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His Life For Yours

Dear Friend,

When you look around today and see all the chaos and violence erupting across this country don't you wonder how we got to this point, and especially so quickly? In January of this year our country looked nothing like it does today. In just a few short months we have watched as our way of life has been turned upside down. So, my question to you is this; "**How did we end up here so quickly?**"

The truth of the matter is that this didn't just happen overnight. Our society has been heading this direction for a long time and finally the opportunity presented itself to exploit people's fears by inciting riots and causing chaos, all in the name of "social justice". Where is the body of Christ in the midst of all this? Have we chosen to be silent for so long, for fear of not offending anyone, that now we don't know how to stand up for what is right? Consider these words of Jesus.
(Matthew 10:34)

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."

Please don't misunderstand, I am not saying in any way that Jesus was suggesting the answer was for the body of Christ to take up actual swords and fight our physical enemies. But, I do believe He was suggesting that we as the body of Christ weren't left here to look and act just like the world.

Could it be that the idea the church has had for so long; going along to get along, has finally caught up with it and now we are suffering the consequences. Taking a stand for truth will cost something, but sitting idly by and watching our nation destroyed will be even more costly. Maybe it's time we grow a backbone, **me included**, and be ready and willing to stand up for what we truly believe.

Step back and take a look at the big picture and ask yourself; "Why does it seem like believers are none existent amongst all this turmoil?" **Fear of retribution** has silenced most, to the point that no one is willing to make a stand against the

mobs. Where did all this fear come from? I believe a lot of it came from not knowing who we are as children of the living God.

See if you can relate with this; instead of teaching believers about who they have become in the new birth, most of the emphasis has been on praying a prayer to stay out of hell. The Lordship of Jesus and the understanding of what it means to be born again have been exchanged with messages about not sinning and trying to stay saved between trips to church. The result is an anemic, almost lifeless looking body of Christ, void of understanding of who they have become now that they are born again.

For the record, I don't believe the answer to our problems lies within a political party. The answer to our problems is, and has always been, Jesus. We need to be exalting Jesus and His Lordship and supporting anyone else who is doing the same. The problem has been that the enemy has successfully gotten us to take our eye off the ball and look at all the confusion and hear all the rhetoric being spouted by so called leaders. All of this has been the enemies attempt to get people to feel there is no hope, which is completely wrong. Our hope is in Jesus.

It's time we realize just how serious this situation is and decide today what our level of commit for Jesus truly is. Maybe your saying to yourself right now; "How dare you Mark, I'm as committed as the next guy. I go to church as often as this person or that person. I give more money than anyone I know. How can you even suggest that I'm not committed?" I'll tell you what, let me give you a few scriptures from the mouth of Jesus and you decide for yourself how you measure up.

The lessons Jesus taught us in the Gospels centered on the great exchange of His life for ours, as well as, developing people into being Disciples of Christ. These ideas have taken a back seat to making converts whose only desire is to pray a prayer to get to heaven. This seems to me to have given people the wrong idea about Christianity and the laying down of our lives in exchange for His. Instead, we have willingly held on to the notion that if we can just "be good enough" we will make it to heaven. Going to heaven has never been about how good we can be.

As a result, the message of the church today is how to have our best life now, be comfortable, and relax because we're going to heaven. We have become oblivious to the concept of "self-denial" and instead we look more like the world, with its self-indulgence and self-gratification. Consequently, we're not so interested in the idea of giving up our life for His, as much as we are in making sure our lives here and now are as comfortable as possible. ***"Is this the message Jesus preached?" (Matthew 16:24-25)***

“Then said Jesus unto His disciples, if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (25) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.”

It seems counter intuitive for us to advance by going backwards, or rather by denying ourselves. We have been raised in a system in which self-promotion is acceptable, even expected. Now, we have Jesus telling us to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him. That’s not what people today want to hear. They want to hear how they can have their cake and eat it too, how they can say a few words some preacher told them to say and go on living the same as before.

Consequently, when the world looks at the church of today they are not seeing a strong body of believers, Christians who have discovered the answer to every situation of life is in Christ. Instead, they see the same weaknesses and insecurities plaguing the Christians as the non-believers. It’s not supposed to be this way. We are the ones who have found the truth. We **should be** the ones the world sees and recognizes as Christians because of our overwhelming peace and joy and love.

So, how do you measure up when considering the words of Jesus? Is denying yourself something that you are conscious of doing or are those words simply a good idea that you feel is unattainable? How about taking up your cross and following Him? Have you considered exactly where it is you are following Him? When He picked up His cross He was walking to his crucifixion. Could it be that Jesus is telling us that we too must be willing to walk up the hill of Golgotha and follow Him into His death so that we can truly be alive in Him as children of God?

Here’s another statement made by Jesus in Luke 14. **(Luke 14:11)**

“For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

So, how do you think you measure up to this verse? Selfish, self-centered people are not looking for ways to deny themselves from anything. A little further down in the same chapter, Jesus continues to teach, but it looks like He has switched to an unrelated topic. I can assure you that He has not changed topics at all. (Luke 14:31)

“Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against Him with twenty thousand.”

So how is it that in a chapter that has been talking about “humbling self” do we find this verse talking about a king over ten thousand making war with a king over twenty thousand, only to end with this verse? (Luke 14:33)

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that foresaketh not all that he hath, he can not be my disciple.”

It looks like Jesus turns in midstream and starts talking about a totally unrelated subject. He does not. The parable of the king with ten thousand making war with the king over twenty thousand is actually illustrating the battle we as born again children of God have with the parts of us that were not born again, our soul and body. Notice the ratios, ten thousand against twenty thousand, 2 to 1. The two here represent our soul and our body. The one represents our lone spirit waging war with our soul and body.

Forsaking all requires us to be willing to go to war with the parts of us that we are in love with, our self. Dethroning self is what it truly means to be His disciple and we do it by giving our spirit everything necessary to put the soul and body in their perspective places. In so doing, the result is that we stop looking and acting like everyone else and we look and act like Jesus. Not because we set out to look and act like Him. We look and act like Him because it is who we are and who we are is finally getting the opportunity to shine.

I believe that by following the instructions set out by Jesus we will be the light in the darkness the world is looking for right now. Jesus has already given us His life for ours and now we simply need to acknowledge His gift and walk in the fullness of being His disciple.

The world needs the body of Christ to be the light shining in the darkness. You might be thinking, “Hey I’m just one person, what can I accomplish?” Just focus on impacting the world around you and trust God to do the rest. We have the answer the world desperately needs and it is up to us the share it with them. God bless you.

~ Jesus Loves You!

Mark Jenkins