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Come Clean and Be Content

Galatians 6: 11-18 and Matthew 6: 24-34

St. Andrew's Anglican Church

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"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). Good words to meditate on from our brother in Christ St. Matthew.

I hear from people daily, how different the world is from days gone by. These conversations illustrate to me how insecure we have become, how untrusting we are, and how little hope we have for the future. We struggle daily as we walked these gnarled paths of worldly affairs attempting to avoid manipulation by the next scam that will take our freedoms away. I was told by a woman in her 80's that she remembers a different world, one where trust and compassion were the norm, where excitement for the future upheld hope... and now she only fears for her grandkids' future...she no longer holds out for hope. Another individual expressed to me a concern over the lack of trust that is expressed today. He dug a large hole in his backyard to put in a pool and was trying to give the excess soil away for free. He said it was good soil for gardening and would sell at a good price at the grange. After two weeks of no response to his add, a friend told him that no one would trust anyone giving something away for free. So, he placed another add offering the soil for \$10 a pickup load. To his astonishment, the next day he had 7 pickups lined up waiting for their turn to load this precious soil.

The world is changing and it should be no surprise. We read in 1 Timothy 4:1-2, *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, through the pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared."* In our distrust and hopelessness, are we giving heed to these deceitful spirits? Fear mongering is the modern day disease of choice and hiding in the shadows is the prescribed cure. May we understand that fear is

not of the Lord, but a void that is filled when we turn from Him. *“Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you”* (Isaiah 35:4) Isaiah tells us.

How can we maintain our sanity in a world that is seemingly going berserk? We can maintain our sanity by seeking the only true path that leads to eternal life...the path forged by Jesus Christ...the path...that is Jesus Christ. Trying to maneuver through the darkness, trying to navigate the endless crossroads of a hell-bent world is a daunting task for even the most devout Christian. We serve Christ...but we also live in a fallen world. We need to stand by each other, strengthen each other and lift each other up; not prepare for battle against our neighbor. Our strength lies in remembering that Christianity is a family of believers who support each other and keep each other in line with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Trying to live the Christian life as a solo act; me and my bible; is akin to being handed a GPS unit as you are dropped in the middle of the wilderness and told you have a limited number of days to figure it out and reach your destination or you will be consumed by the world and forgotten.

With all the uncertainties that surround our lives, it is confusing that Church attendance is at an all time low, while the private interpretation of the scriptures is at an all time high, with no regard for the sacraments or understanding of the Creeds. Many today want God, but on their own terms...as though they know better than 2,000 years of church history and tradition. Many are suffering from biblical GPS units that are low on batteries and many are running out of time. There may be a professed understanding of their relationship with Christ, but no depth to explain what it is they believe. When Paul was addressing the church in Corinth he made clear the need for spiritual growth, boldly stating, *“But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh”* (1 Cor. 3:2).

A fleshly show was an issue then...and it is an issue today...and Paul's words to the Galatians are still eerily relevant to the church, *“As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.*

for neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh” (Galatians 6:13-14). This is reminiscent of what I would call a country club church...one that is all about perception without any true sense of the Gospel of Christ...join our church, get baptized, get confirmed, come to the table and eat the bread and drink the wine, sing the hymns, have some coffee and go on your way proud of yourself that you made it to church today...ahhh...now you have the rest of the week off.

Be honest...are you a new creature...or just the same old creature of the world trying to put out a façade that you hope others will buy into? Playing games with the ultimate reality of the work of Christ on your behalf is not a wise move.

But God forbid that I should glory, (says the apostle Paul) save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14).

We are not called to be lukewarm Christians. If we truly understand the implications of what the Gospel presents, then we need to be shouting from the rooftops the salvific sacrifice of Jesus Christ! To hold back is to remain in the flesh sipping on warm milk. We are not called to serve mammon but to serve God Almighty...to take out the knife and cut through worldly misconceptions and feed on the deeper truths of the Gospel.

But this takes effort...effort that most do not want to put forth. It is easier to put on a façade and only look the part. You would think that after 2000 years, our witness would be so strong that none could resist. You would think that those who were there and actually witnessed the miracles of Jesus and listen to him speak would have been on fire, unable to control their own testimonies.

But, it is easier to put on a show isn't it? This is human nature. Facebook allows us to put out a perception of ourselves that we want others to accept. We hide our faults and put our best foot forward as though we are living perfect lives. Don't get me wrong...I don't want to see people's garbage strewn all over the web...I know we all have dark sides. But, if we are willing to admit to ourselves that we have things to

cover up then maybe we can begin to make changes within that will elevate us to Godlier qualities. Even though we live in a technologically advanced age, we still continue in the same perverted human nature that persisted with those who sat at the feet of Jesus and those who listen to the direct teachings of the Apostles...the devil is hard at work to make us feel okay with our lukewarmness.

If you are finding yourself stressed and fearful over the current news of the day and are losing hope in what the future will bring...If you desire to drop the façade and come clean with yourself...there is an answer...an answer that replenishes, strengthens and creates contentment and the ability to love once again. Hear again the words of St. Matthew,

“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat or, what shall we drink or wherewithal shall we be clothed?.. for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:25-34).

We are the children of God, in the world but not of the world. Glory in the Cross of Christ as St. Paul instructs us, knowing that better things are being prepared for you because of your love for Christ. Be content in your life with Christ as you continue to seek a deeper understanding of His love. Keep yourselves from being judgmental and arrogant, allowing yourselves to be transformed into the image of Christ.

Through Jesus Christ, who strengthens us, we can endure all things. It is time to take our walk seriously, to become real...to become new creatures in Christ.

“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.