

New Year, New Church

Ezekiel 16:49

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

Amos 4:1-3

1 Hear this word, ye cows of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink.

2 The Lord God hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks.

3 And ye shall go out at the breaches, every cow at that which is before her; and ye shall cast them into the palace, saith the Lord.

Matthew 25:41-46

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

It is very popular in the church for a crowd to stand around a 1000 pound weight and ask each person in turn, "are you able to lift it?" And when each person says "no," it is concluded that the weight cannot be moved and therefore of no concern to anyone. "If God wanted it moved, he would move it or send someone who could."

Galatians 6:9-10

9 And let us not be weary in doing well: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

It is true that we are to serve those in the church first. But have you looked around to see if you are fatted cows while those outside the church starve? When are you filled enough that you can feed someone else?

1 John 3:17

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

It's time for a new church.

Ezekiel 36:26

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.”

Where Do We Even Begin?

The first step is obviously finding money. That comes from the tithe. The tithe is for the poor, not the church. If you are (actually) poor, the tithe is for you. If you are “poor” because you forgot about the actual poor and spent all your money already, you’ve already read the bad news. Repentance is always on the table.

The tithe has a seven year cycle. Six years are to be used in service of the church workers and the poor. The 7th year you can legitimately keep it for yourself.

The next step is to think globally. Or at least nationally. You can look at public schools to see what happens when money doesn’t move to where it’s needed. Churches should not be acting like public schools. If people of means live around a particular church then they should ensure that much of the money is sent to churches that are in poorer communities.

Finally, heed the words of Jesus himself.

Mark 13:1-2

1 And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!

2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Are you impressed by how beautiful your church looks? Or are you impressed with how many people your church serves so they do not suffer from poverty?

Cleansing the Temple

Matthew 21:12-13

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Malachi 3:8-18

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—

10 not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.

11 But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.

12 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?

13 God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked person from among you.”

Repentance is always on the table.

The Bible recognizes “Honor your Father and Mother” as the first commandment with a promise. Not the “only” commandment with a promise. There is also a promise with the tithe. That if you give generously, God will be generous. The context of Malachi is that the priests were hoarding the wealth of the tithe and keeping it from the poor who are entitled to make use of it. Jesus would ultimately destroy the temple and tell people to give directly, bypassing the religious leaders. The tithe is for the poor, not the church.

What then is the purpose of the church? To organize the crowd to move the 1000 pound weight.

The rich buy the church’s silence. Dave Ramsey will often post about how his pastor told him he wasn’t actually sinning when he is very clearly sinning with his wealth. Give the church enough money and they’ll rewrite the Bible for you.

Job 31:13-15

If I have denied justice to any of my servants,
whether male or female,

when they had a grievance against me,

What will I do when God confronts me?

What will I answer when called to account?

Did not he who made me in the womb make them?

Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?

Business owners need to be reminded that the market value of greed is death, destruction, and hell. They can lie and deceive all they want to keep their workers in poverty, but God will not have time for them. God also has a contract that anyone who does not repent will be thrown into the lake of fire. Repentance is always on the table. But so often the rich walk away sad instead.

So are we really to throw the rich out of the church? Or can we convince them to pay their workers enough to raise a family and put their kids through college. Can we convince them to serve the poor with gladness?

Can you convert them from Jeff Bezos to MacKenzie Scott?

Is the 1000 pound stone too much to move, or can it be changed to a heart of flesh?

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