

## The Dangers of Acceptance: *Mark 10:17-27*

1. A fairly common practice for me is to share an insightful or thought provoking comment about scripture from uninspired writers from our time:
  - a. These quotes come from men of all backgrounds, and this is a natural reaction to have: when you hear something true, then you want to share it!
  - b. This is in fact, not something that is limited to preachers today, but can even be found being put to use by New Testament writers:
    - i. In **Acts 17:28**. Paul quotes states to the Athenians *in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'* Paul is quoting the classical greek poet Aratus
    - ii. To describe the Cretans to Titus in **Titus 1:12**, he would quote the poet Epimenedes as saying those from crete were *liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons*
    - iii. James 1:5 reads almost like a word for word response to some complaints that were written about “reproaching givers” in the Jewish book *Ecclesiasticus*
2. **As stated, this** this is something I do from time to time as well:
  - a. I like to quote C.S. Lewis so much that sometimes i consider referring to him by all of his different nick-names so he won't get worn out
  - b. In preparing lessons on the subject of evidences, I'll refer to Lee Stroebel, Josh McDowell
  - c. On Family and children I'll refer to James Dobson:
3. **But even as I** do this, It is always with a bit of reserve, and sometimes a bit of sadness:
  - a. As much as I love C.S. Lewis, I can't undo his membership in the Anglican church-- wouldn't refer to his teaching on Baptism
  - b. Tim LaHaye has written great works on morality, not left behind
  - c. James Dobson true moral compass: not church organization
  - d. Often will not recommend a commentary due to error
4. Why discuss these? Starting to see not just a lack of caution in recommending teachers, but a slide towards acceptance, even endorsement:
  - a. **For many, there** is an aura of impressiveness surrounding many denominational writers. While they may make some really good points, for many it goes beyond an

appreciation for the truth that they speak, and instead leads to an attitude of fascination: These guys are really “getting” the essence of Christianity in a way that “the church” just isn’t!

**b. Writers such as** Rick Warren, Francis Chan, N.T. Wright, and David Platt are seeing an increasingly large and growing fan base among members of the Church.:

**i.** In discussing this concern with some; they assure that they are reading from a critical and caution point of view, others meet these questions with defense:

**ii.** “These men love the Lord, and are trying their best to bring Him glory.”

**iii.** This has led to some going to far as to say, that as long as someone is fully surrendered to the Lord, and is trying to serve Him, it doesn’t really matter if they are practicing correct doctrine:

**c. This sounds a lot** like what the writer in Proverbs warned about in 6:27: *Can a man take fire in his bosom And his clothes not be burned?*

**i.** Becoming fascinated by the writings of denominational teachers, is exactly this!

**5. So... Why have some** taken this sort of approach? In my experiences:

a. Some have had family leave the church for denominations, and they grew tired of standing for the truth, so they’ve given wholesale endorsement to some of these men, in the hopes that their family member will be better by association:

b. Some have become embittered against the churches of Christ, and have willingly followed these men who teach some amount of truth, into all kinds of error:

c. Some are just weak, and haven’t spent enough time building up their own faith, and when met with the writings of these men, see just enough truth in what they say, that they cannot weed out the error:

**i. I think that there are** to basic attitudes that a person develops when they begin to accept wholesale denominational teaching

1. First, that “close to the kingdom” is just as good as being in the kingdom:

2. Second, that all differences in doctrine can be explained away as different interpretations:

3. I want to spend our time addressing these two attitudes, and then make a few applications:

## **I. Close to the Kingdom is still outside:**

A. having any other attitude requires that we are willing to say we can do what even the Lord himself couldn't do:

1. God has an attitude of great patience and longing towards sinners:

a) 2 Peter 3:9 *patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

b) *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! Luke 13:34*

c) The Lost passages of Luke 15

2. **As much as** God desires that men repent and as much as he reaches out with love and longing: he cannot move the walls of the Kingdom:

a) Peter's statement of God's patience is followed by an admonition of readiness: *Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 2 Pe 3:14*

b) The Lord wanted to save those in Jerusalem, but they refused Him

c) He loved the ruler, but he couldn't force him through the eye of the needle:

## **B. God calls the path narrow for a reason: Matt 7:13-14**

1. To enter through the narrow gate involves a choice-- to follow the Bible in all that it says, and change whenever truth is brought to light: The Majority of groups claiming the name Christian cannot make that claim in truth.

a) There are over 2.2 Billion people who claim to be practicing Christians in the world today: To strip away the difficulty of holding to the sound pattern is to take the narrow our of the narrow way.

b) This is not an attempt to be unloving, nor is it an attempt to have an attitude of Christian elitism, or trying to make obedience more difficult than it is: it is taking the stance that God takes: "few will enter by it"

2. To cement these points consider the example of the Scribe in **Mark 12:28-34**

a) His question seems to be asked from a pure motive v 28

b) This was indeed a man who understood the concept of being fully surrendered to God: v 32

- c) He had learned a lesson of the heart that the vast majority of the Jews had not been able to grasp v 33
- d) He received an endorsement from the Lord v34,
  - (i) Yet if that Scribe did not take advantage of God's gift through Christ, he would forever remain not far

On this point of dismissing difference in doctrine as interpretation:

Have you heard attempts to redefine false teacher? It usually involves setting up a straw man by saying, if a false teacher is simply someone who teaches something that was incorrect, then everyone is probably a false teacher, or has been a some point:

There is some amount of truth to that, in that when the Bible speaks of false teachers, it is also placing emphasis on the person, that they know what the scripture says, and are intentionally teaching something else: So yes, there is Biblically speaking a difference between a "false teacher" and someone who is simply mistaken in some area of scripture:

***often even encourage people to let us know:*** be careful

But do you know what else scripture makes clear: That those who are mistaken are still called mistaken: Nowhere in scripture will you find that someone who is teaching or practicing something contrary to scripture is perfectly fine to stay that way as long as their motives are pure:

To illustrate this principle, and why it is not a license to give acceptance where God has not, lets look at the the example of Apollos:

## **II. Begin by reading his account: Acts 18:24-28**

A. Now read two warnings against False teachers: **1 Tim. 6:3-5. 1 Peter 2:1-3**

1. How does Apollos compare?
2. Was he a false teacher?

3. According to these passages I'd have to say no.

4. Are there men like Apollos today?

5. Where did Apollos fall?

a) Consider Paul's instructions to Timothy: **2Tim. 2:24-26**

(i) There are a few important lessons that must be taken away from this

(a) **First**, in both the story of Apollos, and in the story of the 12 men in Ephesus who were perhaps taught by him, neither were allowed to go on believing in the Baptism of John-- regardless of how mighty they could use the scriptures

(b) **Second**, if Apollos or those twelve men had refused to listen or change their position, I believe they then would have been classified as false teachers.

(2) This enables me to make a judgment, that while it is possible to be mistaken in regards to God's will and not be labeled a false teacher, it is not possible to continue on in those mistakes and be pleasing to Him.

### III. **Warnings to Take to Heart:**

- a. We are not doing our denominational friends any favors by trying to make them closer to God than they are:
- b. We should not seek an imagined comfort or freedom by trying to justify someone where they are:
- c. We should have the pity of the Lord, and seek to bring in those who are close
- d. Those who try to place people in the Kingdom with their words, will be held accountable for failing to do so with their deeds.