

Unfolding Controversy

(February 1, 2024)

What I'm seeing throughout Christendom is *sorrowful*. I wish it didn't exist, but sadly, not only does it exist, but it appears to be growing at an unprecedented rate. It seems many to most Christians are completely unaware of what is happening throughout global society. Moreover, too many seem unable to distinguish truth from error. Wonder why that is? Maybe it's due to not reading and studying God's Word?

Is all of this due to the "great falling away" mentioned by Paul to Timothy? Is it simply due to the natural inclination of people to get lazy and grow tired of the things of the Lord? Is it possibly both due to the fact that we Christians have had it so easy here in the USA for so long?

Recently, we attended a Bible study with a group of local Christians. Instead of a deliberate attempt to open and ascertain God's meaning of His own Word, there was a general discussion of things with the leader asking questions like, "*Do you see anything else in the text?*" Most of the time, there was unrelated discussion with the passage in question. In essence, there was nothing that actually articulated Scriptural truth, nothing that was anything more than incidentally superficial based on feelings. I felt our time had been wasted.

It got me to thinking. Why is it that so many Christians today appear to have such a hard time getting to the root of the problems in life? Why do we so often become sidetracked by what we *think* is extremely important to God when in point of fact, we often miss the truly important things?

Not long ago, in this same group of people, one of the women volunteered that a friend of hers - whom she says is a Christian - who is also a lesbian pastor and intending to marry her woman friend. She was wondering whether or not she should support the two publicly as they essentially entered into a relationship that God sees as untenable and even an abomination (**Romans 1:18-32**).

Now we have the statements of Pastor Alistair Begg, who appears to have promoted the idea that a grandmother should attend the wedding ceremony of her grandson to a transgender person.[1] Begg's reasoning appears to be that if Christians refuse to attend (provided the person who is joining with another in marriage understands that the Christian does *not* support gay/transgender relationships), but out of love and compassion for the person, *will* attend because by not attending (Begg even suggested buying a gift for the couple), then Christians are again seen as "judgmental."

I believe with many that Begg is clearly in error. While yes, Jesus sat and ate with sinners, publicans and tax collectors, He did not approve of the sins in their lifestyles. In fact, He often warned them of the problem of continuing in sin. Jesus was the epitome of compassion, yet never once denigrated God's Word, in favor of placating people. John the Baptist did the same thing, which cost him his life because he dared to tell King Herod that he had no right to marry the woman he had married (**Mark 6:18**). It literally was against God's Law for Herod because he was part-Jewish, but only used his Judaism as a crutch when it served his purposes.

The trouble is that so much of what Christians are facing today is all part of a very slippery slope. What often passes for authentic Christianity is sometimes the furthest thing from it. It's as though so many within Christendom are completely unaware of the traps and pitfalls placed by the enemy. So many things today are hard at work against the very fabric of what God has ordained as good, holy, righteous and just. Are we to pursue God or the world?

So far, Begg has stated he's not ready to repent over his remarks and stands by them. But what does the Bible say? Doesn't Paul lay out his reasoning for the judgment that is coming to this world very clearly in **Romans 1** alone? How can Christians participate in something that God abhors and finds abominable all on some misplaced zeal for what might be considered "compassion"? How do we justify that? Begg has found a way.

This decision has cost Begg his association with American Family Radio, a conservative Christian radio company. Beyond this, Begg has been dis-invited to the next Shepherd's Conference to be held at John MacArthur's Grace Church soon. Begg says he's not ready to repent.

I have to wonder if, out of a sense of compassion, whether or not Begg would be willing to drive a pregnant woman to an abortion clinic if she needed a ride? By *not* doing so, would he be concerned about whether or not he lacked compassion for the woman even though the drive there meant the wholesale killing of her unborn child?

I'm not trying to judge Pastor Begg. I'm pointing out what certainly seems like a glaring error that could have been avoided. Yet, unlike King David, who immediately repented at the words of Nathan the prophet (**2 Samuel 12**), Begg refuses to even consider it, continuing to double and triple down on his original decision.

Folks, this is important for us all to understand that not one of us are above making a similar mistake. It's how it is handled *afterwards* that informs the world about our character and commitment to our Lord.

This brings me to the larger picture. At every turn, it appears that Satan is making serious inroads against God and His anointed (and that includes all who claim the name Christian). We are seeing a drastic shift in America's culture. Truly, what is evil is now considered good and what is up is now down.

Since 2008 and the legalization of same-sex unions, everything has come out of the closet, with the pinnacle seeming to be transgenderism. Men can be women; women can be men and no one should dissent because if/when they do, it is considered homophobic, uncaring and without compassion. So, the world puts their hands over their mouths rather than point out the obvious that no person can actually and internally change their gender. Instead, we pretend that it *can* be done. These people need serious mental health help. They need Jesus. Instead they have more and more of Satan.

I've pointed to this particular section of Scripture on numerous occasions but never has it seemed to mean as much as it does now; **2 Timothy 3:1-9** (NKJV).

1But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents,

unthankful, unholy, 3unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

Looking through the above list proves that we are there simply by comparing what Paul says to what we are seeing in society now. These are truly "perilous times" that have arrived. People are being thrown in prison for protesting outside abortion clinics and being invited into the Capitol Building on January 6. Yet, a couple of congressional aids who had sex in the congressional chambers are *not* arrested because the same Capitol Police say no law was broken. This is nothing short of madness but it grows.

People have become thoroughly emboldened to live incestuous and morally corrupt lifestyles and not only encourage others but ridicule those who will not. People are fully unloving, unholy, unforgiving and slanderous.

E. Jean Carroll just won a multi-million dollar judgment against Donald Trump allegedly for raping her in the 1990's. Yet, she has actually proven nothing. She did not prove she was raped. In fact, there is a famous photo of her on the cover of a magazine where she claims to be wearing the dress that Trump raped her in. However, the New York Times discovered that the dress did not exist when the rape allegedly occurred. So her story changed and has changed several times. Trump is appealing but can he get anything close to a fair trial?

That's the world and we expect that kind of stupidity from them. But when we begin seeing it in the lives of people who contend to be Christian, it becomes something of note. We have a guy named Preston Sprinkle who supports numerous ideas regarding same-sex relationships, believing that Christians can be involved in same-sex relationships as long as it does not involve direct sexual penetration (forgive me for being graphic). Sprinkle also says anyone who supports politics is an "idolator." Sprinkle himself is supposedly a center-Leftist, so he apparently is okay and we understand he's essentially complaining about conservatives.

In so many ways today, too many Christians only *appear* to have a form of godliness, but their lives deny it. There is no power in their lives to walk away from sin. In fact, they believe that normalizing what has always been considered sinful is simply another way to evidence true compassion. Ultimately, what this does is align us not with God, but with the world and the devil.

Paul makes it clear that we are to turn away from those who espouse such views (**v 5**). We should have nothing to do with them, not because we are somehow *better* than they are but because of how we will be dragged down to join them in their error.

What is happening throughout the world is par for the course. It is due to the constant removal of God from His rightful place. As Paul notes, too many people today are "always learning" but never truly gaining the truth (v 7). Instead, they chase after error believing it to be truth. Then they dig their heels in when it's shown from God's Word they are wrong. They become condemnatory toward those who question their credibility. It is the quickest way for the Christian to become embroiled in sin and out of fellowship with God.

Sadly, we will probably see an increase in this with more and more leaders within Christendom. Pray for them. Guard yourselves so that you also do not become hard-hearted and closed to God and His truth. Be willing to allow the light and truth of God's Word to shine deeply into your heart.

We Christians have had it too easy. It is time to stand up and announce to the world, "*Choose this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!*" (Joshua 24:15).

[1] <https://ministrywatch.com/editors-notebook-alistair-begg-made-a-mistake/>