



But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. -

Matthew 15:9

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The Message in the Meme

It's fascinating how much there is in the Bible that we overlook when we read it. We tend to read through the lens of what we have been taught or learned on our own then tend to skim past most of the passages without taking notice to the gems that are buried within the pages of this Book. If we will take the blinders off and allow the Holy Spirit to work with us he will show us all sorts of fascinating things in the Bible that we have missed.

Tonight I'm going to talk about one of those overlooked gems that is staring us in the face, hidden in plain sight so we don't see it. And I will admit I saw this on a meme that was loaded with animosity toward the church. Despite my own feelings toward the church this is a meme I won't be sharing because my take on the subject is a bit different than the intent on the meme. But I will pass along the message because it was insightful. Keep reading and at the end you can decide for yourself if this makes any sense.

Let me ask you a few questions.

1. What was the purpose for which Jesus became a human being and came to this planet to live with us?

Wouldn't his purpose have been to reveal to us the character of his Father who is also our Father? Jesus showed us what love is by the way he treated others. Everything he did was done with love for others and not once did he ever act in a way that was self-oriented. If he had then he would have failed in his mission.

While he was here Jesus stated that if you've seen him, you've seen the Father for he and the Father are the same. (John 14:6-14) So, if Jesus only acted in Love toward all then so does the Father.

2. What were some of the last words Jesus spoke before returning to heaven?

He told us to love each other as he loves us (John 13:34). There are no qualifications to this command. There are no clauses or loopholes giving us the opportunity to fail to love. He wants us to love all, even those whom we deem to be unworthy or unlovable. He wants us to love our enemies as he loves those who hate(d) him.

Essentially Jesus came and lived with us to show us Love and what it's all about. He created the universe to function under the laws of love. And as we come to truly know Jesus then our own defective characters become like Jesus's character and we learn to love others more than we love ourselves.

By knowing Jesus we also learn to trust God with all phases of our life. We need to place absolutely everything into his hands and trust him with it. No matter what that everything might entail, we need to learn to trust God with it. And I've got a great tip for you, God is trustworthy and he's big enough to take on all your burdens. You can trust him.

So what about the old testament? They were living in a covenant of following the rules. When the Israelites were rescued from slavery God gave them a written list of 10 rules to follow. He did this because the Israelites were morally newborns who didn't know what proper behavior was. They needed a list of rules to follow. The goal was for them to mature enough that they would no longer need that list.

When Jesus came he taught us about love, giving us a new covenant in the process and making the old covenant obsolete. And that new covenant is that we are to love one another.

But generically speaking, the church doesn't teach the message of loving each other. They blatantly continue to spread the doctrine of following the rules. Many churches have made up their own list of rules to add to the original 10 written on stone. Being forced to follow rules that you don't understand or want to abide by doesn't engender love, it results in rebellion. Do you really want to spend eternity in a place where we are focusing on making sure that we don't make any mistakes because we fear setting off the righteous indignation of the Father who will go berserk and zap us if we do something as simple as staying in the shower a bit too long on Friday evening causing us to have to put our jammies on after sunset?

Where is the message of love that Jesus commanded of us? Could it be that we aren't being taught about God's Love because those who are supposedly ordained of God don't actually know God therefore they are unfamiliar with the very concept of Love? I believe that's highly likely.

The pastors and Bible teachers need to learn of God's Love just as much as everyone else. Perhaps you know someone who holds a position that requires him/her to spread the gospel but they are spreading a false gospel of following the rules. If so, I challenge you to make that person a pet project. Pray for them to be receptive of the message of Love and pray that the Holy Spirit will either give you the right things to say to them in order to reach them, or that He will put someone in their life that can teach them about God's love.

Before I end this I want to answer the question of what is wrong with following the rules. If you are bent and determined to follow the rules then you're not following Jesus, you're the disciple of a list of rules. You're focusing on your behavior which ultimately puts the focus on yourself and that makes you guilty of self-worship.

Sadly, the religious world has been so intent on insisting that people follow the list of 10 plus the wealth of other rules that someone dreamed up, that they are in reality teaching self-deification.

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. 2 Timothy 3:1-5

This prophecy is being fulfilled today. People have a form of godliness but are denying that it's a false godliness, a false gospel. We've been taught this by the church. But don't get angry with your pastors and teachers because they have also been brainwashed into believing that self-veneration is the truth.

And that is the overlooked gem for tonight. Thanks to whomever it was that found this and created that meme.

Much love to all,

Hannah

Addendum: Before posting this I realized there is one question or comment that is always made and I need to address it. That comment is, "Hannah, you're off your rocker. We haven't been taught that." Let me respond to that by sharing with you the lyrics from music.

The Lord is coming are you ready?
The Lord is coming are you ready?
Would you be all right, if he came tonight?
The Lord is coming are you ready?
(Where is the focus in this song? It isn't on God, it's on your behavior.)

Oh, you'd better mind
You'd better mind
You've got to give an account in the judgment
You'd better mind
(Where is the focus on this and what picture of God does it present? The focus is on your behavior and it paints an "unfriendly" picture of God.)

Yes, Jesus loves me
Yes, Jesus loves me
Yes, Jesus loves me
The Bible tells me so
(We start teaching children at an early age to focus on themselves and disguise it as focusing it on Jesus.)

I'm only human
I'm just a woman
Help me believe in what I could be
And all that I am
Show me the stairway
I have to climb
Lord for my sake
Teach me to take
One day at a time
(I Googled this one to make sure I got the lyrics right. Look at all the references to self in just those few short lines.)

Because He lives I can face tomorrow
Because He lives All fear is gone

Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living just because He lives
(The song started with a focus on Jesus but it turned to focusing on self.)

When my way grows drear
Precious Lord linger near
When my life is almost gone
Hear my cry hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall
Take my hand precious Lord
Lead me home
(This focus of this song is on self but it's disguised as focusing on Jesus.)

Amazing Grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now am found
Was blind but now I see

Want more examples? Grab a hymnal or turn on christian radio and pay attention to how many times you hear references to self and/or behavior.

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