

Missing the Point

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us...proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”

Ephesians 5:1-15

Have you ever heard the following from a professing believer: “Come on, God’s not going to condemn me to Hell for...”? Maybe you’ve even said it yourself a few times. Fill in the blank with what you will – clothing choices; music, entertainment, or personal lifestyle preferences; activities, hobbies, or habits – the message it conveys is pretty clear, “Back off. Lighten up. Stop judging.” But is that all it communicates? No, and sadly the speaker probably hasn’t even considered the full import of what it expresses. So what else is it saying? Quite a bit actually...a whole lot more than we have time to address fully here.

But in short order, **it’s proclaiming that God is not enough**. Whenever an attempt to justify positions, activities, entertainments, and personal preferences is made using this statement the true condition of the heart is revealed. It’s divided. God’s not first in priority and most likely He’s not even second or third. Material things, people, and pleasures are preferred before Him, clearly communicating in action and deed that they are essential to happiness and contentment, and He’s not (Matthew 10:37-38; 1 John 2:15-17).

Secondly, **it distorts God’s grace and suggests that God is not worthy**. Biblical self-denial is cast aside as being passé, an undesirable and unacceptable concept that is wholly unnecessary in light of God’s grace (another doctrine that has been seriously twisted and maligned for self-indulgent purposes). Self-justification is offered up on the grounds of liberty in Christ, and God’s holiness and the believer’s personal purity are trampled underfoot declaring to all that God is not worthy of, nor would He expect such personal self-sacrifice (Matthew 16:24-26; Romans 6:1-2, 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 5:13-26; Ephesians 1:3-4; 1 Peter 1:13-16).

Finally, and most importantly, **this statement reveals a lack of true understanding of God’s gift of salvation**. It cheapens it, reducing it to a mere escape

from eternal consequences. Consider the statement again: "God's not going to condemn me to Hell for..." Revealing, isn't it? Is that all our salvation is – an escape from the fires of Hell? Is that what Christ suffered and died for – to be our own personal fire escape? Is His sacrifice to be treated so lightly? Absolutely not, and if that's your concept of Him, His sacrificial death, and the offer of His free gift of salvation (evidenced by your words, thoughts, or actions), you're missing the point. I would challenge you to seriously reconsider whether you truly know Him as Lord and Savior at all.

Salvation is not simply an escape from eternal punishment in Hell. It's an act of love and mercy meant to show forth the exceeding riches of God's grace (Ephesians 2:4-7); it's reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ so that we can be ministers of reconciliation (Romans 5:8-11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21); it's redemption, forgiveness, and justification – being declared righteous in God's sight because of Jesus Christ (Acts 26:18; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Romans 3:20-26, 5:1-2, 8-11); it's being made new creatures in Christ so that we can walk in newness of life and good works (2 Corinthians 5:15-17; Ephesians 2:10); it's being set apart for God's holy purposes (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:20-21); it's being adopted into the family of God and being joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-7); it's being sanctified in position so that we can daily walk worthy of Christ in all holiness (Romans 6:22; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 1:4-6, 4:22; 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7; Hebrews 12:14); it's being granted entrance through Jesus Christ into God's eternal Kingdom where we'll worship God and glory in His presence for all eternity (2 Chronicles 16; Isaiah 6:3; 2 Peter 1:10-11; Revelation 4:8).

So the next time you hear someone utter the statement above, I would challenge you to call them on it. They probably haven't even given it a second thought and possibly don't comprehend the magnitude of what it is they're saying. Explain it to them in love and challenge them on it. Time is short. The days are evil. Redeem the time. Be wise and understanding. Don't miss the point, and don't let others miss it either – we're saved for God's praise, honor, glory, and purposes – today, tomorrow, and into eternity. Let's live like it!