

Not All That Glitters is Gold

Things are not always as they seem.
Don't judge a book by its cover.
Not all that glitters is gold.

What do these statements have in common? They all describe the difference between perception and reality, first glance and digging deeper, outside appearance and what's inside.

There are things in life that don't "look good" but as you dig in you find it was a hidden treasure. There are other things that look fantastic but as you dig in you realize inside it's no good at all.

It's so true what we say about people. It's not what's on the outside that counts, it's what's on the inside that counts. I would submit that they both have value and importance and ultimately should match up. Take care of your outside AND your inside!

If we are being real, most people put up a front that doesn't match the back. They put up an appearance of what they think people want to see and give a false perception of who they really are. We see this in believers and unbelievers alike.

Today we are going to look at the words the Apostle Paul spoke to his spiritual son, Timothy about these people.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NKJV)

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

Ouch! That's rough.....but it's reality.

Paul tells us that in the last days perilous times will come. Church, that is TODAY. Today is the last days. The last days is the time period from the first appearing of Jesus until He returns for His people! We are in it now.

In these last days perilous times will come. Perilous times are hard times, difficult times. Have we seen difficult times in this world? YES, of course we have.

Now when Paul says perilous times, these are periods of time. So there will be multiple periods of difficult or hard times. Basically the entirety of the last days we will see overlapping difficult periods of time.

These times are certain to happen and keep happening until Jesus returns. So why are we so surprised when they come? We have been warned. Not just of these periods of difficult times but we are even told what they will look like! Look at this list.....

2 Timothy 3:2-4 (NKJV)

2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, **unholy**, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

Church this is a description of the people living on the earth RIGHT NOW! It's not just a list of sins that people will commit but a list of characteristics or lifestyles that they will have. This describes people that will live a life of self-centeredness and unnatural perversions.

We see a list like this and think we could spot these people a hundred miles away. But could we? Could we even pick them out if we saw their reflection in our very own mirror?

Paul tells us one more thing about these people....

2 Timothy 3:5 (NKJV)

5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

They have a form of godliness. They may have an outward appearance of a godly person. You might even say they are a Christian, THEY might even say they are a Christian!

Not all that glitters is gold. Sometimes it's fools gold. A fool that thinks he's godly! A fool that thinks he's fooling everyone else.....and maybe he is!

Psalms 94:8 (NKJV)

Understand, you senseless among the people;
And you fools, when will you be wise?

These are unwise because they have a form of godliness, an outward appearance of godliness but they deny its power!

They LOOK like Christians but it's all a show. If you weren't here a couple weeks ago when I preached Wants and Desires, please go online and listen to it. Church we need to get close to Jesus.

Fellowship with Him needs to become our desire, something we crave and long for. It's time with Jesus that changes and transforms us. It's time with Him that we need above all else.

If it's not, then we are a fool, maybe having a form of godliness but given to worldly desires.

You might have your fish sticker on your car, your Freedom Reigns t-shirt, your 3 inch thick study bible, a PHD in Christianese, your dog might be named Moses, but what does any of that matter if you have the form but deny the **power**?!

Do you know what that means? It's not the group of people that believe the gifts of the Spirit have ceased. They may be included but it's not just them....

To have a form of godliness but deny it's power means they don't possess the ability to be godly! It means they don't get it! They don't understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's why they live a life of being lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, **unholy**, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God

By living these lifestyles you are turning down the ability to live a godly life. You may appear to be godly but you lack the ability to walk it out.

The main word in that list that sticks out to me is unholy. To be holy is to be uncommon, set apart. So to be unholy is to be common, included in the crowd, just like everyone else. Do you know that Christians are supposed to look different?

Look at what Jesus said:

John 15:18-19 (NKJV)

18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

The world isn't supposed to hate Christians because they are jerks and hypocrites. If they are to hate us it is for the same reasons they hate Jesus. Because He's not like everyone else.

Instead of lovers of self, love others

Instead of loving money, love to give generously

Instead of boasting and being proud, show humility

Be obedient, thankful, holy, loving, forgiving, encouraging, exercise self-control, be compassionate, hate sin and evil, be faithful, be flexible, LOVE GOD

This is what people should see when they see a child of God. This is what they should see when they see YOU, who is supposed to look like JESUS!

We will face difficult seasons. But it's not difficult because of the persecution of the church it's difficult because of the worldliness of the church!

We have been called to holiness. We have been called to look like Christ, not like our neighbor. God's people spend more time building their kingdom than building His Kingdom.

I believe we should enjoy life. We should have fun and at times relax. But what if we worked as hard for God as we do for ourselves (sorry, I mean our family, that's the approved Christian excuse).

We can't just have a form of godliness, we need to actually be godly people. Connected to Jesus. Always willing to change. Allowing Him to change us. And serving Him with our lives.

I guarantee that means you will have to give up something that you like. You will have to sacrifice personal pleasure to serve Jesus. "But that's soooo hard"

Do you understand the gospel? Do you know that Jesus left heaven, was born into this world, lived a sinless life, died on a rugged cross, and rose from the dead? Do you know that's a pretty BIG DEAL?

Do you know that is much, much more than anything you might give up or sacrifice for Him?

If you've never made that commitment to serve Jesus, please consider it today. His love and His grace, are more than anything you could ever gain in this life.

If you've already made that commitment, how about you follow through with it. I kinda feel like uncommitted should have been in that list. It's what we see in society today. People are hesitant to make commitments and then if they do they don't keep them anyway.

But there's something different about Jesus, no matter how many times we fail, He is ready to welcome us home. We can always come back. It's time we commit to following through with the commitment we made to LIVE OUR LIVES FOR HIM.

Isn't it time that the church looks a little less than the world? Or how about a LOT LESS than the world!

We have been praying for revival. Revival breathes life into something that was once alive. Renewal refreshes what we already have.

I believe that God will shake His church and then the world. Something about shaking is it removes what is not built on a proper foundation. It removes what is dead or no good. It purges those things so that what is living may remain and flourish.

Today the question is first, do you have that proper foundation? The gospel of Jesus Christ?

If not, today is your day. If so, then do you have a form of godliness or do you have godliness?

Before you answer that, let me point out 2 things that stand in most churchgoers way.

- Pride and a religious spirit

A religious spirit causes a person to think he is humble through his appearance of false spirituality, but the truth is, he is proud.

But pride keeps a person in bondage to a religious spirit because he is too proud to admit he has one!

So with that in mind do you have a form of godliness or do you have godliness?

One is powerless, the other is powerful. One is lies, the other is truth. One leads to eternal death, the other leads to eternal life.

Not all that glitters is gold. Are you?