

GOD WANTS EVERYONE TO BELIEVE IN JESUS (JOHN 5:39-47) 09/16/12
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

IN A PERFECT WORLD - WHAT WLD THAT BE LIKE? IN A PER-FECT WORLD CHILDREN WOULD NEVER GET SICK OR DIE. EVERY FAMILY WOULD HAVE A MOTHER & A FATHER. CHILDREN WOULD ALWAYS MIND THEIR PARENTS. TEENAGERS WOULD PICK UP AFTER THEMSELVES & NEVER TALK BACK. EVERYBODY WOULD HAVE A MILLION \$ IN THE BANK & THERE WOULD BE NO UNEMPLOYMENT.

ONE MOM SAID, "IN A PERFECT WORLD, I'D WEIGH ONLY 125 POUNDS (SOLID MUSCLE AND NOT AN OUNCE OF FAT ANYWHERE, OF COURSE), WITHOUT EVER HAVING TO TAKE A STEP ON THE TREADMILL OR LIFT A WEIGHT. NO EXERCISE DVD'S TO TORTURE ME AND NO CALORIE COUNTING TO MONITOR MY FOOD INTAKE... IN A PERFECT WORLD, I'D WORK ONLY 9 :00-5:00 EVERY DAY AND SLEEP EIGHT SOLID HOURS A NIGHT. UNINTERRUPTED SLEEP...OF COURSE."

JUST LET YOUR IMAGINATION GO, IN A PERFECT WORLD....

WELL, IN A PERFECT WORLD EVERY ONE, ALL PEOPLE, THE WHOLE WORLD WOULD **BELIEVE IN JESUS AS GOD'S SON** - THAT IS **GOD'S DEEP DESIRE** - THAT ALL THE WORLD BE SAVED & BELIEVE IN JESUS. GOD WAS SO DETERMINED IN DESIRING THIS FOR THE WORLD THAT GOD MADE AN **IRON CLAD CASE** FOR JESUS AS GOD'S SON. IN THE CONTEXT OF JESUS' DAY: THOSE WHO SHOULD NOT HAVE COME TO JESUS - THE SINNERS - TAX COLLECTORS - THE POOR & DISENFRANCHISED OF SOCIETY - THEY WERE BELIEVING IN JESUS BY THE THOUSANDS. THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS & CHURCH GOERS OF THE DAY WHO SHOULD HAVE RECOGNIZED & COME TO JESUS DID NOT - THEY OPPOSED JESUS & SOUGHT TO KILL HIM. SO GOD MADE GOD'S CASE THAT ALL WOULD BELIEVE IN GOD'S SON. IS THAT NOT WHAT WE WANT & DESIRE AS WELL? WE WANT EVERY-BODY TO BELIEVE IN GOD'S SON, JESUS! IN THESE VERSES, GOD MADE GOD'S CASE FOR THE SONSHIP OF JESUS:

THE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE IS THAT THE UNSUPPORTED EVIDENCE OF ONE PERSON CANNOT BE TAKEN AS PROOF. BEFORE A THING COULD BE TAKEN AS PROVED THERE MUST BE AT LEAST TWO WITNESSES WHO AGREE. LOOK AT WHO GOD CALLED FOR WITNESSES TO JESUS:

1. JOHN THE BAPTIST. (V.33)
2. THE VERY WORKS & MIRACLES OF JESUS. (V.36)
3. THE VOICE OF GOD THE FATHER. (V.37)
4. THE SCRIPTURES. (V.39)
5. MOSES & THE PROPHETS. (V.46)

THE CASE WAS/IS CLEAR - WHAT MORE DO WE NEED - JESUS IS GOD'S SON! THESE WITNESSES ARE TIMELESS & THEIR WITNESS IS CLEAR FOR ALL TO HEAR & SEE.

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO WITNESS TO A LOVED ONE, A RELATIVE, NEIGHBOR, FRIEND OR COWORKER ABOUT JESUS & THEY WOULD JUST HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT? PERHAPS YOU HAVE DOUBTED YOURSELF? WE ARE TO STAND FIRM IN THE POWER OF THOSE WITNESSES FOR JESUS - WE WERE NOT THERE BUT THEIR WITNESS STILL STANDS.

I HAVE SEEN SCORES OF T.V. SPECIALS TRYING TO DISPROVE THE CLAIMS OF JESUS TO BE GOD'S SON - I AM SURE YOU HAVE SEEN THEM AS WELL. THE WORLD AROUND US IS BECOMING EVEN MORE HOSTILE TO THOSE OF US WHO BELIEVE. WE MUST BECOME STRONGER IN MAKING OUR CASE FOR JESUS AS GOD'S SON. WE MUST STAND FIRM FOR JESUS & HELP OTHERS KNOW THE **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FACT & OPINION.** FACTS CANNOT BE CHANGED, OPINIONS CAN BE CHANGED.

THE FACTS OF THE CASE FOR JESUS STILL STAND:

1. JOHN THE BAPTIST.
2. THE VERY WORKS & MIRACLES OF JESUS.
3. THE VOICE OF GOD THE FATHER..
4. THE SCRIPTURES.
5. MOSES & THE PROPHETS.

JUST BECAUSE JESUS LIVED 2,000 YEARS AGO DOES NOT CHANGE THE FACTS OF GOD'S WITNESSES. WE CANNOT & MUST NOT REWRITE HISTORY TO COME OUT DIFFERENTLY. FACTS ARE FACTS & DO NOT CHANGE - NOT EVEN IN A MILLION YEARS!

JESUS' ACCUSATION AGAINST THOSE WHO DID NOT BELIEVE IN HIM AS GOD'S SON WAS TWO FOLD. FIRST OF ALL, **THE LOVE OF GOD WAS NOT WITHIN THEM** (VS.42). THEIR HEARTS WERE NOT RIGHT WITH GOD. THIS CAUSED THEM TO HAVE SHUT UP MINDS & HEARTS TO HEAR & SEE THE POWER OF THE WITNESSES. THEY PRETENDED TO BE GOD'S PEOPLE BUT WERE PREJUDICED AGAINST GOD - THEY WERE NOT GENUINE IN THEIR SEARCH FOR

GOD - THEY ONLY LOOKED FOR EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT & MAINTAIN THEIR OWN RELIGIOUS POSITIONS & TO FIND DEFENSES FOR THEIR OWN PREJU-DICED BELIEFS. FIRST QUESTION POSED MUST BE, ARE YOU **OPEN** TO CONSIDERING THE FACTS FOR JESUS? I RUN INTO NARROW MINDED BIGOTS & PREJUDICED PEOPLE ALL THE TIME. THEY ARE NOT ABOUT TO BE CHANGED EVEN WHEN THE WITNESSES, THE FACTS SPEAK LOUD & CLEAR AGAINST THEM. JESUS WAS ASSAILING HIS CRITICS OF THEN & NOW WITH, "CAN WE DISCUSS THIS WITH THE FACTS OF THE CASE?" MOST CLOSED MINDED, NARROW MINDED, PREJUDICED, JUDGMENTAL, LEGALISTIC PEOPLE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN **ALL** THE FACTS JUST THOSE THAT SUPPORT & MAINTAIN THEIR OWN DOOM OF GLOOM & DARKNESS. WE ARE TO ALLOW THE POWER OF THE WITNESSES TO **TEST** OUR BELIEFS. WE ARE NOT THE STANDARDS - GOD & GOD'S WITNESSES ARE THE STANDARDS BY WHICH WE BELIEVE! HAVING THE LOVE OF GOD WITHIN US IS AN ABSOLUTE MUST & STARTING POINT. UNLESS THE LOVE OF GOD IS IN US WE JUST WON'T GET IT! JESUS SHOWED GOD'S DESIRING, GOD LOVES US & WANTS TO SAVE US.

SECONDLY, JESUS POINTED TO THEIR **PERSONAL PRIDE OF RELIGION** AS THEIR STUMBLING BLOCK. (V.44) THEY WERE HUNG UP ON THEIR OWN RELIGIOSITY & PIETY. NOT ABOUT TO BE CHANGED - WHO ME - HUMPH! - EVEN WHEN CONFRONTED BY THE VERY SON OF GOD, JESUS. THEY WERE BLINDED BY THEIR WELL REHEARSED PRIDE & PREJUDICE. REMEMBER YOU THIS, EXCEPT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD, THERE GO YOU & I. PRIDE & PREJUDICE CAN SO EASILY BLIND US AS WELL.

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS DESIRED & CLAMORED AFTER THE **PRAISE OF PEOPLE**. THEY DRESSED - ACTED - PRAYED - BEHAVED IN WELL PRESCRIBED RELIGIOUS WAYS SO THAT OTHERS WOULD RECOGNIZE THEIR PIETY & RELIGIOSITY. FRANKLY SPEAKING, I AM SOMEWHAT PLEASED WHEN PEOPLE SAY I AM JUST NOT RELIGIOUS ENOUGH FOR THEIR LIKING - THEY SAID THE SAME THING ABOUT JESUS - I AM IN GOOD COMPANY. MY SKIN CRAWLS & I GET A PIT IN MY STOMACH WHEN I AM AROUND SUCH RELIGIOUSLY PIOUS PEOPLE - THEY REEK OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS - THEY WOULD NOT DARE TO SACRIFICE THEIR RELIGIOSITY FOR THE SAKE OF FOLLOW-ING THAT VAGABOND, ROGUE JESUS! TO THEM, IF JESUS WAS **REALLY** THE SON OF GOD, THE MESSIAH, THEN

HE WOULD OUT DO, OUT PERFORM ALL THEIR RELIGIOUS RULES & EXPECTATIONS. SINCE JESUS COULD NOT HOLD A CANDLE TO THEM - HOW COULD HE BE THE SON OF GOD - THEY WLD SEEK TO KILL THIS IMPOSTOR.

I LOVE THIS JESUS - HE PROCLAIMS FOR ALL TO SEE & HEAR THAT GOD WAS NOT/IS NOT LIKE THEM - GOD IS LIKE JESUS - NO, GOD IS JESUS. THE RELIGIOUS FANATICS JUDGED GOD BY THEIR FAKE STANDARDS RATHER THAN BE CHALLENGED & CHANGED BY GOD'S STANDARD IN JESUS. HOW ABOUT YOU? WE MUST ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE CHALLENGED & CHANGED BY JESUS. IF WE NO LONGER FEEL THE RUB THEN PERHAPS HE IS NO LONGER HERE?