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Roman Catholicism In Brazil, Praising The Lord Through Song, Hypocritical Lip-Service Or True Christian Examples?, Modern Christian Music, Admonition To CCM Artists, Glory To God Or Glory To The Band?, Some Pointed Questions, Guard Our Mouths Responsibility Of Teachers, Boldly Preach The Gospel, Simple Gospel, William Tyndale's 1525 New Testament, High-Minded Profiteering Theologians And Preachers, Inspiration Of The Holy Spirit, God's Word Bears God's Fruit, God's Results Or Just Our Own?, Peter: Sorry Folks But I Forgot My Script

Recently, a dear Christian friend from Brazil mentioned to me in an email message, how as of late, there has been a renewed interest in, and dedication to, the Roman Catholic faith in his country. This rekindling of the spiritual fires from Rome, has been due in part to a charismatic movement begun by a certain young Catholic priest, who according to my friend, seems to emphasize singing as a part of his ministry. My friend wrote the following. Please note that I have added a few punctuation corrections and a few words in brackets, in order to make his message clearer to our readers:

----- Begin Quotes -----

Some months ago, a young Catholic priest, (he is also a former gymn teacher), appeared, and started a movement that [has rekindled] the Catholic faith. The majority of our slow-pace traditional Brazilian Catholics are now more interested in their religion than prior to this young priest['s] arrival.

[I have] nothing against [this] once Jesus is preached, but the problem is that the movement consists of singing and singing and singing.

Once he said that he doesn't like to preach too much, because if he preaches less than five minutes, God speaks; if he preaches from five to ten minutes, the man speaks; more than that, Satan speaks. (Can you imagine a priest saying this to thousands of Bible-ignorant "christians"?)

----- End Of Quotes -----

To begin with, I am sure that we can all agree that there is absolutely nothing wrong with praising the Lord through our songs. The Bible is literally full of verses which tell us that we are to praise the Lord through word, song and deed. Being as we are specifically dealing with the topic of song, consider the following sample verses found in both the Old and the New Testaments; and there are many more which I have not listed here:

"Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises." Psalms 47:6, KJV

"&lt;&lt;To the chief Musician, A Song or Psalm.&gt;&gt; Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:" Psalms 66:1, KJV

"&lt;&lt;To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph.&gt;&gt; Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob." Psalms 81:1, KJV

"O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms." Psalms 95:1-2, KJV

"Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King." Psalms 98:4-6, KJV

"&lt;&lt;A Psalm of praise.&gt;&gt; Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." Psalms 100:1-5, KJV

"I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee." Psalms 144:9, KJV

"Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely." Psalms 147:1, KJV

"Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp." Psalms 149:3, KJV

"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them." Acts 16:25, KJV

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" Ephesians 5:18-19, KJV

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Colossians 3:16, KJV

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." James 5:13, KJV

Clearly then, the Lord truly enjoys when His children sing praises to His Name; for as King David also wrote 'But thou

art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel'. Of course, as I also point out in other articles, such as in 'Are The Gifts Of The Spirit For Today?', we must make sure that our praises to the Lord are not just dry words, but rather that they are backed by sound Christian doctrine, and good Christian living. In other words, we must not simply offer the Lord lip-service through our songs, while our lives are void of any semblance to the real Christian life. As I make clear elsewhere, this was the problem with the Jewish hierarchy which was in control of the Temple at the time when our Lord walked the Earth almost two thousand years ago. Allow me to remind you again of the following verses:

"Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." Matthew 23:2-3, KJV

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." Mark 7:6, KJV

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James 2:26, KJV

To reiterate, singing songs to the Lord is worth absolutely nothing; in fact, it is pure hypocrisy, if we are not truly living the Christian life, and obeying and pleasing the Lord as much as lies within us. Sadly, I have felt for some time that this truth applies, at least in part, to the extremely popular Contemporary Christian Music, or CCM, which is now broadcast on many Christian radio stations across the United States of America. While I enjoy some of the songs which are aired on our local Christian radio station, I cannot ignore the dark feeling which comes over me, which gives me the impression that there is something dreadfully wrong with the CCM industry; as if there is something fake and 'plastic' about it.

While on the surface, the music sounds quite wonderful and sincere, I must question how much of it really comes from the heart, and how much of it is just dry, meaningless words, coming from the mouths of spiritless Christians who are more interested in musical perfection, and who have discovered that CCM is an extremely profitable business venture for Christian musical artists in the United States of America. What further disturbs me about CCM, is the way some of our traditional hymns and psalms of praise have been so modernized and given a rap beat, or jazzy tempo, etc. If one didn't listen carefully to the words, that is, if they can even be heard, he could easily mistake some of these so-called 'Christian' songs for the evil lustful music which is found on many anti-God worldly radio stations. Borrowing from the proverbial phrase, I can only wonder if some of the original writers of these sacred hymns aren't 'rolling over in their graves' because of the way in which some of these modern musical butchers have corrupted their beautiful musical praises to the Lord.

What further alarms me concerning modern Christian music in America, is the way in which some of these Christian musical artists are idolized by their fans to the very same degree as their worldly counterparts; and some of these CCM artists apparently love to have it so! Brethren, these things ought not to be! Consider some of the wise counsel offered to us by the humble Apostle Paul:

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth...Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."  
(1 Corinthians 10:17-18, 31)

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."  
(2 Corinthians 4:5)

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."  
(2 Corinthians 10:17)

"Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me."  
(2 Corinthians 12:5-6)

"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." (Galatians 5:26)

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Galatians 6:14)

"Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ." (1 Thessalonians 2:6)

For those of you who are involved in the CCM industry in the United States of America, or in any other part of the world for that matter, allow me to ask you a few questions. Who is really being glorified and lifted up through your musical ministry? Is it the Lord; or is it yourself and your band? If you have adopted the practice of passing out autographed pictures of yourself, just like worldly musicians, while you present the excuse that this is merely to appease your fans, it is obvious that you are seeking your own glory, and not the glory of the Lord, and the furtherance of His Gospel. If you think otherwise, then you are only deceiving yourself, and the Lord knows the vain imaginations of your heart. I call you this day to repent of your pride and your vanity. If you have been given the gift of music and song-writing, then I hope that you constantly remember Who it is who has given you your gift to uplift the spirits and encourage the hearts of other Christians. As the Apostle James tells us:

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17)

Allow me to ask you a few final questions. Are you and your music becoming more like the world, or is the world becoming more like you through your godly music and shining Christian example? Are people coming out from among the worldly body of unbelievers and joining our Christian ranks, or are you, and your fans, being slowly sucked into their anti-God and worldly ways? As you can see, you carry a big responsibility on your shoulders, don't you?

Returning to my friend's email message, while my response may surprise some of my readers, I can actually agree with some of the wisdom found in this Catholic priest's words regarding how much preaching we should do with others. In fact, the main thought behind his words is very Scriptural; that is, if this priest's words are applied in the context of the following verses:

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." Proverbs 10:19, KJV

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." Ecclesiastes 5:2, KJV

"A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." Proverbs 29:11, KJV

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:" James 1:19, KJV

Clearly, the previous verses admonish us to first be good listeners, and then to choose our words wisely, and to limit them to only that which must be said; because the more we say, the more chance there is that sin and error will be found in our words. I discuss this same topic of doctrinal error in part two of 'Exposing The Tactics Of The Enemy'. As I explain in that article, the Apostle James, who wrote some excellent advice on bridling the tongue, wrote in part:

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." (James 3:1)

In the previous verse, the word 'masters' is translated from the Greek word 'didaskalos', pronounced did-as'-kal-os, which is normally translated as 'teachers'; thus, what James is telling us, is that we should not desire to be teachers; because if we should teach something which is doctrinally incorrect, the Lord may indeed hold us accountable, and will judge us for it, unless we are open to His correction. As I have told my readers before, it is for this reason that you will often find a 'Last Updated' date at the top of many of my articles. Being as I am only human, with limited human understanding, I must not only remain open to a newer and a clearer understanding of the Scriptures, as the Lord reveals to me by His Spirit, but I must also reflect those changes in attitude and understanding in my articles, so that the Lord's hungry sheep are not led astray doctrinally through my previously-clouded understanding. So as you can see, I take this writing ministry very seriously.

While the Bible teaches us to be careful about what we say with our tongues, at the same time, as I point out in such articles as 'Rightly Dividing The Word Of Truth', there is a balance to be found in the Scriptures. While we are told to guard our tongues, and to watch our words, and our anger, we are also clearly told that, as Ambassadors of Christ, we are to boldly preach the Gospel, following our Lord's very own example. Consider the following verses:

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."  
Matthew 7:28-29, KJV

"And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."  
Mark 1:21-22, KJV

"But, lo, he speaketh BOLDLY, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?"  
John 7:26, KJV

"Now when they saw the BOLDNESS of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus...And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all BOLDNESS they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with BOLDNESS." Acts 4:13, 29-31, KJV

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29, KJV

"But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached BOLDLY at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake BOLDLY in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him." Acts 9:27-29, KJV

"Long time therefore abode they speaking BOLDLY in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands."  
Acts 14:3, KJV

"And he began to speak BOLDLY in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."  
Acts 18:26, KJV

"And he went into the synagogue, and spake BOLDLY for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." Acts 19:8, KJV

"Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more BOLDLY unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God," Romans 15:15, KJV

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth BOLDLY, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."  
Ephesians 6:19-20, KJV

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all BOLDNESS, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."  
Philippians 1:20, KJV

"For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."  
2 Corinthians 10:10, KJV

"So that we may BOLDLY say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."  
Hebrews 13:6, KJV

"He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." John 5:35, KJV

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."  
Matthew 5:16, KJV

"Quench not the Spirit." 1 Thessalonians 5:19, KJV

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Mark 8:38, KJV

So as you can see, there is definitely a time to keep quiet, and to wisely guard our tongues, and there is also a time to open our mouths as widely as possible in order to make known the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. If we fail to do this; if we fail to let our spiritual lights shine brightly before the world because of our pride, and because of our fear of the opinions of men, that is, because of the social disease of political-correctness, then as the last verse above tells us, the Lord will be ashamed of us at His Coming. Allow me to refer you to other articles such as 'Are You A Burning Ember For The Lord?' and 'Parable Of The Sower: Salvation And Service'.

While I do not agree with a lot of Roman Catholic doctrine, it is possible that what this priest was trying to say, is that God does not necessarily require that we speak a lot of words in order to get His Message of Salvation across to the hearers. The basic truth of the Bible is summarized in a few short phrases and key verses which do not require a lot of explanation; such as John 3:16, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:8 and Romans 6:23. The Message of Salvation was easily understood and accepted by the common man some two thousand years ago, and it is equally understood and accepted by many receptive

hearts in the world today. If the simplicity of the Gospel Message has become difficult and hard to understand in our modern day, it is due in large part to the worldly preachers and theologians of organized religion, who have made it that way through the implementation of large words and difficult phrases which are beyond the education of the common man.

This was basically the same problem which existed 475 years ago when William Tyndale printed the very first English New Testament. Tyndale's goal was to reach the common man, whom he referred to as the ploughman, that is, the man working in the field, with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Contrary to his desire to win souls to Christ, the smug, religious elitists of the Roman Catholic Church of that period debated doctrine in Latin and Greek, while at the same time, they neglected the spiritual well-being of their flocks, by denying them the Salvation which they so desperately needed. Jesus also accused the Scribes and the Pharisees of being guilty of a similar crime. In their case, those legalists used the harsh rigid requirements of the Mosaic Law to prevent people from entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Just like the Roman Catholic Church, they taught Salvation based upon good works and righteous acts, and not upon the Grace and Mercy of God:

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Matthew 23:13, KJV

Sadly, the situation hasn't changed much in our modern day. While there are some 'men of the cloth' who have a sincere desire to win souls to Christ, and to feed their flocks with the sincere milk of God's Word, there are also some modern preachers and theologians who seem to be more interested in impressing each other with their doctrinal dissertations which are full of impressive language which is native to their profession, which they expound upon in books which reap them a healthy profit. Allow me to refer you to such articles as 'The Only Credentials You Need', 'The Wisdom Of God vs The Philosophy Of Men', and 'Money-Making Bible Hucksters And Mammon', for a more thorough look at this topic.

This brings us to our next point of discussion. The primary requirement for any preaching of the Word of God, is that in whatever form it takes, it must be God-inspired; that is, it must be inspired by the Holy Ghost, as otherwise, it will be dry, boring and fruitless. In speaking of how His Disciples would appear before kings and the mighty men of the Earth, you may recall that Jesus said:

"But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. And the gospel must first be published among all nations. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." Mark 13:9-11, KJV



What Jesus is basically saying here, is that we should not trust in ourselves, but rather trust in His Spirit to lead and guide us in our witnessing endeavors. I will take this a step further by adding that we must also trust in the Lord to bear the fruit which He desires after we have planted the seed of the Word in a person's heart. As I explain in 'The Parable Of The Sower' and similar articles, God's Word does not return to Him void, or empty; and He is the only one Who can add to His Church, according to His own Will and Plan of Salvation and Predestination. Consider the following verses:

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isaiah 55:10-11, KJV

"...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:47b, KJV

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Ephesians 1:3-6, KJV

There was a time quite a few years ago when I was a young Christian, when I employed what you might refer to as 'hard tactics' in order to try to win a person to Christ. I could sit with a person for hours sharing Scriptures with them, until they were finally pressured into accepting the Lord; even if they weren't really ready to do so in their heart. While my zeal may have been laudable, today I wonder how many of those people were actually saved by my actions, and how many of them remain Christians to this very day. I also wonder how many of them went through the motions of praying, just so they could get rid of me. Well, I have grown older and wiser, and nowadays my tactics are rather different from my former years. While I am still more than willing to share my faith, and my time, with any sincere, truth-seeker, I have also learned to trust in the Lord more for the results.

Unlike times past, I rarely say a word when passing out my Gospel tracts. If a person asks me what I am offering them, I simply tell them that it is about the Lord, or else that it is an important message for them to read, and that is it; unless they show a deeper interest and begin to ask me some questions. Of course, if I have a captive audience, such as when I am riding in a car, then I try to take advantage of the situation to deliver a fuller message, depending upon the person's receptivity. The point I am trying to emphasize here, is that unlike in former years when I felt I had to rely upon my own strength to win a person to Christ, now I try to demonstrate more faith, by simply, and passively, passing out my Gospel tracts and then letting the Lord speak

to a person's heart while they read the Salvation message printed therein. This makes their Salvation a work of God's Spirit, brought about through Godly conviction and genuine repentance, and not through a work of my flesh, or as a result of high pressure witnessing tactics.

As I was working on this article, I began to imagine how funny, or perhaps sad would be a better word, it would have been, if when Jesus called His first Apostles, and then sent them out two by two to preach the Glad Tidings throughout the towns and villages of Israel in the tenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, they would have said to Him, 'But Lord, please forgive us, and try to understand that we are really ill-prepared for this job. We need to take some time first to write out our sermons on paper. Or can you imagine Peter or Stephen standing on the steps of the Temple, frantically fumbling around in their dusty robes, searching for that prepared sermon? 'Oh; I am sorry folks; there won't be a sermon today. It seems I have lost my script'. Imagine how many souls wouldn't have been won on those days; and maybe Stephen would have saved his life for a while longer. But you see, God's Spirit was present on those days; and that is all that was needed; because He was doing the talking, and not them.

As we continue our discussion in part two, we will take a further look at modern preachers and their eloquent non-offensive diatribes, as well as discuss the offensive Word of God, the cult of the glorified preacher, false doctrine, and the dangers of neglecting the Word. I trust that you will join me.

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Prepared Sermons Versus Divine Inspiration, God's Program Or Only Yours?, Eloquent Non-Offensive Diatribes, The Offensive Gospel, Circus Sideshow Of American Preachers, Cult Of The Glorified Preacher, Danger Of False Doctrine, Conclusions

You see, the potential problem with preaching from a long prepared sermon, is that we may say what we want to say, instead of what the Lord may really want us to say. There is very little, or possibly even no room, for intervention by God's Holy Spirit, unless the preacher is really yielded to the Lord, and willing to deviate from his prepared lesson. Perhaps the hearers are really in need of something entirely different from what may be included in the prepared lesson, but they may never get it if the preacher is following just his own program, and is not in tune with God's Spirit. Maybe the sermon of that slick preacher was indeed eloquent, and worthy of worldly praise, but was it really God speaking, or was it just the preacher? Let's be honest with ourselves for a moment. Many of the sermons which are preached in churches throughout America today are lukewarm, politically-correct diatribes, which are specifically tailored to offend no one, lest church members be lost, and the weekly offerings drop. I am reminded of the following prophecy written by the Apostle Paul:

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Timothy 4:3-4, KJV

These modern theological teachers and preachers are paid to spout off a non-offensive, patriotic, secular humanistic, worldly, ecumenical Gospel; but if there is one thing I know without any degree of doubt, it is that God's Word is indeed offensive to this sinful world; and it is becoming even more offensive, and we Christians too are becoming more offensive to the world, with each passing year, as man strays further and further away from the manner of living ordained by the Holy Scriptures. If you seriously doubt the offensive nature of the true Word of God, then may I suggest that you begin a careful study of the audience reaction to the sermons given by Jesus and His early followers before worldly compromise set in. While many of the common people gladly received the Gospel, organized religion, and organized government did not. Consider also the following revelatory verses:

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."  
John 15:22, KJV

"And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A

prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." Matthew 13:57, KJV

"Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?" Matthew 15:12, KJV

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him." Mark 6:3, KJV

"Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?...From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." John 6:60-61, 66, KJV

"When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them." Acts 5:33, KJV

"When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." Acts 7:54, KJV

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4:12, KJV

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Matthew 10:34-39, KJV

So as you can see, the real Gospel of Jesus Christ results in division. It exposes the sins of the rebellious, and it also separates the believers from the non-believers, even within the same families.

Another potential danger of relying upon prepared sermons, is that while the Lord may have already said by His Holy Spirit what He intended to say, the preacher may continue speaking in his own spirit, by his own strength, and by his own wisdom. While we want to follow Paul's advice by not quenching, or holding back, the Spirit, we also need to make certain that it is still God who is doing the preaching, and not we ourselves. It is very easy to become lost in one's own zeal, and lifted up in one's own pride, possibly due to a favorable audience reaction. For those of my readers who are Americans, you are aware of the fact that some Southern Baptist preachers, travelling Evangelical preachers, and Pentecostal preachers are notorious for putting on quite a

show in the flesh. They know how to emphasize just the right words, when to stomp their feet, when to clap their hands, and do everything just right in order to captivate their audiences; but how much of it is really inspired by the Lord's Spirit, and how much of it is just to make sure that the collection plate is filled when it is passed around at the end of the spiritual circus sideshow?

Just as we saw earlier in our discussion regarding Christian musicians, what may start out being Christ-glorifying, can easily result in glorification of the preacher if one isn't careful. In the United States of America, it seems that many Christians have their favorite preacher. Sometimes I'm asked by my readers what I think of preacher so-and-so. More often than not, I don't have an opinion, because I don't know the person in question and I am not familiar with their doctrine or ministry. I simply don't pay much attention to organized religion, unless the Lord happens to place a certain issue in front of me, and I am motivated to look into the matter and then present my perspective on the issue. This problem with preacher worship is nothing new. It causes problems today, just as it caused problems almost two thousand years ago. The Apostle Paul dealt with this issue on one occasion when he wrote the following lines in his first Epistle to the brethren at Corinth:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, KJV

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." 1 Corinthians 3:3-8, KJV

Aside from self-glorification, another danger which exists with some long-winded preachers, is that because of pride, rebellion and unbelief, Satan can indeed enter in, and use them as his vehicles to teach erroneous doctrine. This is exactly how secular humanism has crept into many churches. Because of the unbelief which exists in their own hearts, which is sometimes the evil fruit of several years of study at a particular worldly seminary, some of these preachers use their sermons to convey this same de-spiritualized, perverted and twisted interpretation of the Word of God to their congregations, who blindly accept the words of their preacher. Allow me again to remind you of some of the words

of the Apostle Paul:

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Colossians 2:8, KJV

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, KJV

Based upon the Scriptural evidence I have now presented to you the reader, allow me to suggest that perhaps this is why this young Catholic priest may have said the things which he is reported to have said by my friend in Brazil. Perhaps the priest recognizes that the Lord dwells in the praises of His people, and thus he has chosen to emphasize music and song in his ministry. On the other hand, maybe he recognizes the inherent danger of preaching long sermons, and is simply trying to avoid it. I really don't know. Of course, there also exists the possibility that he is merely carrying on the long tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, which has historically been to withhold the true Word of God from the Catholic faithful, by replacing it with other less important things.

As I explain in such articles as 'Are The Gifts Of The Spirit For Today?', 'Lying Wonders Of The Endtime', 'Have You Been Slain In The Spirit?', and 'God's Golden Teeth, Or Satan's Delusion?', it is dangerous for any church to place more emphasis on music and song, or on the Gifts and the Manifestations of the Spirit, than on the serious study of the Word of God. Some people have become so sidetracked with playing with their spiritual toys, that they have seriously neglected the Giver of those Gifts, and the truths found within His Word; and this has only served to stunt their spiritual growth. Let me simply conclude by saying that I do not know the heart of this priest. As such, I cannot rightly determine what his true motivations might be; yet the admonitions I offer in this article are nevertheless worthy of your consideration.

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