

Subject: The Idols we worship in Christianity (No. 11).



Dear Saints

For some or other inexplicable reason, we've had precious little feedback on the parables we've posted recently - the result being that we have no idea how they've "landed". I've thoroughly enjoyed writing them, and have experienced the Holy Spirit's prompting throughout.

So, how was the reception out there?

1. Did you have difficulty understanding/interpreting them?
2. Did you not know how to respond to them?
3. Did you find them offensive?
4. Were the episodes too long - and you didn't make the effort to read them?
5. Are you still mulling them over?
6. Did you discuss them with fellow Christians?
7. Did they inspire you?
8. Whatever else?

If you can find the time to do so, please give us (in short) your response to the parables. Your feedback will determine whether we send you more of them or not.

But we still have unfinished business:

Last week we've looked at a parable on SYSTEMS. Remember the regular guy and his family who'd opted to trust in man-made systems like short-term insurance, neighbourhood security, medical aid, salaried jobs, etc., rather than trusting in God? How his wife got breast cancer and eventually died? Today we'll have a short discussion on that.

Enjoy!

Eben Swart

The two biblical kings Saul and David were subjected to almost similar tests of faith. Saul flunked almost every test, whilst David passed almost every one. Consequently, Saul's royal line was terminated, whilst that of David was established for eternity.

The only test of faith that the above couple had passed, was the most basic one that we are all subjected to: Faith for salvation. However, they failed every single subsequent test of their faith in God. Each and every time, they've opted to put their faith in a man-made SYSTEM, rather than in God. Their motive: FEAR. In our day, trust and faith in man-made systems, rather than in God, have become so commonplace among Christians that we scarcely give it a second thought. We consider them to be essential pillars of our earthly existence.

Systems erode and undermine our faith in God. They are costly, faceless, impersonal, disempowering, addictive and enslaving. They create a false sense of security and peace of mind, and are based in the worldly principles of belief in whatever is visible, financial profit and unbelief in God's provision and protection.

The question could rightly be asked: When one has expressed so many votes of no confidence in God as the couple above, could one then still ask God to heal one's terminal illness? Why trust God with your health if you continually vote no confidence in Him for your possessions, safety, income or education? Whatever one sows, one will reap¹: If one sows to please the Spirit, one will reap eternal life. If one sows to please the sinful nature, from that nature one will reap death and destruction.² Ditto for sowing unto systems for fear and unbelief.

Surely it does not necessarily constitute sin to be part of a system. But as soon as the system becomes a substitute for faith, it becomes a manifestation of unbelief - and sin. Many who have never been without these systems to "back up" their faith have no idea what faith for everyday living is - because this "back-up" has always served as a substitute for healthy Christian faith. They have never felt any need for strengthening their feeble faith muscles.

Here's a litmus test for your faith in systems, as opposed to your faith in God:

Notify your short term insurance, security company and medical aid that you won't be paying any instalments for the next month, after which you will resume normal payments - with the understanding that you won't be covered by these systems for the next month.

What a wonderful way to make a baby step vote of confidence in God!

But that's not the litmus test itself. Here's the real test:

What does your internal FEAR GAUGE say about this idea?

If the mere thought of dropping these "back-ups" makes your heart throb for anxiety, then you're in sin. The sin of unbelief.

And here's a second one:

For the fear of God, a person who has God for his only provider and protection, and no systems to back him up, needs to live a holy life before Him. If having to live such a holy life seems to deter you, then you're in sin. Then your back-up systems have even substituted your fear of God.

The just shall live by faith - not by sight³ or systems.

And even if you would drop your back-up systems, and trust God, that does not mean that you would have a smooth, uneventful life. That your car won't be stolen. That your house won't be burgled. That your daughter won't be caught up in drugs. That your wife won't get cancer. These things happen. That's life.

Godly kings and judges in the Bible got threatened by evil many times.

And they were always advised not to trust in Egypt or Assyria. Or in alliances. Or on princes or horses. But to trust in God.

"God's insurance" pays out much more handsomely than insurance companies.

The just shall live by faith - not by sight³ or systems.

Faith, by nature, always harbours an element of uncertainty, because faith starts where certainty ends. But the uncertainty factor in faith needn't constitute fear.

Shall we repent of our system idols now?

[For those who didn't know: This is no empty talk on my side.

My family and I have lived the life of faith for the past 18 years (since 1996). For the past 18 years we haven't had any fixed income, short term insurance, medical aid, hospital plan or even pension fund.

We've only had God and God's people.

And after 18 years, I can merely say that God has provided for us, and protected us, for 18 years. I still cannot say what might happen tomorrow. But in Christ I've learnt to conquer my fear of tomorrow. And we've learnt to flex our muscles of faith, which have become much stronger than they've been 18 years ago.

Faith is the only thing we possess that pleases God. Everything else is sin.⁴

In the process, we've been lovingly, but sternly disciplined by God. Most of the time, when things have gone wrong, it had been because we (usually I!) had stepped out of line. Then I had to search my own heart and deeds, and to repent of my own folly.

Yes, our car was stolen. Yes, we and our boys got ill. Yes, we've had to pay school fees, doctors' bills, car breakages, municipal rates and income tax like everybody else. Yes, we've suffered embarrassment and even humiliation occasionally. Many times we've cried out to God to save us from predicaments.

And now one of these days our oldest son will get married. And God has provided and protected through all of this.

In the process, we've been privileged to see and experience several of God's secrets that few others ever see or even conceptualise. And we're not enslaved to any system anymore. We're free!

I still have no idea what tomorrow might bring. But thus far, God has seen us through!⁵]

1. Gal. 6:7.

2. Gal. 6:8.

3. Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20; 3:11; Heb. 10:38.

4. Rom. 14:23.

5. 1 Sam. 7:12.

The entire article may be read on our website: <http://trumpetcall.co.za/articles.php?id=35>

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