

FAITH AND HUMOR

BY: BRAD CULLEN – JANUARY 24, 2003

FAITH, THE ORGANIZED CHURCH, AND A SPATE OF HUMOR

For several years I have been writing about the specifics of what Jesus taught about a variety of things as a “separate set” which is distinctly foreign to what is taught in mainstream Christianity.

Two things I have emphasized that seems to most ruffle the feathers of those I refer to as “self appointed” teachers and leaders in the hierarchy of organized Christianity:

First, are the instructions Jesus gave us to get and use the same kind of faith that he used to cast out demons, heal the sick, raise the dead, make the blind see, the deaf hear and all that kind of stuff, coupled with the fact that he said that all who believe in him will do the very same things.

The second thing I have emphasized in my writing has to do with the fact that Jesus said neither to allow ourselves to be called by any titles that would imply spiritual authority or superiority, nor to refer to anyone else by such titles. He very clearly said that we are to minister to one another in the same equality as brothers and sisters are equal. He emphasized that we have only ONE Teacher and Leader... “The Christ” – and that we have only ONE Father and he is in the unseen “spirit” realm.

It is easy to see why the professional “clergy” -- the modern day equivalent of the Nicolaitans about whose teachings Jesus said he hated (check out Rev. 2:6) would get upset about my second emphasis of what Jesus taught. “Nico” meaning control over and “laitan” referring to the “laity” or common people. Not only did Jesus instruct his disciples to never have a hierarchy and most particularly with any titles... but he said he “hated” the separation! But it is a little confusing why professional clergy get so upset over what Jesus said about getting and using his brand of faith... until you think about it for a moment, but more about that a little later.

One other thing to keep in mind... the “early church” was quite guilty of ignoring what Jesus said... but we won’t even get into that in this little treatise.

Okay, the title I chose for this little piece indicates there might be a bit of humor hidden in here somewhere. Here is the background for the humor: Clerics who oppose my writing about what Jesus taught -- often use the writings of “The Apostle Paul” to justify their position – a position in opposition to what Jesus taught.

I don’t think Paul necessarily meant what he said in the same way that professional clergymen interpret his writings... but if he did mean it in the same way... well, he was writing in opposition to what Jesus said. Again... I do not believe that was Paul’s intent... and further... I find enormous spiritual value in the writings of Paul. Clergymen, however, justify maintaining their position of being referred to as “Father” – “Pastor” – and any number of other common spiritual titles by their interpretation of what Paul wrote... and, of course their control over the laity. Not much humor yet... but here goes.

I stumbled across a passage in 2nd Peter some time ago in which Peter was saying something tongue-in-cheek about Paul... I had seen it before, but not in the light I am about to shine on it... here’s the passage: “... as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you...”

Let’s pause for a second here... Peter is obviously referring to a general letter Paul wrote to some believers in the district of Galatia... Here’s what Paul said: “Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withheld him to his face, because he was to be blamed.” Paul then went on to talk about the hypocrisy into which Peter had led the “rest of the Jews” – “even Barnabus”... (Check out Galatians 2:11 and onward).

Any reasonable person can see that these two writers of Holy Script had differences of opinion – to say the least. That in itself is a bit humorous... well, to me at least.

Back to 2nd Peter... follow the little “dig” against Paul – “...according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you... as in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand...” (the word in the original actually has more of a flavor of, “which cause confusion” – ahem) – continuing with the quote:

“... which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”

We are not done yet... Listen to what immediately follows in Peter's letter... "You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked."

Why is this humorous? Because two men (Peter and Paul) revered by those who consider themselves to be teachers of the Bible... are obviously having a spat and displaying their "dirty laundry" in front of their intended audience – while writing "Scripture" (no less).

Moreover, it is humorous to me... that those who would so vigorously oppose my writings hide behind their interpretation of Paul's writings. – "things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction..." to basically say that what Jesus had to say was, at the very least, inferior to what Paul wrote.

Is it any wonder some refer to seminaries as "cemeteries?" That is where the clergy is trained to ignore what Jesus said and become Nicolaitans... that's right folks... to control the flock. Talk about untaught... wouldn't mis-taught be closer to the truth?

One ex-pastor who "came out" after seeing the truth, that is, Jesus saying that there was only ONE true pastor... (literally "shepherd") and that the rest who called themselves that - were usurpers of the title and actually "thieves" and "hirelings" who would ultimately desert the sheep... told me that in seminary they had an entire course geared to teaching pastors how to keep control over the flock. Ah yes, the system of the Nicolaitans which Jesus said he HATED. – Maybe there isn't any humor here after all?

I'm not laughing... but I did promise to provide more about why professional clergy argue against what Jesus taught about getting and using the same kind of faith he had... for performing the very same and even greater miracles than he performed. Might it not be that they are exposed by their own lack of faith and power?

Jesus created quite a ruckus in the temple at Jerusalem. This was where he drove out those who were selling things and kicked over their chairs and the tables on which they had their wares displayed. "Then he taught, saying to them, 'Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all races of people? But you have made it a den of thieves.'

Now listen to the next verse... And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.

Who are the moral and spiritual equivalent to the "scribes and chief priests" today? Why don't they want you to hear and know the truth that Jesus taught and said will set you free?

I think it is an excellent question... and maybe it just isn't so funny after all.

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