

THE EMERGENT CHURCH

1 JOHN 2:15; ROMANS 12:1-2

Text:

Introduction:

The emerging church is the name that has been coined for a new approach to missions and church life among some “evangelicals” for these present times.

In reality, the emerging church is simply the latest heresy within the broad tent of evangelicalism. When the “new evangelicalism” swept onto the scene in the late 1940s with its bold repudiation of “separatism” and its emphasis on dialogue with heretics, the door was left open for every sort of heresy to infiltrate the “evangelical” fold, and that is precisely what has happened.

The Bible warns us of the dangers of this philosophy.

1 Corinthians 15:33

³³ *Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*

Emerging church teaching tends to be complicated, convoluted, contradictory, and confusing.

In addition, it is evolving, and there is a “conservative” side to the emerging church issue that further complicates things.

Some of the tactics being used today to transform traditional biblical churches into a new emerging church model consists of:

- To Create Doubt and to Bring About a Re-thinking Process

It’s not wrong to re-think things, especially methodology, but our thinking must be bound by Scripture or we’ll find ourselves in deep spiritual trouble.

Another tactic involves:

- To Get Churches to See Themselves Through the Eyes of the World and to Encourage Them to Adopt and Adapt to this Viewpoint.

Example:

Since the world doesn’t like “judgmentalism” and criticism, the churches must stop judging and be tolerant and tone down the “negative preaching,” since the world is put off by an “anti-gay” stance, then church must adopt a new approach regarding these issues.

God's people should try to understand the people we are trying to reach and we should care what they think of us at some level, but the fact remains that the world has always looked upon Christians negatively.

It was true in the first century and it's true today.

John 15:18-20

¹⁸ If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

John 17:14

¹⁴ I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Another tactic involves:

Promote Contradictory Doctrinal Positions

Illustration:

Zondervan and InterVarsity Press

They publish men who claim to believe the Bible is infallible and who have a personal testimony of salvation and supposedly believe in Hell (e.g., Bill Hybels and Rick Warren) alongside of men who do not believe in the substitutionary atonement and are convinced that the message of eternal punishment in Hell is not the way forward according to: (Brian McLaren in the book *Generous Othodoxy* pg. 120)

These contradictory positions ultimately cause readers to conclude that doctrine cannot be dogmatically known and is not very important. It destroys doctrinal stability.

I want to share a few thoughts on these passages:

1 John 2:15

¹⁵ *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Romans 12:1-2

¹ *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

² *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

The first two verses of Romans 12 gives us some insight into an area of our walk with God that we must never overlook.

These two verses tell us the secret of holy living. Paul tells us what God expects from us and how we are to achieve His goals for our lives. He tells us that holy living revolves around our surrender to three powerful concerns.

Notice the First Concern:

1. THE WORSHIP OF GOD (VS. 1)

Romans 12:1

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Notice presenting our bodies to the Lord is our "Reasonable Service."

The word "reasonable" comes from the same word from which we get our word "logic". So, first we see that yielding our bodies to the Lord is logical. Then, the word "service" comes from a word which means "to perform sacred service." It has reference to the function the Levites performed in the Tabernacle and Temple. It is connected to the idea of worship.

Therefore, that phrase means that yielding our bodies to the Lord is our "logical service of worship before the Lord."

Note:

- The Challenge – “Present Your Bodies”

The idea here is of total surrender to God. Far too many people want to be saved, but they are not willing to lay everything on the altar. They are guilty of holding back areas of their lives that are precious to them. God wants it all!

- The Consecration – “A Living Sacrifice”

This sounds dreadfully painful to us because we know that a sacrifice, in Bible times, was an animal that belonged to the person offering it and that the animal was put to death, its blood was shed and its flesh was burned on an altar. That does not sound like something I want to be involved in. The difference between what the Lord is calling us to do and what He called those people in the Old Testament to do is this: Their sacrifice was to die, our sacrifice is to live!

1. A living sacrifice means that we are to be on the altar wherever we are. Regardless of the geographical surroundings, we are to remember that this body and all it is belongs to God. There is never an instant in life

when we are out of His view or free to live as we please.

2. A living sacrifice means a constant, continuous sacrifice. This is not something we do from time to time. But we are to offer this body up to the Lord and never ask for it back again!

3. A living sacrifice means that the body sacrifices its own desires for those of God. To be a living sacrifice will require that the body does not live for the world, the flesh or the devil, but that everything the body does is held to the guidelines of the Word of God.

4. A living sacrifice means that the body is devoted to the task of serving God. This means that we are to lay down the ambitions and desires of the body and commit ourselves to doing nothing but that which God bids us to do! We are to be His vessels through which He can live and work in this world.

Notice the First Concern – The Worship of God but also:

2. THE WISDOM OF GOD (VS. 2)

Romans 12:2

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Paul moves from dealing with the body to dealing with the mind. Here is the root of all our problems anyway. When we can get the mind to think as it should, then the body will obediently follow along. In this matter of conquering the mind, there are two steps that must be taken.

- We Are Commanded – “Be Not Conformed To This World”

The word "conformed" means "to fashion, or to shape." It literally means "to mold". We are not to allow this world to squeeze us into its mold. We are not to allow the world to make us like it is!

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told

you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Illustration

Read Article of Beer and Bible Study

Read Article about Rob Bell's same sex marriage position.

Rob Bell is the was the founder of Mars Hill Bible Church

We Commanded to be – “Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind”

This word is the same word we get “metamorphosis.”

It describes the transformation a caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly.

What happens when the caterpillar enters the cocoon and later emerges is that the part of the insect that resides on the inside is allowed to be manifested on the outside.

That is the change God wants to for each of His children!

He moved into our hearts when He saved us.

He transformed our spirit and changed us into His child.

Now, He wants to transform the mind so that the flesh might be changed.

What we must remember is that this flesh will do what the mind tells it to do.

It is only when the mind is changed and brought under the power of God that the flesh can be brought under control.

Notice the Concerns of “The Worship of God” and the “Widsom of God” but also:

3. THE WILL OF GOD (VS. 2)

Romans 12:2

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Having told us that the secret to a holy life revolves around worshiping God through the sacrifice of our body and through developing the mind of Christ in each of us, Paul moves on to tell us that accomplishing these two things in our lives will enable us to carry out God's will for our lives in a way that

honors Him. As we yield our bodies and our minds to Him, His will becomes clearer and more important to us.

Note:

- God's Will is Precious

Regardless of what the Lord may ask us to do, we will find in the end that it is good.

- God's Will is Pleasant

Pleasant in the sense that when His will is revealed to us, it is something that we are made willing to do.

As we move through this life, God is in the business of maturing us.

As we grow, His demands on our life change. Through the experiences of life God grows us and matures us so that when His call comes and His will is revealed, we are equipped and ready for whatever He calls us to do.

If His will seems unacceptable, then we are overlooking something that He is trying to show us! He will never lead us to a place we are not ready to go!

- God's Will is Perfect

Nothing we could add to God's plan would improve it. When He reveals His will to us, we need to realize that God sees the end of the matter before the matter begins.

He knows the path we will take and He knows the obstacles and valleys we will pass through as we go.

He knows where the provisions are that He has already placed along the way.

His plan cannot be improved upon.

Close:

The secret of living a holy life boils down to God having control of our minds, our bodies and our wills.

We are living in a day where many refuse sound doctrine.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴ And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

We certainly must exist in the world but the world must not exist in us.

God has designed believers to be distinctive without being stuck up.

I quoted Vance Havner a few weeks ago. Vance Havner said:

“We are not to be isolated but insulated, moving in the midst of evil but untouched by it. Separation is contact without contamination. Jesus was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26), yet He was “a friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Luke 7:34).”

Remember:

Our goal is not a guideline but rather God.

Remember:

Standards will never be as exact as commands.
Standards are given to help us keep commands.

Can the world tell the difference in your life?

Can other Christians tell the difference in your life, that you are a child of God?