

American Church Buffet

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When somebody is searching for a church today, they usually ask the following questions to the church secretary or Pastor: Do you have a youth program? How many ball fields do you have? Do you have a fitness center and does it have basketball courts? Do you have a contemporary music program at your church and a good worship band? Do you have recovery groups for the divorced and drug-dependent? Do you have yoga classes? Do you have Zumba dance classes? In other words, a typical American family looking for a typical American church today approaches it like they do a buffet line in a restaurant with a smorgasbord of choices. In essence, they are saying, "Before I join your church let me see a menu and look over it to see if you can service my family the way I want you to."

So, for the last several decades, the American church has bowed to consumer demand and has provided all the above-mentioned delicacies to attract new members over their competition. We have become the American Church Buffet to the point where if the consumer says they want a yoga class, we give it to them for if we don't, why they may leave and go to another church that offers it. The American church has become a /fitness center/sports complex/house of entertainment. After all, Jesus said, "My house should be a house of entertainment." Isn't that what he said? That's what we think he said. That's what we pattern our churches after.

I wonder what would Jesus say to the typical American church today. Would he stand on the outside of it and declare, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer but ye have made it a den of thieves." Listen friends, selling out to the world is spiritual whoredom. Listen to how God views his people when they depart from him and fall into spiritual whoredom. Listen to this from the book of Hosea,

"And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms for the land hath committed great whoredom departing from the Lord."

You see, friends, much of the American church has sold itself to the world by bringing in the idols of yoga which is Eastern philosophy, Zumba dancing which is erotic gyrations and worldly entertainment which is spiritual harlotry.

Listen to how the Jews departed from the living God as seen in Hosea 4, beginning in verse 9,

“And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings. For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD. Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart. My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.”

Now, listen to what God says in verses 16-17,

“For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place. Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.”

Dear friends, do you wonder why God isn't sending revival to his church in America right now? We are joined to our idols and he has left us alone. We have transformed ourselves into the American Church Buffet. We have turned our backs on God and joined ourselves to idols of this world to please the lost with an American Church Buffet that they can choose and declare for themselves and God says to the church in America, “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.”

So we have the withdrawn presence of God as a judgment upon us for our replacing God with things of this world to attract new members to our churches. Let God have mercy on us! And the sad thing is, most Pastors would disagree with this message and call me and it unsound. Well, I may be unsound to them, but I will sound the alarm to awaken the church out of her spiritual authority and slumber and her duty to take the gospel to this generation of hell-bound sinners.

A fellow minister asked me a question last week. He asked, “Aren't you tired of dead churches?” I replied, “I can't use the word tired. The word I would use is nauseated.” When I sit in churches and listen to the nonsense that is going on, I get nauseated, sick to my stomach. I just can't take it anymore. I plead with the American Church Buffet today.

Listen, Brother Pastor, don't call yourself a church if you have yoga and Zumba classes. Be more transparent and just call yourself a fitness center. Listen, a Pastor is a shepherd over the Lord's sheep. An Eastern shepherd is deeply familiar with the sheep in his care. At night, when the sheep are brought into the sheepfold, the shepherd examines each one carefully to see if their condition needs immediate attention. Some sheep may have had their wool torn off by a thorny branch or the skin may have a sore on it that needs oil

poured on it for healing. The shepherd examines each sheep carefully and tends to its particular needs for its ongoing health and restoration.

If you are a Pastor and you are not familiar with each member's spiritual condition in your church, you are a poor shepherd indeed. If you're too busy marrying and burying and you don't have the time to visit with each family member of your church and speak with them about their spiritual welfare, why should you complain when they give you trouble and fight you at every turn.

Listen, friends, you have no business calling yourself a church if the carpet in your sanctuary isn't wet with the tears of your people, broken over their sins and the sins of the land. Don't call yourself a church if the carpet in your sanctuary isn't soaked with tears of your broken-hearted members as they pray for the lost in your community with anguished heart cries and pleadings with the Lord for their salvation. How can you call yourself a church if prayer is not the engine that runs your church? Is your church operated by money and man-power and not Holy Ghost power? If that is the case, your lack of prayer is an indictment against you. Jesus said, "My house shall be called the house of prayer." Does your church have a regular weekly prayer meeting that truly lays hold of God in desperate agonizing prayer? If your church is not a house of prayer from God's perspective, then why meet at all?

Listen, Brother Pastor, don't call yourself a church if you don't have an outreach program to the lost in your community. This generation doesn't need to hear the doctrine of election, they need to hear their duty of repentance. We were never meant to have a come-and-hear gospel but a go-and-tell gospel. Whatever happened to knocking on doors and sharing our faith? We're too afraid of making a false convert so we don't tell anybody about Jesus except our regular church members. Rather, in the gospel of Luke we have this command, "And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled." Are we doing it?

And we wonder why people are leaving the churches in droves and not coming back. We became the world and people are sick of this world. It doesn't satisfy so they are sick of the worldly church. It is high time that we get serious with God and go to our knees in repentance and seek his face and forsake our ways. Judgment must begin at the house of God instead of our churches being filled with yoga classes and Zumba dancing and worldly entertainment, let us humbly return to the Lord and flood our sanctuaries with the sighs and heart-cries of broken-hearted repentant people who have turned back to God in holy desperation pinning all their hope of deliverance upon him.

We must turn back to the Living God of the Bible and preach a pure message of the gospel that isn't politically correct and afraid to offend man. We must have boldness and courage to preach the full counsel of God which speaks of ruin, redemption, repentance and regeneration. The gospel of the Son of God calls sin black and hell hot. It warns men to flee from the wrath to come through their duty of immediate repentance and faith.

The gospel of the Son of God speaks of a broken law and a curse and an offended God. The gospel declares that man is a sinner by nature and one who stands in need to be reconciled back to a holy God. The gospel speaks of a bloody cross and the Savior who shed his precious blood for sinful man as a substitute for sin and who died and rose again and reigns in glory.

Listen, friends, Christianity differs from other religions. Listen, Buddha lived, died and was buried. Confucius, lived, died and was buried. Mohammed, lived, died and was buried. Jesus, lived, died and was buried but he rose again. We serve a risen Lord. Christianity was never built on a coffin lid.

Let us forsake the American Church Buffet and let Christianity in America be what it was always meant to be, counter-cultural. Let us have a counter-cultural revolution within the churches of this land and get on our knees and get back to God. God told his rebellious people, "And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down."

O friends, let us go to our knees as a church and beg God to spare us from being wiped as a dish by his hand of judgment.

Let us pray.

O Great God, forgive us for our wicked ways. Forgive us for turning aside from thee. Forgive us for replacing thee with the idols of this world. Forgive us for our spiritual harlotry and whoredom. Give us the grace, I pray O Lord, give us the grace of repentance to bring us to our knees in mercy rather than bringing us to our knees in judgment like you would wipe a dish and turn it over in disgust. Separate us from our idols, I pray. Purify our hearts. Open our eyes to behold your majesty. For if we could only catch a glimpse of thee, we would see our own rotten hearts for what they are.

Great God of Glory, hear our prayer. Come down and visit this vine once again in a spiritual awakening as you have done in former times in this once great land of ours. Purge thy church of its impurities. Cleanse your people and prepare your bride for the marriage supper of the Lamb. Help us, Lord Jesus, to be candles burning brightly in these dark, sin-soaked days of apostasy. Help us, O Lord, to be on fire for you in a red-hot love relationship with you.

O God, hear this prayer as it ascends to thy throne room and answer it with a mighty outpouring of your grace rather than an outpouring of your wrath upon your disobedient people. Have mercy, I pray.