



Do we have an “Attitude”?

Some of those sensing a strong call to the Reformer’s role are charged with having “An Attitude.” Is this true? Do we? I know some, including myself, have received some criticism for this, and I guess I go back and forth in my own mind about this issue of “Attitude,” as relates to the concern many of us who are writers, theologians, and reformers, feel about where the Church has come to after 1850 years, and how we see it as having hurt the people of God and dishonored the huge price Jesus paid to have the Church be His own.

I don’t think an “Attitude” serves any good purpose, but are we who feel an acute sadness, concern, and disapproval over what has happened to the Church, over those 1850 years, just to be silent as to our passionate concern? Are we just to be soft, gentle, and non combative, towards that which we are concerned with? I see the Church as having been ripped out of Jesus’ hands, torn loose from His direct oversight, used to abuse the flock of God so that man can develop his own security and significance at the expense of what is best for the Church and at the expense of the Lord’s honor.

When I use the word “abuse,” I do so advisedly. In other words, I’m well aware there are gradients of abuse, and certainly most Senior Pastors are not classical abusers, BUT, if we use a broader definition of “abuse,” to extend well beyond just direct intentional abusive behavior, that is selfish in nature and designed to rob Jesus’ glory while promoting their own, then perhaps we are not wrong to define far lesser aspects of abuse as still being abuse.

Is it not abusive, even if not directly intentional, to promote and work with a religious system that marginalizes Jesus? Is it not abusive to both Jesus and His flock, to take the direct oversight of His Church away from Him, and vest it in the hands of a single man, or group of elders, who decide what they are going to allow Jesus to do or not do in any given service? Is it not abusive to treat Jesus like He can’t directly oversee His flock, and guide them in discussion, the manifestations of His Spirit, in edifying communication through ALL the members of body, and put virtually all control into the hands of one man? Is it not abusive to the body, to not allow them to have as strong a voice into the direction of any given flock as that of the pastor? Isn’t it abusive to create a program out of the service, that says to Jesus, “Now Jesus, you have 15 or 20 minutes to communicate through me, or a few who prophesy in any given service, so You’d best be getting it done quickly, because when the next element of my service comes up I’m going there, whether I have to leave You behind or not? I could go on and on and on, and it could all sound like I have an “attitude,” but I’ve been involved in Church leadership, in one way or another, for over 30 years, and frankly it sickens me to watch leaders, benignly or malignantly, strip Jesus of His direct leadership, and take it unto themselves, and do something with it I’m personally confident He would never have wanted done.

It is very hard for me to look down throughout Church history and see the crusades, the inquisition, and the various Church missions that entered regions and raped, pillaged, mutilated, and destroyed

whole cultures, just because those cultures were different than their own, and didn't ascribe to exactly the same religious norms and standards as those they had experienced. They forced them, at knife, spear, and gun point to convert, and when they either didn't understand it all, or resisted it, they were killed for resisting the Gospel these missionaries brought. I've just seen too much man centered Churchy behavior to always be a soft spoken, kind, and gentle person. It upsets me to see what has been done with Jesus' Church, in the name of Christianity and Christian religion.

The following information is shared, not with a view towards an equal comparison with the modern errors of the Church, or its leaders, but simply to expose how serious error can become, when allowed to continue unchecked. Obviously such error no longer exists, in either the Catholic or Protestant Church, but how sad a thing it is, when we handle the work of the Church in a manner not prescribed by the Lord. This is just an example in the extreme, to make this point.

Consider the following atrocities, done in the name of Christ:

Eyewitnesses recalled, "Once the Indians were in the woods, the next step was to form squadrons and pursue them, and whenever the Spaniards found them, they pitilessly slaughtered everyone like sheep... So they would cut an Indian's hands and leave them dangling... Some Christians encounter an Indian woman, and since the dog they had with them was hungry, they tore the child from the mother's arms and flung it still living to the dog..." After all, the Indians were only infidels."



Of Columbus' second voyage, it has been further written: "The Spaniards found pleasure in inventing all kinds of odd cruelties... They built a long gibbet, long enough for the toes to touch the ground to prevent strangling, and hanged thirteen [natives] at a time in honor of Christ Our Savior and the twelve apostles... then, straw was wrapped around their torn bodies and they were burned alive."

Or what took place in Goa, India:



Many types of brutal torture were employed by the Inquisitors, such as mutilation of body parts, fire torture and drownings. The details of this torture are too ghastly and horrid to contemplate for any sane human being.

"Children were flogged and slowly dismembered in front of their parents whose eyelids had been sliced off to make sure they missed nothing. Extremities were amputated carefully, so that a person could remain conscious even when all that remained was a torso and a head."

The archbishop of Evora, in Portugal, eventually wrote, "If everywhere the Inquisition was an infamous court, the infamy, however base, however vile, however corrupt and determined by worldly interests, it was never more so than in Goa."

When I look over even modern Church history, and the leadership within the Evangelical Church, while I believe most Senior Pastors are well meaning, I know for certain they are either consciously or unconsciously resisting the Holy Spirit, Who is grieved over their use of titles, singular pulpit dominating ministry, a passive pew sitting laity, turning His Church into a place and building, rather than an organic living community of saints. I feel I know that the Holy Spirit testifies to their spirit that what they are doing is missing the mark, but I believe they are so terrified at endangering their security and significance, and negatively conditioned by Church history, that they shut off His voice, in their inner hearts, and tell themselves His voice is the devil's voice, and something that must be resisted. I believe, on that Day, when they stand before Jesus, and Jesus fully reveals to them that it was His voice they were calling the devil's, that they will fall down and weep, and realize how that means they had both abused the Lord and His people, though unintentionally.

Sooo, do I have a bit of an attitude about all this? I suppose I do. Do I want to keep a tight leash on it, and not let it become destructive? Absolutely! But I know we ache to see things become different, and we have dedicated our lives, gifts, money, and time to work towards radical changes, that will at times be misconstrued. I think these things describe where some of the “attitude” comes from. I hope I’m not just justifying an “attitude,” but certainly my heart feels tremendous pain over the changes that need to be made.

Now, along these lines, consider with me, not towards justification of a bad attitude, but towards identifying others who may have shared similar strong feelings about such matters.

Jesus -

John 2:15 And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. 16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

Do you suppose Jesus’ zeal was interpreted as “An Attitude?” I suspect it was. Do you think He apologized for it? Does this mean it appeared to some as a bad attitude but wasn’t?

Some will say, “Ok, but you aren’t Christ...you aren’t pure enough to allow for such an attitude. Only Jesus can get away with such an attitude!”

I will grant you, I am not Jesus, but then what do we do with the testimony of Paul’s passion?

Paul -

Galatians 1:6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. 10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

My point is this, not that we should justify a bad attitude, but I suspect in a great many cases what is labeled a “bad attitude,” is the misinterpretation of passionate concern for the things of Christ. Surely a truly bad attitude is something none of us should desire, and such would ultimately dishonor the Lord, but if zeal gets interpreted as a bad attitude, then I submit to you that both Jesus and Paul would have had a bad attitude ascribed to them.

Some things are worth becoming passionate over. Some things are of sufficient importance that to not be zealous over them seems to me to be a form of dishonor towards Christ. I’m not suggesting we should direct our zeal in a hurtful way towards individuals, and we must be very careful in how we address religious systems, lest we end up smiting the sheep, when it is the religious system we seek to expose, but somewhere along the line there will be those who will be incensed at the exposing that takes place, as regards the belief systems of many. Such exposure will feel painful, and may get interpreted as a bad attitude, but ultimately it remains with each individual to monitor his own motivations for whatever he says or does.

On my part, I know I love the brethren I have related to in the Traditional Church system, and I believe, for the most part, they are great and godly men, but this doesn’t diminish my concern for them, or the things they practice, or the concern I have for how Traditional Christianity dishonors the Headship of Jesus Christ and His body.

We who are called to work towards reforming Jesus' Church must walk a very careful line in this area. Jesus alone had perfect motives. At best our motives fade in and out of purity. We must become humble of heart, filled with the love of God, for everyone in the body of Christ. We dare not allow ourselves to attack Church shepherds, as if they were all Pharisees or Hypocrites. Such would miss the mark, and do far more destruction than good. In most cases we will be called to gently expose the error they believe, and wait on God for the right timing to assist them in seeing the things He is revealing. I do not ascribe to being invited into a Traditional Church, and then attacking them from the pulpit, or displaying disrespectful behavior towards a Church or its leadership, all in the name of reformation. Such is shameful, and rightly deserves the label of "sower of discord."

May God grant a spirit of revival, that far outshines any emotional gyrations of past revivals, and moves His Church towards full repentance and true change, and we need to pray for His attitudes to become our attitudes, so that when challenged we simply deflect those concerns back towards Him.

We live in a day where Jesus is exposing the errors of Church history. I pray it leads to purity and healing, rather than name calling and the pointing of the finger.

Isaiah 58:9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,

Far better that we hear and enter into the same call that Isaiah entered -

Isaiah 6:8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

And if it turns out for us, as it did for Jeremiah, we need not be too surprised -

Jeremiah 7:27 "So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you."

We are not called to results, just to faithfulness and the attitudes of the Holy Spirit of Christ.