

What are your expectations for this series?

Some are expecting me to **blast a “godless” world** for their sinful ways while others are expecting me to **lower the boom on the church** for sitting idle for decades, allowing these issues to go off the rails. Neither expectation reflects my intention for this series.

It is NOT my intention to BLAST the world or the church, but to speak directly and boldly to the church. My concern is this; if “the church” falters in representing and standing firm in God’s truth, who will be the LIGHT to those bound in the darkness of sin and death? Whether it is convenient or not, the church of Jesus Christ must not waiver from Biblical truth.

LIKE A SNOWBALL ROLLING DOWN HILL

The phrase “...like a snowball rolling downhill...” is used to create a mental picture of something that GROWS larger as it moves along a path. This is how I have seen our culture self-destructing, especially over the past 18 months or so. To be clear, the issues of focus for this series are not new, they did not materialize in the past 12-18 months. What is new however, is the blinding speed at which these and other issues have found themselves either gaining acceptance among the populous and/or causing irreparable division. I find this ALARMING, but it should not catch us by SURPRISE because what we’re seeing is the natural course of SIN and SPIRITUAL DEATH.

There is something that is SUPRISING to me, however. I am SUPRISED at the way these issues have found entry into The Church of Jesus Christ, and how The Church is being SILENCED at best, and DECEIVED and/or WON OVER at worse.

BENDING LIKE A REED IN THE WIND

The Apostle Paul is noted for his expansive missionary ministry, planting churches all over Asia-Minor. In his instructions to Timothy about the church in Ephesus he laid down an important fact about the CHURCH & TRUTH. **See 1 Timothy 3:14-15**

Paul uses two words to describe what The Church is in relation to God's truth: ...**pillar** and **buttress**.

Buttress = a support that maintains the structural integrity of a wall.

Pillar = a support that maintains structural integrity, and supports the weight of a roof.

Together, these are non-negotiable necessities for a structure if it is going to stand firm, providing shelter from the calamities of the volatile elements of nature.

TRUTH POINT #1: The Church of Jesus Christ is the _____ support and maintainer of God's TRUTH in this world. Corrupt the Church and the _____ of His TRUTH is dimmed extensively.

CHURCH GROWTH has become the **IDOL** for Pastors and Parishioners, and it is bringing disastrous consequences on the clarity of The Gospel.

Scripture tells us that The Gospel is an OFFENSE (1 Peter 2:7-8; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Galatians 5:11) to the natural man, and of course if something is offensive it naturally repels rather than attracts. If CHURCH GROWTH is the goal, and if The Gospel is an OFFENSE, then something must be done to mitigate the OFFENSE and make The Gospel more ATTRACTIVE to sinners. Right?

What is offensive about The Gospel:

- It tells us that in our natural state we are _____, unacceptable to God. **Romans 3:23**
- It tells us that we are _____ to fix this condition. In other words we have nothing to bring to God to make ourselves acceptable to Him. **Ephesians 2:8-9**
- It tells us God will accept us _____ we are, (**Good News**) but will not allow us to remain _____ we are. (**Bad News for those**

who will not bend the knee to accept God's ways) His Goal for us is **TRANSFORMATION**. **Romans 12:1-2; 8:29**

- The Gospel _____ that the sinner **die to self** and **live for God**. **Romans 6:1-14**

TRUTH POINT #2: The trend has been to _____ the true message of The Gospel and replace it with something the unredeemed mind would see as less _____ and more _____.

Under the banner of “**reaching people for Christ**” and “**growing the church**,” as the culture has slid further into the depths of sin God wants to save them out of, The Church has found itself accommodating the ever-growing call for tolerance, inclusivity, and affirmation of ungodly lifestyles to ensure that its seats are filled, and its coffers are full.

The Pressure is Great to...

- **Acquiesce** to the political crowd who believe the answer is found in politicians and laws instead evangelism and discipleship.
- **Concede** that there are acceptable times to devalue developing life, or old life, or infirmed life so that established, young, viral life can be unimpeded in its quest for happiness and ease.
- **Redefine** marriage, sexual identity, and change pronouns so that those who are lost in the malaise of sexual confusion can be affirmed.
- **Join the cause** to rectify the unjust prejudice, bigotry, and hatred of one people group, by assigning blame for ALL injustice to another people group, defining them as racist simply because of the color of their skin.

KNOW WHAT YOU BELIEVE, WHY YOU BELIEVE IT AND STAND FIRM

This series is about bringing these topics out into the open, examining them in light of Scripture, and for “**The Church**” to...

- ...understand **what** it should believe about these issues.
- ...understand **why** it should believe what it believes.
- ...**determine** by God's grace to stand firm in our belief, holding out the light of the gospel for all to see and receive, disciplining anyone who receives it to trust Jesus as Savior and Lord and to grow in His likeness.

What to expect: As we dive into our first topic, RACISM, here is what you can expect throughout the series.

1. **My presentation will be Biblical and Prayed over.**
2. **I will refrain from railing at sin, but will speak boldly and clearly, with compassion for those trapped in sin.**
3. **The topics are for many VERY controversial and can engender anger and a desire to be disruptive. Disruptive behaviors will not be tolerated in our Worship Gathering.**
4. **I will seek to end each session by drawing our attention to how The Gospel impacts the topic at hand.**

WRAP UP

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Next Week - RACISM