

May 2018

The Escape From Cultural Christianity

Cultural Christianity means to pursue the God we want instead of the God who is. It is the tendency to be shallow in our understanding of God, wanting Him to be more of a gentle grandfather type who spoils us and lets us have our own way. It is sensing a need for God, but on our own terms. It is wanting the God we have underlined in our Bibles without wanting the rest of Him, too. It is God relative instead of God absolute.

The Man in the Mirror

Resurrender: The Way Back

When I speak at an evangelistic outreach meeting (like a prayer breakfast or a luncheon), I always mention that Revelation 3:20 is my favorite verse in the Bible. Let me tell you why.

In the past I closed evangelistic meetings by offering the audience the opportunity to express faith and receive Christ by silently praying a sinner's prayer. In recent times, though, I close with two prayers – one for those God is calling that day (see John 6:44), and another for those who have not been walking with the Lord and long to find their way back.

For the second prayer, I make it very clear and very precise that I am referring specifically to those men and women who have once known the joy of receiving Christ but are not in fellowship with Him. They have taken control of their lives. They have pursued the God they wanted instead of the God who is. They are not walking with Christ. They are cultural Christians and not Biblical Christians.

Why would I approach Christians with the Gospel in this way? In my experience, nearly everyone has "prayed a prayer," especially in the South. America has been saturated with the Gospel, and countless millions have leaped at the chance to receive Christ without knowing or counting the cost.

Many of these people leave the revival meetings and go about the business of life as usual. They don't obey Christ, meditate on the Word, talk with God, or manifest the changed life of those who had surrendered their will to almighty God.

When one prayer to receive Christ and a second to resurrender to Him are offered, those who resurrender always outnumber the first-time decisions. I think it's great! Dwight L. Moody once said, "I would rather wake up a slumbering church than a slumbering world."

I offer the Revelation 3:20 passage as the way back for broken Christians. In that verse Christ speaks to the *church* at Laodicea. They were a lot like us. They became prosperous and self-reliant. The Lord addressed them this way: "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing'" (Revelation 3:17). Jesus sternly warned the Laodiceans. "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm-neither hot nor cold-I am about to spit you out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16)

We live in a profoundly religious country, and we are a prosperous people. But we are also a broken people-a people who have pursued the God of our own imaginations, believing we can re-create His character to suit our own practical problems. The result? We are the most religious nation in the world, but, like the Laodiceans, many are lukewarm.

Prosperous Christians become lukewarm. Lukewarm Christians rely upon themselves and forget the terms of their surrender to Christ. Instead of living by the will of God, they live according to the self-will and break fellowship with God. We live in a broken generation.

In Revelation 3:20 Jesus offers to reestablish fellowship with broken, lukewarm, cultural Christians. He cries out His warning and His offer to the church. Long before the idea struck Moody, Jesus spoke to wake up a slumbering church. He said, "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and know. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:19-20). He is the way back. When we become complacent, when we stop walking with Him, He still loves us. He despises our behavior, but he wants to restore fellowship with us.

Patrick M. Morley

Dining with God

A quiet dinner with friends in their home epitomizes fellowship. The door bell rings. The door swings wide. Eyes meet. Smiles erupt on happy faces. Friends embrace. The hosts invite their dear friends in. The warm, encouraging conversation that flows easily around the table over a fondly prepared feast symbolizes the high-water mark of fellowship. Christ picked this very symbol to express what happens when we repent and open the door of our heart and resurrender to Him. "I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (v. 20).

Have you been lukewarm,? Have you thought to yourself, *I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing?* If so, Jesus is standing at the door, knocking. Jesus is gentle and quiet, and He never forces Himself into our lives. Instead, He knocks and softly whispers His offer. Do you hear it? It is my favorite. For those who are walking with Him, it is the way back. "Here I am! I stand at the door [of your life] and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in..." (v. 20).

If you have not been walking with the Lord and long to find the way back, invite Him in.

Patrick M. Morley

Front Entrance Greeters This Month:

- 6th – Harriett Cheek & Mary Kimrey
- 13th – Larry & Debbie Balk
- 20th – Sara McGee & Margaret Watson
- 27th – Martha Smith & Nancy Rich

Annex Greeters This Month:

- 6th – Tyler & TJ Black
- 13th – Jason & Brenna Rich
- 20th – Vicky West & Vannetta Keller
- 27th – Jim & Lindsey Kithcart

Nursey Rotation This Month:

- 6th – Meghann Case
- 13th – Tish & Kimberly Pilcher
- 20th – Nancy Fillpot
- 27th – Dixie Vodry