

Public Profession

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While searching the Internet for people who are public with their faith I found lots of church sites for Christian churches, there are lots of sites on Islam, the Occult and every kind of ideological group you can think of. The most interesting thing I discovered is that many professing religious people, to include Christians, are very vocal, be it on-line or just about anywhere in the public square, about everything from immigration, global warming, economics, even moral and often controversial issues such as homosexuality and abortion. All of which are things that as Christians we have been commanded by God to steward and govern through Kingdom precept and principle. And, let me add, they are important issues. But none compare to the greatest of moral issues; the most tragic if not shouted from the roof tops of our homes, schools, and public square; all others do not compare in importance and relevance as that of the human soul and it's need for Jesus.

Even the lives of the rich and famous, none of which can heal and deliver the soul with fame and fortune, are crumbling in the public eye as their sin overtakes them and they wallow in hopelessness. They can see our steeples, they can turn to our television and radio stations, they can visit our websites but who will share Jesus with them? To post and publish the information is one thing but God did not stop there. He did not send His Word and say, now it is up to you to seek Me out alone. No, He sent the Holy Spirit to meet with those who are seeking truth face-to-face, heart-to-heart, soul-to-soul, and Spirit-to-spirit. Father did not say in **Matthew 28:19-20** Go ye certified preachers therefore and start a television show, publish some books, put up a website and sit back and let the technology do the evangelism. These are all useful and awesome tools to reach the masses but they are not substitutes for the real church, you and I, going into the highways and hedges, the workplaces, hospitals, prisons and anywhere else we can to share the gospel of Christ to the lost and hurting.

Again, many, even Christians are public about many convicting things and are willing to start or be a part of a movement for everything from global warming to homosexual adoption. But when it comes to being vocal about telling someone about the birth, life, death, resurrection, love and transforming, redeeming power of the Lord of Lord and King of Kings, well that is private or taboo. We have bought this cultural voodoo put on us that we are not supposed to speak publicly about our faith, the joy of our salvation. This, it seems, is to each his own and not tolerated in the public arena.

As I stated in Bible study Wednesday night, let us daily search our hearts and cling to our profession of faith. Webster defines profession as: "an act of openly declaring or **publicly** claiming a belief, faith, or opinion." It is a verb. Too often I have heard many Christian say, "My faith is private." I find throughout Scripture that this is not and cannot be true of a believer of Christianity. Instead, it is a great responsibility to openly proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, King of Kings and Lord of Lords over all creation and to every nation. As believers we are **commanded** to share the joy of our salvation and the love of Christ to every unbeliever everywhere. To not do so is to accept the responsibility of the blood of their **soul** upon your own hands. To think that God would give the gospel to you to withhold from others for your own personal gain and gratification is absurd and is not Christ. He did not die privately but publicly. His acceptance of our sin and infirmities were for public display. His entire life was an open book for us to see and **emulate**.

Jesus said, in **Matthew 28:19-20** *19Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

The increase in technology to spread the gospel is great. But we have lost a few key components such as the Holy Spirit's ability to operate through you the human element from one spirit and soul to another. I believe it has led us to convenient, complacent, lazy and apathetic evangelism if not none at all within the Body of Christ. The implication of Christ's command in Matthew is that of personal intervention into the lives and souls of another human being. It is that of taking the time and effort to impart from one heart to another. It is the

patience to transform ones thinking and heal ones emotional hurts with the law of love. It is founded in a responsibility of compassion and obedience to God's command and accountability from sincere caring about the well being, Kingdom purpose and destiny of another's life in Christ.

I spoke with Brother Len Ballenger Thursday on the phone. He told me he had been in about six different cities in Columbia with drama ministry teams. He said that they were averaging about 600 decisions and commitments to Christ each day. Folks, fish don't jump out of the water and into the boat. You can have all the right bait in the boat and they still will not jump in. You have to go where they are. Some say, "But I don't know where they are?" They are all around you everyday, everywhere.

Luke 14:12-23 *12Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. 13But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. 15And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, **Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.** 16Then said he unto him, **A certain man** made a great supper, and bade many: 17And sent **his servant** at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18And **they all with one consent began to make excuse.** The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. 19And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. 20And another said, **I have married a wife,** and therefore I cannot come. 21So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, **Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.** 22And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and **yet there is room.** 23And the lord said unto the servant, **Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.***

The parables Jesus spoke denote responsibility to us in the Kingdom relative to the conditions of our hearts in response to that responsibility. There are five players or groups in this parable:

1. The host of the feast – Our Lord and Savior.
2. The servant of the host – I stand before you now teaching you what Father has commanded of us regarding the souls of the lost. Will you be as this servant or will you make excuses.
3. Those who knew him but made excuses – Is there one of us who has a valid excuse that the King will accept?
4. The poor, maimed, halt, and blind who came and feasted with the Master.
5. Those in the highways and hedges who came and filled the house.

When Peter, Paul and many of them were thrown in prison and their very lives threatened for publicly preaching about the salvation of our souls through Jesus Christ they continued even in the prisons and when set free the very first thing they did was go into the public square and publicly start preaching again. What was it that drove them, or compelled them to such devotion to public profession and unashamed love for this cause?

The Apostle Paul expresses this need and responsibility for public profession in **Romans 1:15-17** *15So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. 16For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.* And in **Philippians 1:20** *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in **nothing** I shall be **ashamed**, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.* And finally in **2 Timothy 1:8** *Be **not** thou therefore **ashamed** of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;*