

THE LIST

BY: BRAD CULLEN – JULY 31, 2003

THE LIST... THE DIFFERENCE... (JESUS DIDN'T REALLY MEAN THAT, DID HE?)

Since I followed the call, several years ago to, “come out of her,” it has been easier and easier to differentiate between what the namesake of the religion called Christianity, that is, Jesus Christ, actually said and the traditions that are perpetuated by the “church.” The arguments that church leaders use as excuses to ignore what Jesus said are really quite astounding.

Let's look at a list of just a few of the things Jesus said... and then we'll take a look at the differences between the practices of the “church” at large and what Jesus said. Then we'll look at the excuses that leaders of organized Christianity use for ignoring them.

Let's preface the list with just two things Jesus said about the importance of following his words: “What is the point of calling me, ‘Lord,’ if you don't also do as I say?”

“He who rejects me by not receiving my word, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority; but the Father who sent me gave me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.”

To the faint of heart I say... this is not an attempt to be legalistic or to put anyone in bondage. Jesus' words are empowering, and therefore freeing, but not if these words are ignored...particularly by those that say they believe in Jesus Christ. If we truly face what Jesus said - head on... with failure, to be sure, but without excuse... we really can find freedom!

1. “Don't allow yourselves to be referred to by any title that implies spiritual superiority or authority. Do not refer to anyone else by any such title either. You have one spiritual Leader and Teacher, the Christ! You have only one spiritual Father and He is in the realm of the unseen. You are to minister to one another in the same equality that brothers and sisters have.”
2. * “If someone takes something from you, don't demand it back. In fact, if someone takes your coat give him your shirt as well.
3. * “If somebody abuses you don't try to get even, no! Pray for him.”
4. * “Even evildoers lend to their friends, but I say to you, don't lend -- give with no hope of any return.”
5. “Anyone who believes in me will perform the very same miracles I have performed and even greater miracles.”
6. * “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters... yes and his own life as well, he cannot be my disciple.”
7. “You study and handle the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life, when all the time they give their testimony and point to me. But you refuse to come to me to have that LIFE.”
8. “I will send you Holy Spirit and He will guide you into all truth.”

* The passages above that are marked by an asterisk (*) are included to demonstrate the impossibility of taking the words of Jesus seriously without a deep prior commitment. Also to underscore the vast difference between the levels of commitment of the spectator mentality fostered in a typical church setting and following what Jesus is really saying. Note: Jesus had much to say about the all encompassing forgiveness of God. The challenge is differentiating between the false guilt that comes from all kinds of self-righteous human behavior emphasized in the “church,” and which has nothing whatever to do with what Jesus is calling us to be able to do. We understand the need for forgiveness and easily receive it when we face what Jesus said, head-on, in failure, but without excuse.

1. The church finds this first passage impossible to deal with. Those pastors that begin to see this passage clearly (Matthew 23:8-10) and begin (as was my own experience) to attempt to gently lead their congregations in obedience to what Jesus so clearly said... find absolute resistance. I hear from these men almost daily from

literally all over the world – many whom have been fired by their churches... merely for telling them to no longer refer to them as “pastors,” but as “brothers” in obedience to what they see as Jesus’ command. I tell about my experience in an earlier article. Please go to www.ministryofspirit.com and click on “Articles” then scroll down to REBELLION -- March 24, 2003. I resigned... some of these men who write to me have families and other heavy personal responsibilities. They understand at their depths the difficulty involved in the choice to follow Jesus Christ. Many have been out long enough to also know the absolute freedom and joy that comes from following Jesus out of the church. The primary defense those who choose to ignore what Jesus said, in this particular regard, is to drag out the list of church officers that Paul wrote about in Ephesians 4:11. This has been referred to mostly in Charismatic and Pentecostal assemblies as the “Fivefold ministry of the Holy Spirit.” When I first began to hear, “come out of her” – I struggled almost to the point of how Jonah struggled when he ran away from God’s call on his life. During a time of deep prayer and fasting I received a vision of a human hand positioned horizontally with the thumb at the top and the little finger at the bottom, palm facing me. I was shown that the thumb at the top represented Holy Spirit’s position in the true church of all God’s people. The remaining fingers represented Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and then Pastor-Teachers. I was given to see that Organized Christianity had inverted the hand... and stifled the work of God’s own Spirit through its hierarchy and placing the people under the controlling spirit of those that allowed themselves to be called (ordained) pastors. Is this always true? I frankly don’t know. I received the vision and it was the final “clincher” for me in the process of coming out. I knew that there was one Pastor and one Teacher... and that no man was to take the title. The word “pastor,” incidentally, means shepherd. Holy Spirit can easily work through men and women in all his gifts, including pastor/teacher among those committed to wanting only God’s will... but it doesn’t seem to work in organized Christianity (at least in my limited experience).

2. 3 and 4... are all of the same vein. How serious was Jesus about these things? I have literally heard men say from the pulpit that Jesus didn’t really mean these things. Well... it was on the heels of these words that he said: “I will tell you, those who hear what I say and put my words into practice are building their lives on a firm foundation. The waves and winds of life will pound at them, but they will not be shaken. Those who hear my words and don’t put them into practice are building their lives with no foundation at all, and their ruin shall be great.” To get the full flavor of what Jesus is saying here, go to Luke 6:27-49.

5. For the most part, churches simply ignore this passage (John 14:12). Why? Well, one possible reason is that it exposes a church leader for what he or she is, i.e., being the powerless usurper of the title that Jesus said was reserved for Holy Spirit alone. Jesus’ teaching is very clear on the matter of our individual destinies. We are to be doing the same things that he did while he was a man... with the ability to heal all sorts of diseases, emotional and physical, give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf and do this sometimes via casting out of demons causing the maladies! If you would like to receive a more complete explanation of this... please order your FREE copy of *Unlocking The Treasure Chest of God’s Gifts*. Simply click on “Reply” then type in BOOK on the subject line and it will be sent to you as an e-mail attachment.

6. Organized Christianity prefers the words of well meaning men that make up nice sounding clichés such as “Focus On The Family.” Imagine how a church would empty out... if it began to focus on this little saying by Jesus (Luke 14:26). It is often explained-away from the pulpit as being “comparative.” That is, we should hate members of our family in comparison to the love we have for God. In the original language of this passage the words are “turn your back on them as if in hatred.” My own experience is this: I didn’t really learn how to love another human being until I decided to take Jesus’ words literally. My model for this? Mohandas K. Gandhi, a Hindu. I reasoned that if a man who doesn’t believe in the deity of Jesus could have such a dramatic impact upon the world of his day by following literally what Jesus said... then what could I do as a “believer?” I found out... and again refer you to, *Unlocking The Treasure Chest of God’s Gifts*.

7. Isn’t Bible study important? The simple answer is yes, with this obvious caveat proven by the words out of Jesus’ own mouth in this passage (John 5:39,40). If Bible study doesn’t lead us to a vital and continuing encounter with the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8), it is worse than meaningless... it is DEAD-LY!

8. With the immediate foregoing passage these words of Jesus are spiritual dynamite! The quote is from two separate verses... “I will send Him to you,” comes from the end of John 16:7 and the remainder comes from verse 13 of the same chapter. Verses 5 through 16 are worth meditating over. What I find intriguing is the argument I get from the self-elevated leaders of Christianity to me, in what could only be termed as defiance to Jesus’ own words... is that I am not “rightly dividing the word of truth.” I consider that their argument stems from the fact that they have supplanted the LIVING WORD with the written word... and refuse to face that for the fact that is so obvious. The Bible has led them away from Jesus Christ just as it did to the Pharisees in Jesus’ own travels on this planet.

It is time to close, period. Consider also reading "THE ARGUMENT: - April 17, 2003 (I just noticed that it needed editing (that's the challenge with a low budget show... I'm the writer, the proofreader and the editor) and read carefully what I said regarding interacting with me. This piece has taken me much longer (and with much prayer) than I thought it would take. Hope it has been meaningful to you. Writing it has been quite an experience for me.

A GIFT FROM: LIGHTHOUSE LIBRARY, INTERNATIONAL; P. O. BOX 571225,
DALLAS, TX 75357-1225; ROGER and SUNNY COFFMAN; [972] 270-4232;
E-MAIL: inquiries@lighthouselibrary.com; WEB PAGE: www.LighthouseLibrary.com
NEWEST WEB PAGE: www.LighthouseLibrary.org