

Pastor's Corner – 6-23-2018
Fear of the New

It is not uncommon for God's people to have concerns when something new comes to the church. I can think of several instances in scripture when God's people had concerns because new things were happening and they weren't sure whether or not those new things were of God. Jesus encountered objections to his ministry and some of the church leaders even thought he might be using the power of the devil to cast out demons. In another instance, the apostles were concerned that there were other people besides themselves who were preaching about Jesus, casting out demons, and healing the sick. They thought that perhaps this was some kind of counterfeit. In still another instance, the leaders of the church were concerned that Gentiles were joining the faith without fully converting to Judaism. They thought this might be a watering down of the message and that the church was compromising to accommodate the world.

In each of these cases God's people were worried that the changes they were seeing were somehow contrary to God's plan. They were concerned that the enemy was at work and thought these changes should be halted.

So how did God respond to each of these challenges? How can we tell if something new is from God or not? Very simply, the scripture tells us that we should look at the results.

When Jesus was accused of casting out demons by the power of the devil he told the Pharisees, "look at the results." Was the kingdom of God expanding because of what Jesus did? It was? Then it was from God and not from the devil because a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.

When the disciples were concerned that others were performing miracles Jesus told them, "look at the results." Again, the kingdom of God was growing and Jesus assured the disciples that this was proof that they were on the same side.

When it came to the inclusion of the gentiles the same argument was used: "look at the results." When Gentiles accepted Christ they received the Holy Spirit and their lives were changed. God put his stamp of approval on them and God's kingdom grew. The results proved that the work was from God.

I think that we should apply the same principle today when we are confronted with new ministries and methodologies. One area where I think this common sense approach should really be applied is in the area of worship music. There are few things that seem to generate as much controversy as a discussion about the usage of modern music in worship. There is a fear among many that this music isn't from God, that it's the devil's tool, that it has too much of a worldly background to be used by God. But let's look at the results before we pass judgment

The other day one of our members shared an acapella arrangement of a contemporary Christian song titled, "No Longer Slaves." The chorus of the song says, "I am no longer a slave to fear, for I am a child of God." I knew I had heard the song before (though not with that arrangement) and decided to dig around on YouTube a bit to find it. I found a video of the original song (complete with drums and other "secular" instruments) that had 55 million views and 10 thousand comments. Take a look at some of the comments that people made about this contemporary Christian song.

"I am a 5 time ovarian cancer warrior. I have survived 4 battles with this disease. I hope with Jesus to win the battle again. He holds my life in his hands. I am no longer a slave to fear..."

"I'm 18 and just got baptized in the name of God today! I pray that this year will be permeated with breakthroughs in all areas of my life and a fresh journey with my lord and savior!!"

"I'm no longer a slave to fear but I am a child of God...Oh God, I need you today. Forgive me. I need more of you. Things are not going right but with you anything and everything is possible."

"Sang this in church today. I was genuinely smiling for the first time in months."

"This song comforted me in the time of my loss. I love God!"

The comments all continue along this vein. 10,000 of them. So let's ask the question. "What are the results?"

This song has helped impress people to change their lives, to glorify the name of Jesus and to cry out to him for the strength to live holy lives. Those kinds of things don't come from the devil. Countless posts have affirmed that they heard the loving voice of God through this song assuring them that they no longer need to be held captive by fear, that because they are children of God they can have hope and peace.

Does this sound like something the devil would want? Of course not. If this were the devil's work the result would be apathy towards God. The result would be self focused and not God focused. The fact that God is being glorified in the lives of these people is proof that God is working through this song.

I think the results tell us where this music comes from. I think that God is using this song, along with many other contemporary Christian songs, to touch the hearts and lives of people who would be unmoved by traditional church music. He is using modern sounds to reach modern people. What a shame it would be to resist the working of God just because he's using something new and trying something different.

May we all be open minded enough to allow God to pour new wine into our old wineskins.

Have a Happy Sabbath
Pastor Tyler