

They Loved the Praise of Men

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Introduction:

1. Maintaining proper priorities has long been an issue with most of us.
2. We can't get to heaven by accident. We must love God supremely.
3. Matthew 10:34-38 – “³⁴Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. ³⁵For 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. ³⁶And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household. ³⁷He 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. ³⁸And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”
4. God must be first in our lives (Matthew 6:33), or else He will not be in our lives at all. Jesus taught us to love the God with all of our heart, mind, body and soul (Matthew 22:37).
5. Sadly, many people “sell out” for the praise of men.

Discussion:

I. The Fact That Some Sell Out.

- A. Adam and Eve (Genesis 3).
 1. God's message was simple.
 2. Satan altered the message.
- B. Aaron and the Golden Calf (Exodus 32).
 1. The people were impatient.
 2. Aaron buckled to public pressure.
- C. Saul and the people (I Samuel 15).
 1. God's command was to kill all that breathed.
 2. He listened to the people instead.
 3. Thought to offer an unauthorized sacrifice.
- D. Peter (Matthew 26).
 1. Was confused after the arrest of Christ.
 2. This confusion (lack of faith/understanding) weakened him.
 3. He denounced the Lord.
- E. Pilate (Matthew 27).
 1. Knew that Jesus was innocent.
 2. Made an attempt to release Him.
 3. But ultimately gave in to the wishes of the crowd (politics).
- F. Demas.
 1. Must have started well. Paul didn't seem to make it a habit of traveling with men who are untrustworthy (example – John Mark).
 2. But Demas quit. He forsook Paul (II Timothy 4:10).

II. The Reason Some Sell Out.

A. Spousal Pressure.

1. How many have quit the church over the years due to the influence of a spouse?
2. Our mates will either help or hinder our service to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22ff).

B. Pressures of Uncertainty.

1. The need for strong faith in God cannot be overemphasized (Hebrews 11:6).
2. When we are uncertain our minds become uneasy and the way less secure.

C. Pressure to Stay in Good Graces.

1. Many want to be liked (either in general or by a particular person or group) so much, they will sacrifice their relationship with God to do it (Note Pilate).
2. Peer pressure has caused many to stumble (I Corinthians 15:33).

D. Fear.

1. The Bible strongly condemns fear (Revelation 21:8).
2. Fear can petrify us and cause us to fail the tests of life (I Samuel 17).

E. Political Considerations.

1. It is impossible to be a faithful Christian and be popular with the world at the same time.
2. Jesus taught us that the world would hate us because we are not of the world (John 15:19).

F. Money.

1. Judas betrayed the Lord for money (John 18).
2. Many let jobs (money) get in the way of service to the Lord's cause.
3. We can't serve God and money (Matthew 6:24).

III. The Cure.

A. God Must Come First.

1. Malachi 1:6 – God demands honor and fear from us.
2. We should love God as He has loved us (John 3:16; Matthew 7:12).

B. Life is Fleeting.

1. If we fail to get to glory we have missed the entire purpose of life (Ecclesiastes 12:13).
2. We need to make the most of our time – for it is brief (James 4:14).

C. Heaven and Hell are Eternal.

1. The judgment parables of Matthew 25 affirm the eternal aspect of heaven and hell (verses 41, 46).
2. We have a heavenly body that awaits us in the eternal heaven to which we are going (II Corinthians 5:1).

D. Men Will Not be Our Judges.

1. We must remind ourselves of Who (God – not man) we are supposed to be pleasing (John 12:28).
2. Jesus and He alone is our Judge (II Corinthians 5:10).

IV. The Return.

A. If you've wandered (Luke 15). The story of the Prodigal Son should show us what God's will for us is.

1. God's sacrifice of His Son forever proves His love for us, and His willingness to save us.

2. The entire Biblical story is an effort on God's part to reclaim mankind.

B. If God is no longer first in your life (Revelation 3:15, 16), repent (Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30) and return to God who loves you.

Conclusion:

1. Stay true to God and He will never leave you nor forsake you.
2. Come home if you've wandered away (Matthew 11:28-30).