

But They Will Not Do It

by Tricia Berg

*"As for you, son of man, your people who talk together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, say to one another, each to his brother, 'Come, and hear what the word is that comes forth from the LORD.' And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and **they hear what you say but they will not do it**; for with their lips they show much love, but their heart is set on their gain. And, lo, you are to them like one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument, for they **hear what you say, but they will not do it**. When this comes -- and come it will! -- then they will know that a prophet has been among them." Ezekiel 33:30-33 (RSV)*

Wow! Doesn't this sound like what's happening in the mega-churches today? I once heard someone refer to it in this way - "they worship the worship." They all LOVE the music and feel-good message (which is often self-centered). It's entertaining and they enjoy the sense of community, but some go home unchanged in their hearts—having the appearance of godliness, but deny its power. (2Tim. 3:1-5) The POWER comes from the Holy Spirit inside of us to resist the temptation to give in to the same sins that tempted us before we came to the knowledge of the truth. (Col. 1:9-11, 2Thess. 1:11-12, 2Pet. 1:3-12, Titus 1:1, 1Tim. 6:3, Eph. 4:17-24, Heb. 10:26-27, Rom. 6:12-13, Mark 14:38, 1Cor. 10:6-13, Jam. 1:12-16, Heb. 12:1-17)

Jesus had words for people who worship, but not the way God intends. (John 4:21-26) We worship in spirit and truth, according to knowledge of our HOLY God who sees EVERYTHING - who gave His only begotten Son to cleanse us from sin (not so we could live in it). (Rom. 6:1-4, John 8:31-36, Rom. 6:15-23, Heb. 4:12-13, Heb. 5:11-14, Rev. 2:21-23) Going through the motions didn't work for the Jews who claimed to be saved by being "children of Abraham" and neither does it work for us. (Rom. 10:2, Matt. 3:7-10, Rom. 2:28-29) Adapting the message of the gospel and catering to the wants of unbelievers is not the way to make disciples. (Matt. 28:19-20, Luke 14:26-27, 33) As the saying goes, "sitting in a garage doesn't make you a car any more than sitting in 'church' doesn't make you a [born-again, saved] Christian [believer]." (I object to calling a building, institution or worship service "church," because that leads to the mentality that you can come and go—whereas we ARE the Church.)

We mustn't deceive ourselves by pretending that we're "clean" because we claim to be His, even though have been deliberately soiling our white garment

ever since the moment He provided it for us—even though we don't love Him enough to do as He says. (Rev. 3:3-6, Rom. 13:14, Gal. 5:24, Jam. 1:27, 2Tim. 2:19-22, 1Cor. 3:16-18, Gal. 6:7-9, 2Pet. 2:19-22, 2Pet. 1:9, Heb. 3:5-6) We worship 24/7/365.25 with OUR LIVES, not only once a week. (Rom. 12:1-2) The Spirit dwells in us all of the time, doesn't He? (John 6:63, 1John 3:24, 1John 4:13, Rom. 8:9, 2Tim. 1:14) Jesus has bought us with His precious blood and we LOVE Him, ALL of the time. (Rev. 5:9-10, 1Cor. 6:18-20, 1John 1:5-2:6, 1John 3:4-10, 1John 4:10, 1John 5:2-3) We use our freedom to glorify and honor His name out of love, gratitude and a healthy dose of RESPECT. (Jam. 1:21-25, Jam. 2:12, Gal. 5:13-25, Rom. 1:18, Rom. 2:5, Eph. 5:6, Col. 3:5-7, 1Thess. 4:1-8, John 15:8)

Those who listen to the lies spoken by greedy people wanting to make a profit from FOOLISH people who like to have their ears tickled will not be prepared to meet their Lord and King. (2Tim. 4:1-4, 2Pet. 3:14-18, Rom. 16:17-19, 2Pet. 2:1-3, 2Pet. 2:14-16) Those who are WISE will take the care to read the Bible for themselves so they can get back on the narrow path. (Matt. 25:1-13, Psa. 119:105, Rev. 3:19, 1Cor. 11:31-32, 2Cor. 13:5, 1John 2:28-29, Matt. 7:13-20, Luke 13:23-30, 2Tim. 2:5, 1Cor. 9:24-27)

The following passages go along well with the one from Ezekiel at the top (Rom. 15:4, 1Cor. 10:11, Matt. 13:51-52, Rom. 11:17-36):

*Thus says the LORD of hosts: "They shall glean thoroughly as a vine the remnant of Israel; like a grape gatherer pass your hand again over its branches." **To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised, they cannot listen; behold, the word of the LORD is to them an object of scorn; they take no pleasure in it.** Therefore I am full of the wrath of the LORD; I am weary of holding it in. "Pour it out upon the children in the street, and upon the gatherings of young men, also; both husband and wife shall be taken, the elderly and the very aged. Their houses shall be turned over to others, their fields and wives together, for I will stretch out my hand against the inhabitants of the land," declares the LORD. "For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace. **Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush.** Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown," says the LORD. **Thus says the LORD: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk***

in it.' I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not pay attention.' Therefore **hear**, O nations, and know, O congregation, what will happen to them. Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing disaster upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not paid attention to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it. What use to me is frankincense that comes from Sheba, or sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing to me. Jeremiah 6:9-20

You **adulterous** people! Do you not know that **friendship with the world is enmity with God**? Therefore **whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord,** and he will exalt you. James 4:4-10

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and **hears my words and does them**, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who **hears and does not do them** is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great." Luke 6:46-49

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who **does** the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" Everyone then who **hears these words of mine and does them** will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who **hears these words of mine and does not do them** will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." And when

Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. Matthew 7:21-29

*Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "**Listen!** Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." And he said, "**He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**" And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven." And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they **hear**, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they **hear the word**, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who **hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.** But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who **hear the word and accept it and bear fruit**, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. **If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.**" And he said to them, "**Pay attention to what you hear:** with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away." Mark 4:1-25*

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him,

saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will **gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers**, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. **He who has ears, let him hear.** Matthew 13:36-43

Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and **even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.** For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and **count the cost**, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you **who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.** Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has **ears to hear, let him hear.**" Luke 14:25-35

When they had appointed a day for him [Paul], they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "**The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: "Go to this people, and say, "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive."** For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.' Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will **listen.**" Acts 28:23-28

And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "'This people **honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me**; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men." And he said to them, "You have a fine way of **rejecting the commandment of God** in order to establish your tradition!" Mark 7:6-9

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. **Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.** And he **who loves me** will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, **"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.** And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14:15-27

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. **If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide**

in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **You are my friends if you do what I command you.** No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and **bear fruit and that your fruit should abide**, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another. "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. John 15:1-21

For the **love of Christ controls us**, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might **no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.** 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

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