



But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. – Matthew 15:9

invaindotheyworshipme.com

And the Enemy Is...

In my quest for a better understanding of God, I frequently will listen to various preachers who have posted their sermons/lectures on YouTube or other various websites. What I have found is confusion. It would seem that most preachers don't have an accurate concept of God's Character which is Love. Many of them are trying to present a better picture of God, but they are stuck on the idea that God is a murderer.

Just yesterday I saw YouTube was recommending a preacher that I was unfamiliar with. His topic was intriguing so I clicked to listen. Initially his message was informative and I was enjoying it. But when he began telling us that God was justified in committing murder then I practiced my right of free choice and turned him off. I'm not going to listen to that.

In his example he was speaking of the two who sold their property, kept half of what they had sold then gave the rest to the disciples and claimed they were giving the full price. According to Peter they had lied to God. You can read the story in Acts 5:1-11.

What this preacher missed was that it is SIN that kills, not God. God is the life-giver.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Romans 6:23 NIV

The wages of the righteous is life, but the earnings of the wicked are

sin and death. – Proverbs 10:16 NIV

When we do a job for someone, the employer is the one who pays our wages. Suppose you were hired on as a new employee at a wage that was barely enough to survive on. When payday finally arrives and you're expecting to get paid for your services, or to receive your wages, you're told by your boss that God will give you your pay. How do you feel about that? Will the promise that God will issue you a check pay your rent, buy your food and other essentials?

It just doesn't work that way. The person who hires you is the one who is responsible to pay you. When you work for sin, then it is sin that will pay you and your wages is death.

But when you “work” for God (live your life in accordance to his Character) then your “wages” is the gift of life.

So, this aforementioned preacher failed to recognize that God didn't kill Ananias and Sapphira. What most likely happened is that when they lied God allowed them to see themselves without any blinders. They recognized just how wicked they were and probably died of a heart attack, stroke, brain aneurysm, or some kind of natural death brought on by stress and/or anxiety. God didn't have to kill them. The recognition of their own faulty character caused them to die from a massive overload of self – a major meltdown.

Moving along....

There is a pastor in Canada that Elkanah and I both enjoy listening to. He's got a terrific presentation and is teaching a picture of God that we both enjoy and want to learn more about. His name is Bruxy Cavey. You can google him.

I'm not positive about this but I believe that Bruxy is an Anabaptist pastor. His church operates differently than any other religious organization that I've run into. And actually, I don't know what's going on there. It appears that they meet in small groups all over Canada and parts of the US, and every Sunday they watch a live presentation given via the internet by a different pastor. But like I said, I don't know that's what's going on.

This morning I listened to last Sunday's sermon which was given by a woman. I would be glad to credit her but I don't know her name. Her sermon was informative and interesting. It was the last sermon in a series on the book of Jonah. In this sermon she asked the question, “Who is your enemy?”

Now I'm asking you to stop and think for a moment and identify who your enemy is. The woman who gave the sermon began talking about different people and suggesting that they might be someone's enemy then she suggested how to deal with your enemies. (At least I think that's what she did. I admit, I checked out about that point.)

Yes, I checked out. It was just this week that Elkanah and I learned exactly who our enemy is. The Bible tells us.

“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),
salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—
to show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember his holy covenant,
the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear
in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
– Luke 1:68-75 NIV

“Praise the Lord God of Israel!
He has come to take care of his people
and to set them free.
He has raised up a mighty Savior for us
in the family of his servant David.
He made this promise through his holy prophets long ago.
He promised to save us from our enemies
and from the power of all who hate us.
He has shown his mercy to our ancestors
and remembered his holy promise,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham.
He promised to rescue us from our enemies' power
so that we could serve him without fear
by being holy and honorable as long as we live.
– Luke 1:68-75 God's Word Translation

It's going to take a little reading into this to see what is being said here. What I initially read is just words. It meant nothing to me. Not long ago Elkanah and I began reading the book, *The Day the Revolution Began*, by N.T. Wright. In the book Dr. Wright used the above passage in Luke to show us that the enemy is not a person. Our enemy is anything that stands between us and God.

What would stand between us and God? How about pride? Or maybe an attitude of judging others? Let's add to that list greed, self-focus, failure to love, etc.... I've been told there are pastors who insist that you cannot have a one-to-one relationship with God, instead you must go through him or a church representative and use them as a go-between. There are even people who believe they can't have a relationship with God if they are eating eggs, cheese, or anything that is non-vegan. Many people will take their own set of man-made rules and try to impose them on others by attempting to brainwash others into believing that God will zap them if they don't follow these man-made rules.

So, I go back to the question that the lady pastor asked and that I have echoed to you. Who (or what) is your enemy? It may be that a person is responsible for keeping you from having a loving, one-on-one relationship with God. If that is the case then recognize that it isn't the person that is your enemy, it is that person's behavior that is your enemy.

I'll end this with a challenge. That challenge is to pay attention to your "enemies," those things that keep separating you from God. Do whatever you must do, no matter how painful that may be, and take the necessary action to put those things out of your life.

This is a challenge that I must also work on. It won't be easy but if we rely on the Holy Spirit for help, the help will come when we need it.

Much love to all,

Hannah

Copyright 2019 by Hannah