

The Great Disconnect

Introduction. In Luke 12:1, Jesus warned, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." You struggle to be consistent sometimes but you are a good person and do not want to be a hypocrite. Likewise, you have read Paul's command, "Do not lie to one another ..." (Colossians 3:9). You know that lying is a part of the old man of sin and you put that man to death many years ago. Speaking the truth with family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers has become the hallmark of your character. You are a person of integrity. Or, are you?

I. *The Disconnect In Teaching*

- A. For a long time now I have been concerned that there is a great disconnect in our worship. Gospel preachers and Bible class teachers all over the country sympathize. Great care is spent preparing a lesson that the preacher or Bible class teacher knows is applicable to people who listen to them.
- B. Yet, it seems that what is said does not sink in. The words of instruction, admonition, and encouragement easily and evidently go in one ear and out the other. It is as if the people who are listening think that preachers and teachers are talking to someone else and they are only spectators to the event (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:21). They are talking to you! It is your life God is seeking to change (Luke 8:18).

II. *The Disconnect In Singing*

- A. Yet, as important as preaching is, the greater disconnect between what we think about and what we say or do may be in the words we sing. Maybe it is because we want to get the melody right. Maybe it is because we want to make sure we hit every note. Perhaps it is because we are so familiar with songs we have sung since childhood we do not think about words that roll off our lips so readily. This is a serious problem because the very last place you want to be a hypocrite is when you assemble with others to worship God.
- B. Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:17 tell us that we are to "make melody in our heart to God" with our singing. We are also to "teach and admonish one another" when we sing too. Furthermore, we are to sing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs."
 - 1. "Psalms" indicates a song that took its general character from the psalms of the Old Testament.
 - 2. Competent Greek scholars agree that "hymns" means praises to God or Christ with religious content composed by Christians.
 - 3. "Spiritual songs" can be descriptive of the first two and extend to all forms of song, with the limitation that they must be "spiritual," not

- secular. Their content is what has been revealed by the Spirit through the word.
- C. How, you ask, does this affect my singing? Consider some of the familiar words we sing and the promises we make to God and others.
1. "Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom, brother, All along the fertile way? Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom, brother? You must reap at the last great day!" Part of the chorus says, "Will your sheaves be many? Will you garner any, For the gathering at the harvest home" ("Sowing The Seed Of The Kingdom," Fred A. Fillmore, 85).
 2. "If the name of the Savior is precious to you, If His care has been constant and tender and true, If the light of His presence has brightened your way, O will you not tell of your gladness today?" ("Will You Not Tell It Today?", Jessie Brown Pounds, 351).
 3. "We have heard the Macedonian call today; Send the light, Send the light." Later in the song are the words, "Let us not grow weary in the work of love; Send the light, Send the light" ("Send The Light," Charles H. Gabriel, 544). Is it true? Have you heard the "Macedonian call"? From whence did it come? How did you answer it?
 4. "I want to be a soul winner for Jesus every day, He does so much for me; I want to aid the lost sinner to leave his erring way, And be from bondage free" ("A Soul Winner For Jesus," J. W. Ferrill, 568). Really?
 5. "O let us spread the word wherever it may be heard, Help groping souls the light to see, That yonder none may say, 'You showed me not the way, You never mentioned Him to me.'" The chorus says, "You met me day by day and knew I was astray, Yet never mentioned Him to me" ("You Never Mentioned Him To Me," James Rowe, 598).
 6. "Millions are groping without the gospel, Quickly they'll reach eternity's night; Shall we sit idly as they rush onward? Haste, let us hold up Christ the true light" ("Into Our Hands," Ruth Carruth, 616). Do you realize what you are singing in the words of this song? Do you realize the promise you are making to God?
- D. There is an element of poetic license in poetry -- and also in how songs are interpreted -- but poetic license is not a license to make promises that you have no intention to keep (Deuteronomy 23:21).
- E. Songs are prayers, and prayer is to be offered in faith (James 1:6). Furthermore, in whatever you pray for, you should do your part to see it accomplished (Matthew 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10). Hear our prayer, O Lord: "Lead me to some soul today, O teach me, Lord, just what to say; Friends of mine are lost in sin, and cannot find their way.

Few there are who seem to care, and few there are who pray; Melt my heart and fill my life; Give me one soul today" ("Lead Me To Some Soul Today," Will H. Houghton, 476). Can you sing that prayer in faith? Are you seeking a lost soul to save?

Conclusion. There is no good time to disconnect from God, especially when we are singing and praying. After all, acceptable worship must be "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Therefore, consider carefully what you say when you sing. It is better that you should not sing than to promise what you are unwilling to deliver (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5). Jesus gave us a command in Matthew 28:19-20 and we need to be determined and diligent to fulfill it.

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