

CHANGE



By Jeremy Edmondson

At this moment in history, the world is in a crazy place. Everything is changing and it may often seem like those who uphold God's Word are losing the battle. Bruce Jenner's decision to identify as a woman has been publicly celebrated by such organizations as ESPN as an act of courage. This has caused some stirring concerns, and immediately outspoken voices lobbied for both sides. With the legalization of gay marriage by the Supreme Court of the United States, many Christians took to social media to express their outrage and disgust publicly, with an overwhelming number of believers expressing hatred in the name of Jesus. At one point, my wife said, "Be glad that you are no longer on Facebook. There is nothing but hate going back and forth between the two sides." It grieves me that those who have been shown such grace would respond so mercilessly. It would seem that many have lost their way in regards to handling earthly situations with biblical guidance. How did those who claim the name of the Lord Jesus come to this point? I believe that we can identify three gaps in the Christian mainstream that desperately need to find correction in the Word of God.

First, there will always be change and new levels of shocking lengths to which people will go to in their sin. Laws will change, politicians will change, causes will change, but many Christians seem to have forgotten that God does not change. In Jas 1:17 we read, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, *with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*" The \$5 theological word for this concept is called immutability. God does not change, He does not waver, and He does not stop loving people. One significant contrast between the gods of pagan myths and the Lord God of the Bible is that the pagan gods are always warring and fighting only to lose their authority and sovereignty to another up-and-coming god. With the Lord God of the Bible, this never happens. He always is, and always will be, God. He does not change, and He will not be overthrown. Mainstream Christianity should take great comfort that the laws of men have no bearing on the reign of God over all things.

Second, today's Christians have made a naïve and foolish assumption in presuming that a sinful world is going to live in godliness. The focus of concern is over the subject of morals in the public arena and what is considered acceptable among the masses. For too long, Christians have been consumed with behavior modification, whether that be inside or outside of the Church. Christians have longed to control everything around them. Another word for this is *legalism!* Somewhere along the path of history, Christians expected for a sinful and depraved society to act like Bible-believing Christians. This is foolishness! Paul is very clear about the origins of such a depraved state in writing, "although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (Romans 1:21). You and I are no better than those people who are without Christ, and without the grace of God and the indwelling holy spirit, our lives would be the same. This is why grace is such a vital and welcomed antidote to our corrupted state. As recipients of grace, we are called to be ministers of reconciliation to the world (2 Cor 5:20). Jesus has died to pay the penalty for the sins of the world (John 1:29). This means that the solution to such degradation has already been provided: His name is Jesus! Time would be better spent praying for open doors and opportunities to share Christ (Col 4:3-4) and then obeying God's answer to those prayers.

Finally, the Church has lost sight of the fact that suffering is part and parcel of the Christian life (Phil 1:29). But this suffering is not useless! The Apostle Paul writes, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor 4:17-18). In Rom 8:18 he writes, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Many believers have not studied nor heard of the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10) and have no concept of the Lord Jesus Christ rewarding those saints who sought to be faithful in their time on earth.

While much of our concern has been about other people and what they are doing, we should be more concerned with our faithfulness in representing Christ well here and now. We are to love one another (John 13:34-35) and keep the commandments of Christ (John 14:21). We are to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20), be witnesses (Acts 1:8), and renew our minds with the Word of God and offer our bodies as a living sacrifice unto God (Rom 12:1-2). We have no time to control others if we want to be found faithful to the Word of God in our time on earth. Such living radiates grace! And this is exactly what the world needs to see in action: the grace of God flowing forth from the people of God who are grounded upon an unchanging God!

Let us represent Him well among the masses, being faithful at every turn.

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MINISTRY PURPOSE

BOLD GRACE MINISTRIES EXISTS TO:

Unite believers under the banner of God's grace (Eph 4:3-6), **share** the gospel and aid those who will proclaim it faithfully (Rom 10:14-15), **increase** believers' confidence in the power of the indwelling Christ (Gal 2:20), **love** without hypocrisy (Rom 12:9a), **proclaim** the hope of Christ's glorious kingdom (Rom 8:18-21), and **equip** the saints to share Christ's matchless grace and love with others (2 Tim 2:2).

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