

Complacency

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Merriam Webster's Dictionary defines complacency as "a feeling of being satisfied with how things are and not wanting to try to make them better." This definition is invaluable to what is intended to be discussed in this piece. Some folks are sincerely, but ignorantly carried away by the swelling current of complacency and perhaps, mediocrity. Little did they know that their lackadaisical attitudes towards the things of God and their nonchalance towards errors are detrimental. In Proverbs 1:32, the Bible says "*For the waywardness of the simple will kill them and the complacency of fools will destroy them*" and in Revelation 3:16, Jesus said to the church in Laodicea; "*So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.*" These passages are unequivocally clear that complacency is wrong and destructive. A lukewarm church is a complacent church and Christ says He will vomit such out of His mouth.

Kyle Butt summarizes the meaning of complacency when he said;

Few and far between are those brave individuals who have the fortitude to swim against the swelling current of mediocrity and the status quo. Most are content to sit by, occasionally complaining about this situation or that, never making bold, decisive moves in an attempt to make their world a better place by standing for what they think is right regardless of the cost.

Undoubtedly, some are guilty of this and several reasons are behind complacency. Sometimes, out of unnecessary fear of the unknown, people prefer to allow "the sleeping dog lie." It could also be lack of faith and conviction of what one believes. Often, when a doctrinal discussion is going on, the attitude of certain people is to keep reiterating the refrain; "Let us stop the arguments and let love lead." They prefer the ecumenical spirit which is obviously a disguise for compromise and they are just satisfied with the way things are going that they would not want any "noise" or "dust" to be raised. Are we not commanded to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered? (Jude 3).

While it is true that we must let love lead, we must realize that true love does not rejoice in iniquity (I Corinthians 13:6). And so, the right attitude towards doctrinal differences is not to remain silent and allow anything and everything go. Priscilla and Aquila would have done a much havoc if they had just simply ignored the great preacher, Apollos when they heard him speak knowing that he was oblivious of the baptism enjoined by Christ (Acts 18:25). They understood that it is sinful for them to fail to do something when they know the right thing to do (James 4:17). The Antioch church was not complacent when a strange doctrine was introduced to them (Acts 15:1-3). The apostle, Paul, was always in the act of defending God's Word and tackling errors (Acts 15:1-2; 18:19; 19:8). In his letter to the Philippians, he declared that he is "set for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17) and just like Christ, he was "doing and teaching" (cf. Acts 1:1) Also, the great preacher, Apollos was said to have "mightily convinced the Jews" (Acts 18:28). This was not done by being quiet or ignoring the religious confusions in his time.

When we take our minds back to the Reformation, despite the several theological concoctions that were prepared by the Roman Catholic Church and shoved into the throat of the people at that time, there was this brave man, Martin Luther who stood against those things he considered wrong. Kyle Butt describes him thus:

"He was a daring, courageous man who wanted the general mass of people to experience what he considered to be the true grace of God, free from the oppressive practices that were then taking place in the Catholic Church. In 1517, the nail he drove through his 95 theses simultaneously drove a separating wedge between his followers and the Catholic Church."

Brethren in the churches of Christ in the past have stood seriously for the gospel of Christ. Several of them were so skilled in polemics and engaged in public oral and written debates to defend God's Word. Men like Joe S. Warlick (1866-1941) who had 399 religious debates with several people including folks from various denominations, was known for his doggedness in the defense of God's word. Twenty three times, he debated Ben Bogard (1868-1951) who is perhaps the greatest Baptist debater that ever existed and who was disturbing the religious world in America with the Baptist blunders.

Another great mind was W. Curtis Porter (1897-1960), who participated in 77 debates and dissolved several Baptists aspirins as well as defended the Book of God. His first debate was

held in 1916 with D.N. Jackson, a noted Baptist debater of that time. At this time, Brother Porter was only 19 years old and he unmasked sophistry in a masterful way. He was the last person who debated Ben Bogard in 1948. Bogard had 237 public debates in his lifetime.

A lot could be said of others including C.R. Nichol (1876-1961), Harold F. Sharp, Sr. (1915-1987), Leslie Diestelkamp (1911-95), Roy E. Cogdill (1907-85), Cecil Willis (1932-1997), etc. and the list is endless. Some of these brethren left their comfort zones and risked their lives traveling to various countries to propagate the gospel of Christ. A lot of them trained their children in the way of the Lord and they carry on the propagation of the Gospel. Brother Harold Sharp's children are great preachers of the gospel. During his lifetime, Brother Harold had several debates and the most notable of these was with Dr. Cobb in 1954 where C.R. Nichol served as Harold's moderator and D.N. Jackson moderated for Dr. Cobb.

Time and space will not permit me to talk about others. Where are the voices of our leaders today? Most complain about the influx of heresies in the religious world but never attempt to do anything about it. Some want to adopt the sponsoring church arrangement before they could do God's work. Others wish to do it through a human organization. These men never adopted any of these but they turned the world upside down during their lifetime. How often do you preach the gospel? What is your attitude towards doctrinal errors? The COVID-19 pandemic has made some people to relent in their evangelistic work. Since most cannot go out, they resolved not to do anything. Brethren, "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Let us wake up and do something!

Reference

Butt, K. (2005). *What the Bible says about the Lutheran church*. Montgomery, Alabama: Apologetics Press, Inc.