

Our Labels of Authenticity

It has been a couple of weeks since I spoke about each of us needing to **“BUILD AND TO BE BUILT INTO THE SANCTUARY OF GOD”**

1 PETER 2:1-5

Vs. 5 (MSG) – Present yourselves as building stones for the construction of a sanctuary vibrant with life, in which you’ll serve as holy priests offering Christ-approved lives up to God.

There is a cost and there is a commitment required of anyone who makes the decision to ‘bear the name of Christ’. That is what declaring you are a Christian means ... you have made a decision to:

- ∞ Be someone who belongs to Jesus
- ∞ Be someone who is different to the world around them
- ∞ Be associated in all ways with the Jesus

PSALM 139:23-24 (NIV)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

When we have just enough Christianity to make us moral & comfortable but not enough to confront our thinking, our actions and decisions, then we are only fooling ourselves.

The evidence that you have repented in your heart to salvation ... not merely said that you are sorry or felt remorseful ... but have literally repented, made the change of mind, turned from your previous Godless life; is that you are still repenting today to maintain that salvation.

The evidence that you truly believed to salvation; it takes both believing and repenting - ; is that you are still believing today and even more. It doesn’t stop there though ... it takes CONFESSING too. Do you confess – speak out your belief in Jesus?

We need to deal with the fact that the Gospel of Jesus Christ confronts us and demands everything from us.

Many believe in God and have no trouble with that but we still think that we – by ourselves - are good enough, can do enough or succeed enough to measure up to His standards ... **WE ARE NOT & CAN NOT.**

Being brought to a place of salvation is so difficult it takes a supernatural act - from a supernatural God - to bring about a supernatural transformation that is needed before we can even begin to think we can get to Heaven.

- ∞ Genuine AUTHENTIC articles have an “official mark”; the mark of the manufacturer. **IT IS OBVIOUS WHOM IT BELONGS TO OR CAME FROM.**
- ∞ Genuine AUTHENTIC products are more expensive and people **ARE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE TO OBTAIN IT.**

I said last time...

The problem is not a lack of zeal for right living, or clean living or being part of a Church – the problem is much greater. It is a LACK OF ZEAL FOR GOD HIMSELF, for the GLORY OF GOD to be MANIFEST and made CLEAR.

Here's a thought...:

If we are zealous for the things of God, if we fully realise what has been done, the purchase that has been made for us in order to save us from sin and the wrath of God; if we realise the greatness of the One who sits on the Throne, who created the Earth and one day will bring it all to an end; if we realised that absolutely everything in this temporal sphere is here because He holds it together ... the bigness, magnitude and majesty of God ... then we will begin to have a real zeal for God ... but not just a zeal for God but a real fear/reverence for Him. **We will have no option but to be utterly authentic or completely rebellious.**

So what are those Labels of Authenticity?

Two weeks ago we had our first “*Here's a Thought*” night and we shared with each other about “*being fully committed to God*”. Here are your thoughts:

- ∞ Obedience to the TWO Commandments – to Love God with ALL our hearts, minds, souls and strength and to Love our Neighbour as ourselves.
- ∞ Setting time aside for God without distraction and surrendering to Him who gives us life.
- ∞ Living in line with the scripture of **Matthew 26:39** – **Not my will but Yours be done.**
- ∞ A trust in God that goes beyond circumstances & outcomes.
- ∞ A relationship of true love, AGAPE love and reverence.
- ∞ A determined whole-hearted decision that places God at the top of every situation and relationship.
- ∞ A relationship that is completely TWO-WAY.
- ∞ Practicing our Christianity.
- ∞ Living our faith in our Community by walking, talking, living and giving like Jesus.

- ∞ Actually making a CHOICE to be committed
- ∞ Living in unity and trusting God with all of our heart and life.

Each and every one of these is absolutely true and authentic ... TO US. How about those who we associate with? How will they 'SEE' this authenticity?

What are our LABELS? Let's ask some questions about the genuineness of the product?

LABELS OF AUTHENTICITY – some that describe what being a Christian means:

BELIEVERS: Acts 2 describes their belief as life changing, practical, seen and communal.

- ∞ Are you convinced of what you believe?
- ∞ Has it changed you?
- ∞ Is what you believe seen?
- ∞ Is there a community of believers?

WITNESSES: Acts 3 describes the practical nature of being a Christian both personally and communally.

- ∞ Have you witnessed the change in your life?
- ∞ Has anyone else seen it?
- ∞ Are you sharing what you do have – your faith?

SERVANTS: Acts 4 describes how the followers served each other and cared for each other.

- ∞ Do we serve because of our faith?
- ∞ Do we serve out of a willing and a changed heart not doing so to receive anything in return?

OBEDIENT: Acts 5 tells of Peter on trial and his declaration is that **“We ought to obey God rather than men.”**

- ∞ How willingly do we obey?
- ∞ Are we obedient in accordance with God's direction or self motivation?
- ∞ Would we obey if it meant public trial and potentially worse?

DISCIPLES: Acts 6 speaks of many becoming disciples.

- ∞ Disciple is associated with the word discipline. Are we willing to discipline ourselves in prayer, serving, speaking out?

∞ A disciple is a student. Will we willingly place ourselves into a situation to learn more of God?

Two more Labels of Authenticity that carry with them the **risk of being 'Labelled'**:

FOLLOWER & PARTISAN:

Each of these words carries with them a heartbeat of devotion; belonging to a movement, a sense of complete attachment to a person, cause or belief.

The characteristic even goes as far as being described as fanatic.

The word fanatic has an interesting origin.

FANATIC = (Latin – *Fanaticus* – Inspired by a Deity)

DEITY = God or divine person; having a divine nature or status. The DEITY = GOD (Latin = *dues* = God)

So it would be safe to conclude that anything we are fanatic about ... we allocate a divine status to.

Therefore, if we are a fan ... a fanatic ... about anything other than God we are risking breaking the Commandment of God ... "*You shall have no other gods before me!*"

I REFUSE TO ALLOW ANYTHING TO EXCITE ME MORE THAN GOD.

Either Jesus Christ is the supreme Authority on the Human Heart or He is not worth paying attention to.

Authentic and genuine articles 'last the distance'. The only thing we can build our lives 'with and on' to last the distance is the ROCK CHRIST JESUS. (*A wise man built his house upon the Rock*) **It wasn't the house that helped it stand in the storm ... it was what it was built on.**