

The Religion of Guilt

Some churches have generated a religion of guilt as a result of a drive to bring holiness into the forefront of their congregations' minds. These extreme groups judge sermons by how guilty they feel after listening, and they consider a sermon a dud if there is no guilt.

What these people are faking is conviction, but the real effect is guilt.

Frank Viola writes about this:

*“Without a guilt-kick in the pants (which usually boils down to “God is holy, you’re not, so try harder”), their spiritual life would be completely sterile.”*¹

Their mode of operation is in contrast to the way Jesus operated which produced genuine love for him without the need to be always releasing guilt. This is how love works.

When we encounter Jesus – as those who have had a visitation from him testify – we feel overwhelming love. Any feeling of guilt is momentary and then they are engulfed in warm, inviting love.

Yes, there are occasions when Holy Spirit puts his finger on areas of our lives that are out of line with the character of our King. However, this does not evoke a feeling of dread.

Remember: The Spirit convicts the non-believer², but enlightens those who are genuine believers.

Teaching is not always about revealing Christ, but when it does, this is what it should be generated in the hearer:

*“The revelation of Christ through preaching will produce the freedom of the Spirit, a cleansed conscience, weights lifted (not added), and a heart stirred to love Jesus because of the sighting of His beauty and glory. This is something radically different from the culture of guilt.”*³

Frank points out in his book “Jesus Now” that the saints are the only people in the world who should be guilt-free because they are not condemned.⁴ Condemnation comes from accusation and that's Satan's way of working – he's “the accuser of the brethren”⁵. We are forgiven and our task is to personally deal with sin in our lives.

The Christian hang-up of guilt and the addiction to it is a sign that they haven't discovered the life and liberty of the Kingdom. They are living in religion, trying to please God, instead of partnering with him as favoured sons.

Note: Preaching is for those outside the Kingdom. Believers need teaching, not preaching.

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1 – Frank Viola (29-9-2016) “I was SO convicted” (frankviola.org/2016/09/29/convicted)

2 – John 16:8

3 – Frank Viola (29-9-2016) “I was SO convicted” (frankviola.org/2016/09/29/convicted)

4 – Romans 8:1

5 – Revelation 12:10