus here for the purpose of making peace with fallen humanity. In other words, Jesus' goal wasn't to end all wars and establish a harmonious kingdom on earth, but rather to provide humanity the opportunity to be at peace with God through being born again.

Consequently, Jesus didn't spend His time on earth patronizing people in an effort to make them feel good about themselves and who they were as sinners. So, why do we struggle so much with this issue of not offending sinners simply by speaking truth? Jesus never wasted time coming up with cute little names and catch phrases for sin so as not to offend, such as: "alternative lifestyles", "having an affair", "sleeping together", and "right to choose". He simply called it sin. Nor did Jesus instruct the twelve to be "politically correct". Of course, I'm not suggesting we intentionally hurt sinners, but don't think Jesus ignored their sin for fear of offending their tender little hearts or out of fear of alienation or retribution. Look at how "tenderly" Jesus addressed the Pharisees. (Matthew 23:33)

“You serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell.”

Now, if that sounds to you like Jesus struggled with fear of offending anyone, then a refund on that last "sensitivity training class" might be in order. "Well Jesus, that's just not a very nice thing to say to those Pharisees. I thought you walked in love?" Don't confuse humanistic love with the true love of God. In an effort to try and rescue these Pharisees, in love, Jesus chose some very expressive words hoping to shake them up in their thinking. I don't believe Jesus wanted them, or anyone else for that matter, suffering in hell for eternity. That being the case, Jesus was willing to suffer personal ridicule at the hands of these Pharisees for His comments rather than to simply stay silent and watch them bust hell wide open.

We have got to realize that being a believer automatically sets us apart from the rest of the world, and that's not a bad thing. Instead of struggling all our lives to look like, sound like and be like them, let's understand that we are not like them. Once we accept that, we can better focus on why we are here. In the prayer Jesus prayed in John 17:14, speaking not only of His disciples but also of those disciples who would follow;

“I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

We are what Jesus described as the wheat among the tares in Matthew 13:30,

“Let both (tares and wheat) grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, gather you together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn.”

The hour is quickly approaching, and may even be upon us, when making a stand for our faith, among the “tares” won’t be optional. In other words, what we claim to believe will most certainly be put to the test by those looking to silence us. Jesus never said we should strive to fit in ambiguously, especially to the point of being indistinguishable as Christians. Please don’t get the impression Jesus was instructing us, in Matthew 10:34, to take up swords against the heathen to kill them. But, neither was He saying to throw open the doors of acceptance to their spiritual depravity and join hands in a rousing chorus of “Kumbayah” pretending their spiritual depravity is okay.

The reason we struggle with this issue of acceptance and wanting to fit in is because we crave the approval of others. We look for the nod from our peers saying, “You’re okay. You’re one of us.” We buy the same kind of cars, wear the same kind of clothes, vacation in the same places, all in an effort to fit in. That sword Jesus brought to this earth was the sword of the Word of God, which He used to carve out a family from amongst the heathen. We must remember that we aren’t like them and the sooner we accept that fact and stop being ashamed of who we really are the sooner this Gospel will be preached in all the world. Jesus warned us not be ashamed of Him in Luke 9:26,

“For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My Words, of Him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and the holy angels.”

The Apostle Paul said this in his letter to the church at Rome, (Romans 1:16)

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

The word, “ashamed”, is defined in the Webster’s Dictionary as feeling shame, guilt or disgrace, as well as, feeling inferior or unworthy. Why should we as Christians, having been reborn into the family of God, struggle with feeling ashamed of Him? Who are we again? (I John 3:1-2),

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. (vs.2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.”

Of what do we have to be ashamed? **Nothing!** We are sons, children of God and should be ashamed of nothing. Nevertheless, time and time again, believers are shamed by heathens into believing that they are out of place for even the slightest mention of Jesus or for making a stand for righteousness. Let's think for just a moment about how this is so completely ludicrous. We are the ones who have made the correct choice and will be spending eternity with Jesus. Those who are buffeting us are the ones who will spend all of eternity in the lake of fire, unless they wake up to their demise and choose Jesus. Yet, they have the audacity to ridicule us for choosing Jesus. It's time we wake up to the reality that, for the heathens who are busy thumbing their noses at us, we are most certainly their last hope for salvation. Let's stop allowing ourselves to be shamed by the spiritually dead. Remember, they couldn't even recognize God in the flesh when Jesus stood right in front of them, it's certain they won't recognize that we have been born again into God's family as His children.

Rest assured that in the end, those of us who have chosen to walk, unashamedly, with Jesus through this life will be elated beyond words because we did. Who's going to be ashamed then? It won't be those of us basking in the glory of Jesus. So, if we aren't going to be ashamed then, let's not be ashamed now.

In order to truly appreciate our current situation here on earth, let's see it in the light of what Jesus taught in Matthew's gospel, chapter 7, verses 13-14.

“Enter you in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: (vs. 14) Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

In order to reach the glorious end we all desire, we must be willing now to forego the ease of walking along the broad path. This message is about the path less traveled, a way of life that will never be popular with the “in” crowd. The path less traveled leads away from the lure of fleshly enticements and towards a certain future with Jesus, for eternity. To understand the path less traveled; let's use an analogy that is common at the beginning of summer: people who are heading out on a vacation.

Many families are preparing to embark on a journey to their favorite vacation destinations. They will load up all the kids into the family vehicle and head out for a time of fun and relaxation. Huge interstate, super highways, are filled with travelers rushing to get to their favorite spots. Strangely enough, many are heading for the exact same places: huge theme parks, sandy beaches and sunny southern destinations. So, drivers take their place in the long line of cars heading down super highways. They set their cruise control and off they go to join everyone else on crowded beaches or waiting in hour-long lines for a 5 minute thrill ride at theme parks. It's amazing how programmed we have become to all think alike, even to the point that we can't break free to have a little fun in some secluded place for fear that it might be different than the rest of our friends.

Miraculously, though, there are those few brave souls who venture off the beaten path for times of rest and refreshing in more peaceful, secluded, surroundings. They refuse to be influenced by the barrage of TV commercials showing kids wearing mouse ears in magical kingdoms. These brave souls have chosen the paths less traveled. They aren't interested in boasting about going to the same vacation spot as everyone else. They looked for the side roads leading to secluded spots where they can relax away from all the crowds. In other words, they refuse to continue following the rest of humanity just to fit in. When these people came to the fork in the road and the road to the left led to the super highway and the road to the right led to the narrow, single lane road, they went right. Sure, they might not be able to compare how many hours they had to wait in line to ride the most popular attraction, but that's not what was important to them in the first place. Their goal was much different and because of that they refused to be afraid to take the road less traveled.

Debbie and I, like many of you, have a great little device enabling us to enter an address for a desired destination and it instantly maps out a course, referred to as GPS or Global Positioning System. Once we enter our desired destination all we have to do is follow the prompts directing us to where we want to go. So, if we want to head to California, we enter the California address and off we go. Or, if Florida is our destination, then we punch in the Florida address and head to Florida. There may be times that in order to get to our desired destination we are directed to use less traveled roads. In that case, when the GPS says to turn onto a single lane highway and depart from the rest of the "super highway" travelers, we have a choice to make. Either we follow the instructions given to us by the GPS, regardless of how things may appear, or we remain with everyone else traveling on the main road to who knows where. No matter how strong the temptation might be to remain with the rest of the pack, continuing with them will never get us to where we want to go. The question then is this, **"Do we want to end up at our desired destination or follow them in their journey?"**

I was recently in this exact situation. I was on a trip to West Texas and my GPS instructed me to turn off of one larger highway onto a smaller single lane highway with no other cars on it. I can remember thinking to myself, "This can't be right. Where are all the other cars? We are out here all alone in the middle of nowhere on this 'God forsaken road.'" "This can't be right!" Now, those little beads of sweat began lining up across my forehead ready to make their descent. "Which way do I go?" The nervous tension began to cause my stomach to churn. "If this is wrong, we are going to be late for our meeting." "Oh no, what do I do?" "If I stay with the rest of these cars on this main road, I have no idea where we will end up." I had to trust my GPS that it was not lying to me and that it could see the end from the beginning. Yes, there was a chance that there might be a flaw in its programming, but not likely.

I had a choice to make. I was either going to trust that the GPS was correct and I would arrive at my desired destination or I could choose to stay in line with the other cars. I chose to trust my GPS and I arrived exactly where I was supposed to arrive. We

have got to trust the infallibility of the Word of God and the fact that our Father will never leave us nor forsake us, no matter what. We can trust in His Word and in the leadership of the Holy Ghost 100% of the time to be our GPS through this life. He will never fail us.

The narrow path Jesus was referring to is the path less traveled for a reason. Often, the choice is made to stay on the broad path because people, generally, don't want to break free from the rest of the pack and be different. Call it "peer pressure", call it "going along with the crowd", call it "politically correct", if a person chooses the wide gate instead of the strait and narrow the end result will surely be destruction.

This point is so important to remember; the destination the rest of the pack is heading towards is eternal damnation, forever in torment, separated from God. This is what most choose and is the easiest to navigate. No need for the GPS where they're going. Just jump in line and do whatever feels good. Sadly, this will be the only enjoyable time of their very long, eternal existence. You see, their problem is the destination, because no one will enjoy hell. The traveling now is easy, no pressure, do whatever, fine. Only, don't expect to take that road and end up with Jesus in the end. That would be like punching in a Florida address in your GPS and following all the cars heading for California, still expecting to arrive in Florida. That is impossible.

A GPS is only as good as the programming inside. If the programming is flawed, the GPS might say to take a right turn straight into a cornfield or directly into on-coming traffic. For us, the good news is that we can rest assured in the infallibility of the Word of God. The Word of God, in addition to the leadership of the Holy Ghost, insures we will always reach our desired destination.

While we make our way along the path less traveled, continuing to live amongst those speeding along the big super highway of life, heading straight to eternal damnation, realize that you will not be appreciated by them. Jesus described it this way in John 15:19,

"If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Why, then, did God leave us in this world, anyway? Why not just take every person out the instant they're born again? Wouldn't that be better? The moment a person accepts the Lordship of Jesus they are instantly whisked away into heaven with Jesus, free from the pressure and hatred of this world, never to fall away. Could God have orchestrated that? Certainly He could have. So, why didn't He? Think about this, He left His family here for one reason and one reason only, to reach the rest of the human race with the truth of what Jesus has done for them so that they could choose the "narrow" way and join His family, just as we did. Our Father is all about increasing His family and that's what we are here to do. We are not here to waste our life on things that do not matter, amassing all the trophies of this world only to be burned in the end. He did not leave us here to get caught up in the affairs of this life to the point that no one can distinguish us

from the rest of humanity. We must stand out. We must be a light in the darkness of this world to shine as a beacon of hope to those lost souls heading towards hell for eternity. We cannot be afraid to call sin, sin, for fear of being labeled a bigot or insensitive or worse. The idea that we are just to blend in and be “politically correct” is not a message taught by Jesus. If we don’t have the courage to call sin, sin, and step between doomed humanity and hell to rescue them, then who will? Of course we must take care of our responsibilities here on earth: family, jobs, etc. But, if our entire life is **solely** dedicated to caring for those responsibilities and we forsake our responsibility to Him, then we have placed our priorities in the wrong order.

I will leave you with one last verse to chew on. It is one that I have been preaching on a lot lately. (Luke 14:26)

“If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”

What in the world does this mean? Relax, it doesn’t mean to hate these people, including ourselves, with the kind of hate that wants to kill people. That wouldn’t make any sense. So, what did Jesus mean by this? He meant that we must love all these people, including ourselves, **less** than we love Him. In other words, He is our first love above and beyond even our own lives. If we do this, then we truly love our families the most because we love Him first and foremost. That means, when we are faced with decisions about the course of our life we choose Him and His plan for us regardless of what anyone else says or thinks, including ourselves. It generally won’t be the most popular decision we make, but in doing so we are in fact loving our family as much as we possibly can because we are loving Jesus first by placing Him first and foremost in our life.

As children of God, we have got to stop expecting to just blend in with the rest of the world, because even though we are in this world we are not of this world. The path we have chosen is a narrow path that leads to a destination of eternal peace with our Heavenly Father. In the days ahead, expect the gap between us and those on the broad path to continue to widen, exponentially. Trying to walk on the narrow path and still blend in with those of the broad path is impossible. Stands will have to be made which will immediately distinguish us from them. Uncomfortable glares, because of casually mentioning spiritual issues, are going to be replaced by more consequential punishments for our refusal to agree to call righteous those things God calls sin.

A re-categorizing of sin is under way by those on the broad path. How foolish they are on the broad path to think they can determine by consensus what constitutes sin. They are in for a rude awakening, if not here, then there. Rest assured that our stand for righteousness will surely be contested. Those uncomfortable glares will most certainly give way to more pronounced objections. Let’s not be deceived into thinking we will stand up under the pressure then if we refuse now, while it is still easy. Remember, Jesus is not politically correct and isn’t interested in you being politically correct either.

In closing, this is not a message of defeat, but rather of victory for us on the narrow path. Even though challenging times may be on the horizon, Jesus has given us everything we need to overcome. Praise God! Rejoice! (1 John 5:4)

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the World: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

~ Grace be with you

Mark Jenkins