

#320 Kingdom: The Central and the Marginal

1Cor 7:17 Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the churches. [18] Was any man called **already circumcised**? Let him not **become uncircumcised**. Has anyone been **called in uncircumcision**? Let him not be circumcised. [19] **Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing**, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.

Gal 6: 14] But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. [15] **For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation**. [16] And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

2 Cor 5: 14] For **the love of Christ controls us**, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; [15] and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. [16] Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. [17] **Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come**.

Because the church in general has ignored the King and His Kingdom as the central issue within the church, it has majored upon the minors and focused upon marginal issues! It has nearly become a dead issue in preparing people for their eternal destiny. Sometimes very trivial issues have split churches and caused many to backslide, be offended or stumble in their walk toward eternity.

Amish churches have split over the proper way to milk a cow or how they tie a bundle of wheat. Over what kind of tires to have on a buggy or if they can have a windshield in their buggy. Protestant churches have split over having a steeple on a church building or whether a piano is permitted during the song service. Clothes and beards have split churches. Neither pianos or unpianos are anything but the focus is upon the new creation. These “issues” are trivial and marginal and have nothing to do with anything affecting our eternal destiny.

Therefore, when we are redefining the church, or the ministries, or the vision, or our destiny, or God’s purpose, or the creation we must focus upon the central issues and forsake the marginal, the peripheral and the trivial. The point of reference for all things is the King and His Kingdom and all things will be summed up at the point of the origin of all things. God is our center of reference for all things, our absolute, and everything else is relative. All other issues are marginal and only have relevance in a lineal relationship with the King and the Kingdom.

Music or no music, pews or no pews, parking or no parking, ties or no ties, beards or no beards are all trivial in compared with the new creation and our preparation for eternity. Since the King and His Kingdom are the epicenter of the universe and all things converge at that reference point, it is impossible to over emphasize the importance of staying focused

The farther we are from the epicenter, the more important “things” become. The closer to the epicenter we come, the more irrelevant “THINGS” become. Therefore, at the epicenter “things or no things” are unimportant! The closer we come to the epicenter of the universe the clearer our vision and definition of ultimate reality becomes. Here, only the new creation is essential and our conformity to Jesus Christ is of any importance. To dwell at the epicenter of the universe for eternity becomes our ONLY real ambition. To press toward that prize was Paul’s Life.

If we removed the goal posts from the football field or the baskets from the basketball court or the nets from the hockey game we would soon lose interest in the game because there was no reference point or purpose of running back and forth.

This is exactly what the church has done when it lost the Kingdom of God as the epicenter of the church. The goal posts have been lost. We have nothing to aim at except going to heaven someday. The eternal goal posts are the King and His Kingdom. The “game of Christian Life” involves the total preparation of Kingdom Character and the maturity of Christ. This, then, involves the personal cross, discipline, cost, training, preparation and faithfulness.

In sports we just accept that all kinds of training and preparation is essential if we are going to participate in the games. No novice is going to play in the Super Bowl. If any player in any game is worthless or won’t cooperate with the other players he is disqualified and removed very quickly. No one gets offended if someone is not performing and is removed from the game.

For some reason the church assumes that everyone who “accepts Jesus as personal Savior” is qualified to rule with Him in eternity. Some are extremely offended if it is suggested that we have to be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God. The visible church has removed the goal posts and then they tell us to play the “Christian game of life.” It is difficult to understand what all this running back and forth is all about when there is no point in the game and everyone wins without trying. Everyone will win the “Golden Globe Award” and the “Overcomers Crown” just for showing up for the game, even if they just sit in the bleachers.

Multitudes of naive believers accept this nonsense simply because they say “The Savior has already won the game and all we need to do is accept His victory.” That may get you in the bleachers but that doesn’t qualify you for the game where only the “overcomers” win. In a race many, many run but only not all win. Therefore, we are supposed to run to win. Showing up for the race won’t get you the prize of the high calling of God.

Many in that great day will fall on their knees and say Lord, Lord, we had a great ministry but they will be rejected because they didn’t prepare for His Kingdom Government. Having a great ministry is irrelevant if we haven’t grown up into His measure and stature. If we are not conformed to His image and reflect His character we will not be qualified for His Kingdom.

We can get involved in countless numbers of projects, programs, activities and ministries that have nothing to do with our eternal preparation. These are not wrong but they are not the central issue. These are all marginal things at best and irrelevant things at worst. It seems that the FIRST PRIORITY is the “new creation.” No matter how many good things the “old creation man” does,

none of these things counts for anything in eternity.

Thousands of wasted lives are attending the church building on Sunday but being told nothing about their preparation for eternity. No spiritual growth is taking place and most leave in the same condition they were when they arrived. No absolutes are established and no goal posts are defined. Even the rules for the “Christian game of Life” are ignored because there is no purpose in the game anyway except to fellowship in the bleachers, have lunch and then we all go to the same place and win the same prize.

Those who are at the epicenter of an earthquake can tell us about it but all we hear is the words, simply because we haven't had the experience. Only those who are not far from the Kingdom can discern the Kingdom. Most all the others are involved in the marginal, the peripheral, the trivial, the non essential and the routine. Because these things are not wrong, they must be right!