

Is The Church Your Safe Space?

Safe spaces on college campuses are for students “who have been traumatized,” by someone’s comments, to go to recuperate. Some of these safe spaces provide cookies, coloring books, Play-Doh, bubbles, blankets, pillows, and perhaps a staff to help them deal with the traumatic experience of hearing something that is contrary to what they believe.

These pampered “adult children” apparently do not have the courage of their convictions, and they cannot face any challenges to their beliefs. However, they will use political correctness, marches, rioting, and generally obnoxious behavior in an attempt to force their viewpoints on others. They are like spoiled children who throw temper tantrums to get their own way.

People often use their church as a safe space. They do not want to hear anything that may bring any of their church’s doctrines into question, because that might require them to make a choice between the church and the truth. To be put in a position where you have to make a choice can be very traumatic. It upsets the comfort level.

The church at Laodicea liked being comfortable. Jesus said to them, “So then because you are **lukewarm**, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth” (Revelation 3:16). It isn’t comfortable to be cold or hot. We are not called to be comfortable. When we are comfortable we do not see any need to change anything. “Because you say, I am rich and increased in goods, **and have need of nothing...**” (v. 17).

The church has become their “safe space,” and it is the church that provides all of their needs. This is spiritual socialism, but the Kingdom of God is not a socialist endeavor. Socialism breeds lethargy, and these people do not know that they “are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (v. 17). Spiritually they are in a miserable condition, and are spiritually blind. Because of their blindness they are unable to see their own nakedness, i.e. that they are in a state of sin.

Spiritual blindness is caused by idolatry. Idolatry is to worship something else in the place of God. The first commandment reads, “I am the LORD your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt [*sin*], out of the house of bondage” (Exodus 20:2). The first commandment establishes the God who we are to worship as the One who redeemed from sin and death. Therefore we owe our allegiance to Him only. A mere man or a church has never redeemed anyone, and we do not owe them our allegiance.

“You shall have no other gods before [or *besides*] Me. You shall not make any graven image, or any likeness that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth

generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy to the thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments” (vv. 3-6).

Each generation tends to follow in the footsteps of the previous generation. That is why it is crucial that we teach our children, by our example, to follow the One who has set us free, and not the church.

But aren't we supposed to follow church government? No, we are supposed to follow the truth. The problem with following “church government” should be obvious. All you have to do is read about the many problems of the various congregations in the New Testament, and the many warnings about “...false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies [139, *choices*], even denying [720, *contradicting*] the Lord who bought them...” (2 Peter 2:1).

If we give our allegiance over to church government, then we have abrogated the responsibility for our salvation to the church, and we are committing idolatry. We must never put our salvation in the hands of another. Each one has the responsibility to “...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12).

Too many use the church as a crutch, and a crutch does not strengthen you, but it will weaken you. It isn't a matter of what the church says, but it is a matter of what do you say, and are you able to prove it, or are you just regurgitating church doctrine? If you feel that you have the truth, then you should be able to prove that you are correct, and be fully able to counter the arguments that you believe are incorrect. That would serve to strengthen what you already have, but what if you cannot prove the opposing view to be wrong?

The Bereans didn't agree or disagree with Paul, but rather “...they received the word with all readiness [4288, *willingness, eagerness*] of mind, and searched [350, *to examine, scrutinize, be inquisitive*] the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. **Therefore many of them believed...**” (Acts 17:11, 12). They didn't just accept what Paul said, but they had an open mind, and were willing to see if what he was saying was true by studying the scriptures.

“Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (Proverbs 27:17). Both parties can be benefited by the discussion, if they are willing to actually listen to one another, and to search the scriptures. Yes, studying does take time, but the reward is awesome. Quit leaning on the church. We must, not by relying on the church, but **we must “...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear** [5401, *reverence*]” (1 Peter 3:13-15).

We must be willing to prove what the Word says by studying it—not just by reading or hearing what the church says. If there is a controversial doctrine, then study the opposing viewpoint, and not just what the church says about the opposing viewpoint.

We need to understand that a church's doctrines **are not necessarily the truth**. They may or may not be the truth. There were false teachers in the early congregations at the same time that Paul, Peter, John, and others were teaching. Why do we think that that isn't possible today?

Jude warned, "...that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were of old ordained [4270, *designated*] to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and **denying** [720, *contradicting*] the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:3, 4).

These men contradict the truth, while claiming to be God's ministers. God allows this for our benefit. It forces us to "**Prove** [1381, *to test, assay metals, scrutinize, examine*] **all things** [3956, *the whole, every*]; **hold fast** [2722, *retain, hold down, detain*] **that which is good**" (1 Thessalonians 5:21, 22).

Notice what God says about putting your trust in a man/church. "Thus says the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusts [982, *to put your confidence or hope in anyone*] in man, and makes flesh his arm [2220, *fig. strength, might, power*], and whose heart departs from the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5). If you put your trust in man, e.g. the church, for your salvation, then your heart has departed from the Eternal. The church and Christ are not one and the same, as many seem to think.

Our safe space is in Jesus Christ. "If you then be risen [*through baptism*] with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. **For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God**. When Christ, **who is our life**, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:1-4).

Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock..." (Revelation 3:20). The door represents the entrance to our mind. Continue verse 20: "if any man **hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me.**"

It is our responsibility to open the door, and allow the Messiah to come in and teach us. We cannot afford to hide in the "safe space" of the church, as Adam and Eve "...**hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden**" (Genesis 3:8). It won't work.

"Seek you the LORD while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6).