

Howards Corner

Many have joined churches but?

I have much concern about those of today that have maybe joined churches but have not found that there is not much difference in their lifestyle. That is common in the churches of today for they have been taught from their denominational background that the joining of a church is the same as salvation, but it is not so. That is so because the church has usurped the power to save by their own thoughts and imaginations.

So many of the churches of today have maybe pressed forward to reaching new members because their membership has dwindled, and they are seeing their budgets and existence are at stake. Maybe they thought that by having new members they could overcome the problems. Well suppose that you do talk people into joining the church club but to join does not change the condition of the soul.

Those people, however, are just people who have become members of an organization but that is not salvation. So, the numbers have grown but what happens to the souls of the people that you promised eternal life but have not delivered. Where is repentance and change of direction? By what power does that happen? It certainly does not happen by a powerless dead church that has decayed through the last many years because of the lack of correct preaching of the word and the message of salvation by grace through faith.

So, we come to the point where these new members are to face the fact that they are sinners and that there is no remedy for them in church membership. So, you have these new members, but their souls are still where they were. That is because joining a church does not save and it has never been because that is getting the cart before the horse.

Conviction and then *repentance* and *conversion and acceptance* by the Lord Jesus and then the *filling of the Holy Spirit (Being born again)* then *the power to live the life*. You cannot get the order wrong because it leads to putting glory into man's or the church's hands. Glory belongs to the Lord and all ability to bring it to completion on that final day.

Righteousness is still the objective!

God is a righteous God and cannot have unrighteousness in His presence. So, we that are unrighteous by our nature cannot by our own actions become righteous before the Lord for “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” and “our works of righteousness are as filthy rags before the Lord”.

So, there must be something else that must happen to bring us to be an acceptable person before the Lord.

So, mankind from the beginning has tried to work our way to reconciliation with God by our works of righteousness but *our works of righteousness are as filthy rags before the Lord*. So, we persist in our efforts to do righteous works to gain favor with the Lord but that only puts another sin on our plate –that of self-righteousness. It becomes pride in ourselves, so we get the credit and God is denied the glory.

In the Old Testament that was the case. They were given laws to obey and to follow but were never able to keep those laws. The pharisees at the time of Jesus first coming were very diligent to keep the letter of the law and went to extremes to force their ways on the people. They however had no righteous heart, so they were not able to see and keep the “spirit” of the law and killed their only hope of righteousness which is Jesus the Messiah.

The churches of today are still in that same pattern. Many even place themselves under those same laws of the Old Testament and still insist on trusting the keeping of the law for their righteousness. It didn’t work for Israel, and it won’t work for the churches of today because the law cannot produce righteousness and that is where we need to be.

Do we not understand that after 2000 years we are failing to understand that there is a New Testament –there is one greater than Moses that has come –there has been a real and everlasting righteousness brought into this world by the son of God. Unless you turn loose of trying to be righteous in your own self by works of law or church membership or doing charitable works then you cannot be righteous before God.

Jesus is the giver of righteousness. I said giver!! We have not earned our position of righteousness – it has been truly given to us as a gift of God. Freely given to those that will receive. You are used to hearing it called salvation but without righteousness you will not see the Lord, but you do not supply the righteousness it is given to you.

So then why are not all saved and why is it a narrow path we must follow to get the reward of eternal life?

It is so simple that it goes right over our heads –like a little child you must receive the word of salvation which leads to righteousness. It is too simple! We however have made it complex and based on our knowledge and have tried to help God out by adding our works and our own abilities so then comes pride of self-righteousness.

I explained earlier that there must be the proper order which is first --humble ourselves and recognize that we are sinner in need of the grace of God. We do not even get credit for that.

It is God who seeks out the hearts He wants in His kingdom and convicts us of our lostness. That is why we must have a sincere heart that is built on truthfulness. It is very hard or perhaps impossible for habitual liars to enter the kingdom. Can God even trust you if you are a habitual liar? Why would He choose you for He has already had one close to him who had pride enter him and he rebelled. That is the evil one who is the father of lies and the deceiver.

This deceiver has been active on earth from the beginning and is still active in the world and the churches of today. He is the king of counterfeit righteousness. He is the one who places these thoughts in us to go about doing charity deeds and think we are serving God. He has and will use this ploy to lead the world to destruction and try to place himself upon the temple of Jerusalem and declare to be God and require all to worship him. The chief liar of all time will come to his end and Jesus' name will be glorified.

If you are a habitual liar, you must flee immediately from that sin or your pleas for forgiveness will fall on deaf ears because who can trust you? There is however hope in the Lord for all sins when we sincerely repent and seek the truth which is Christ Jesus who is the truth. Truth and lies don't mix! You cannot find "thou shall not lie"

in the ten commandments so by the letter of the law it is not listed but it is closely akin to “thou shall not bear false witness” but that is why Jesus said we must live by the spirit of the law which is the law of the spirit of Jesus. So, we are not under the law for our salvation but under the spirit of Christ. There are then many things that could spin off, “not giving false witness” so they all cannot be written down as law but if we are in Christ Jesus, then the spirit of Christ will guide us back on course. But if we are not in Christ Jesus but are only a member of a church organization then who is going to guide us back onto the righteous path?

Then follows lying to ourselves and then the cloak of hypocrisy. We pretend to be a follower of Christ but are not and will wind up believing we are saved and are righteous, so we no longer sincerely seek the truth and are put to sleep by our own supposed salvation. We then add our “good” works and our church attendance and keeping the Old Testament laws and volunteering to do church work and it fortifies in our mind that we are a real believer. So, you settle into a life of churchism but have never been born again. Do you not realize we came from dust and to dust we will go? That is why we must humble ourselves always before the Lord or He cannot teach us.

There are many more sins than these two and all must be addressed for the result must be righteousness. The only place to receive that is in the shed blood of Jesus—which was shed for you and me—all must bow to Jesus now or at our judgement.

To the members of these churches, I say –You must be born of the spirit and to the leaders of the churches –You must teach the total word of God and lead them to seek to find the Holy Spirit in their lives with truth which is Jesus Christ alone.

I write these things to you because I have seen the deadness of churches today and I have been given a mandate to try to wake up those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. The wind of the spirit of Christ is blowing but few want to put up their sails to catch the power of the spirit of God. Maybe a few will understand.

Howard