

## Liberty Commentary February 2, 2009

A recent commentary by Prism Ltd. (a leadership consulting firm) says the following regarding the topic of commitment. "The most important single factor in individual success is COMMITMENT. Commitment ignites action. To commit is to pledge yourself to a certain purpose or line of conduct. It also means practicing your beliefs consistently. There are, therefore, two fundamental conditions for commitment. The first is having a sound set of beliefs. There is an old saying that goes, "Stand for something or you'll fall for anything." The second is faithful adherence to those beliefs with your behavior. Possibly the best description of commitment is "persistence with a purpose"."

If one were to sum up what it means to be a Christian one could say "commitment". The question is, commitment to what? Is it a commitment to a set of principles? Is it a commitment to a church? Is it a commitment to a pastor? Is it commitment to live by the "golden rule", or is it solely a commitment to the person of Jesus Christ?

We read the account in Luke 9:51-55 when it was approaching the time when Christ should be delivered up to be crucified that Jesus wanted to go to Jerusalem. In the process of going to Jerusalem he passes through an area occupied by Samaritans. The Samaritans reject Jesus and this infuriates the disciples James and John. The disciples say, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?" In essence James and John wanted God to send fire down from heaven to show them who they really are. The disciples wanted to let the Samaritans know they better not reject their cause; they are followers of the true Messiah.

Even though James and John were Disciples of Christ and had spent time with Him they still had some areas of their lives that

were not reflecting the Character of the one to whom they had committed to follow. These disciples were committed to a cause and when the Samaritans rejected their cause they were ready to fight.

Jesus had to do to these disciples what he does to us sometimes-he rebuked them for their attitude. He rebuked them because they had become committed to a cause, but not to Christ. In verse 56 Jesus reminds them of the mission. Jesus says, "I am not come to destroy men's lives, but I am come to save them". That ought to be inculcated in every church's mission statement. That is the purpose for which Christ came and died and we ought to never lose sight of that.

There is a vast difference between being committed to Christ and being committed to a set of principles or a cause. All too often those who name the name of Christ lose sight of the true mission and purpose for which Christ came. Instead of being committed to the person of Christ we become committed to a cause, a creed, a dogma, a denomination or a principle that has virtually nothing to do with being committed to Christ.

God is not impressed with our church building programs, our budgets, our assets or our ministry initiatives and causes. The thing that impresses God is people coming and receiving His Son the Lord Jesus Christ as savior and committing their lives in service to him. It sets all of heaven to shouting and rejoicing. People coming to Christ and receiving Him as savior is the heartbeat of God. To the extent that we use our buildings, budgets and programs to meet God's prerogatives is a measure of our commitment to following Him, not following some cause, as good as that cause may be.

Suppose God through his word, prayer, and Godly council leads you to do something that is an enormous test of your faith and even

your common sense. What would you do? Are you committed to Christ or committed to a cause?

God wants to do mighty things through us and He will bring us to the point of testing to see if we are committed to Him or just to a cause. If we are just committed to a cause He will not and cannot use us because as Christ says of James and John in verse 55, “ye know not what manner of spirit you are of”. In other words, you are not Holy Spirit led and therefore you cannot be used of God to accomplish great things for the kingdom.

James and John, even though they had been with the Savior, had totally missed the true purpose for which Christ came to earth. If James and John could miss it then we need to be careful that we too do not miss it. Jesus sums it up in Luke 19:10, “for the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost”.

Are you committed this year in 2009 to the person of Christ or are you just committed to warming a pew, standing for some Christian principles, standing for virtue and morality, participating in church activities-good things all, but that is not the purpose for which Christ came.

God is not interested in us being committed to a cause no matter how noble that cause may be. God is interested in men, women, boys and girls being committed to the person of Jesus Christ and joining Him in His work and working with Him to fulfill the mission that Christ gave us in Luke 9:56, “For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”

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