

## A SEEKER FRIENDLY CHURCH

Among the catch-phrases of our day are that churches wishing to grow, must be “seeker-friendly,” or “seeker-sensitive.” By this they mean that church leaders must determine what their unchurched neighbors want in a church and then adjust their message, worship and program to meet those expectations. These slogans are standard stock of the “church growth” industry and are frequently used by our promoters of change. Looking through my concordance I found numerous Scripture references to “seek” and “seeking” but in no case was their message that suggested above.

The Holy Word makes it clear that *we must be seekers* if we are to please God. God said to David, “Seek ye my face;” and David replied, “Thy face, Jehovah, will I seek” (Ps. 27:8). Again David said, “earnestly will I seek thee” (Ps. 63:1). Later he wrote, “Ye that seek after God, let your heart live” (Ps. 69:32). When young king Josiah “began to seek after the God of David” he found the “book of the Law of Jehovah” and read therein. (II Chron. 34:3, 14, 18). The knowledge he found convicted him of his sin and lead him to a correct understanding of God’s will for him and his nation. He commenced a renovation of the ruined temple and a restoration of God’s ordinances and worship. Ezra the priest “set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances” (Ezra 7:10). Isaiah exhorted his contemporaries to “Seek ye out of the book of Jehovah, and read...” (35:16). Amos the shepherd prophet taught his neighbors to “Seek Jehovah and ye shall live” (5:4) but he straitly warned them against trying to find God at the unauthorized shrines at Bethel, Gilgal or Beersheba. He warned that if they did not hear and heed God’s word, he would take it from them and they would seek it in vain (8:12). Note well that none of these devout men set about to change the worship ordained by God to make it more acceptable to their peers. None of them thought to change the various ordinances and institutions set forth in the law of God. They first devoted themselves to learning and understanding God’s will and then called others to back to it.

God has always been concerned for those who desire to serve him. “Thus said the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I myself..will search for my sheep and will seek them out...as the shepherd seeketh out his flock...I will seek that which is lost, and will bring back that which was driven away...” (Ezek. 34:11-12, 16). When the time was right, He sent his holy Son “to seek and save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). He has commissioned us to assist him in that great search and rescue mission (Mark 16:15).

God expects man to play a part in his salvation. We are to seek Him but like Josiah and Ezra, to find Him we must seek His Word. We are to “*seek* first *his kingdom* and his righteousness” (Matt 6:33). His kingdom is his church (Matt. 16:18). We do not go shopping for the church of our choice nor should Christian leaders adjust the God-ordained faith, worship or practice of the church to attract adherents. His righteousness is his righteous teaching (Ps. 119:172) and the blessings only He can bestow. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *seeking* goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matt. 13:45-46). When seekers find Christ true church they must be willing to pay the price if they wish to possess it. God does not barter with those who wish to possess his kingdom/church! Imagine a sinner saying to the Almighty whose church was purchased by the tortuous death of his Only Son, “I prefer instrumental music and I will come only if you provide it!” Or imagine some lady saying, “If I chose your church, you must let me have a role in the public leadership of your church!” Such is the height of arrogance! The Rich Young Ruler was a seeker who was not pleased with the message Christ gave. But there were no negotiations regarding the conditions Christ set forth. He went away sorrowful (Mark 10:17-22).

\* We are to “seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated” (Col. 3:1). Like the ancient patriarchs we are to “(seek) after a country of (our) own...a better country, that is a heavenly” (Heb. 11:14,16). Christ promises that he that seeketh his way will find it (Matt. 7:8). Heaven’s richest blessings are reserved for “the soul that seeks him” (Lam. 3:25). Those however who “seek their own, (and) not the things of Jesus Christ” have no promise of God’s blessing (Phil. 2:21). A faithful church will always be *seeking to please the Lord* of the church rather than seeking to entice unsubmitive souls in on their own terms. JHW

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