

Dangerous Ground

by K.P. Yohannan

We must choose between prioritizing success and numbers or preserving the purity of the Gospel with the cross at the center.

Scripture: Luke 9:23, Luke 14:26

Topics: "Discipleship", "The Cross"

Description

K.P. Yohannan addresses the alarming trend in churches prioritizing entertainment and numbers over the core message of the Gospel, which centers on the cross and the urgency of reaching the lost. He critiques the focus on grandeur and success, warning that such pursuits can lead to a dangerous compromise of the faith. Yohannan emphasizes that true discipleship requires self-denial and a commitment to the Great Commission, urging believers to reflect on the purity of their message and actions. He challenges congregations to consider the eternal implications of their choices and the importance of maintaining a pure testimony for God. Ultimately, he calls for a return to the foundational truths of the Gospel, where the cross remains central.

Transcript

Some time ago I found a colorful church flyer in my mailbox. It was an open letter from the pastor of a large congregation. He invited the whole community to attend a series of high-class, Christian concerts he had lined up at his church. In his letter he wrote, "Ever since I first came to this church, it has been my highest priority to offer the finest and best Christian entertainment to the people of [this city]." This pastor is definitely not alone in his pursuit to draw and impress crowds with his outstanding programs.

Other churches do the same with their advertisements of the largest auditorium in town, the best interior decoration and comforts, the most spectacular Christmas pageant, the biggest budget, the newest sound equipment or the largest church membership. Two things are strangely absent in all this competition for numbers, glamour and success: the cross and the lost world! Once they were the center of the Gospel message; but for so many congregations and believers, there is very little room left in their lives or thoughts for these most vital conditions of discipleship.

Because they are no longer popular, they have been replaced with all sorts of self-centered activities. Quantity, size and success impress us, but they do not impress God. This is evident even in creation. The earth, compared to the other planets, is so tiny and insignificant. Yet this is where God chose to carry out His eternal plans. From the beginning of time, God's greatest concern has been to have a pure testimony

to His name. This means His Word, His goals and His priorities cannot be changed by any man.

It also means that whoever is called by His name must live by His terms and preserve the purity of His Gospel. We tread on very dangerous ground if we don't preach and teach the cross in fear that our membership will decrease. The same is true if we don't speak up when our church spends millions of dollars on an elaborate auditorium but has no burden, no prayer and no money for the more than 2 billion people who sit in darkness--on their way to hell--having never been reached by the Gospel.

A.W. Tozer wrote: "Why do we build our churches upon human flesh? . . . For we teach men not to die with Christ but to live in the strength of their dying manhood. . . . But if I see aright, the cross of popular evangelicalism is not the cross of the New Testament. It is, rather, a new bright ornament upon the bosom of a self-assured and carnal Christianity. . . . The old cross slew men; the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it."¹ In the Old Testament, God wiped out multitudes and once even the whole world population (except Noah and his family) in order to preserve a pure testimony.

What would happen to us and to our churches if God dealt with us in the same way, judging our compromises with instant death? Even if everything we do looks so successful right now, eventually it will have to pass the test of purity described in 1 Corinthians 3:13 when we get to heaven. What a shock it will be to watch our lives' work and all our church programs go up in flames. Today we stand at the crossroads and have a choice to make: Do we choose the purity of the Gospel with the cross at the center and the Great Commission as our number one task, or do we continue to fool ourselves with a gospel that has little to do with the New Testament?

The pure Gospel says, • "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). • "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26-27). • "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21). What is your answer?

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