

Contemplations on Trade

By Steve Stutzman

Jesus represents Himself to us as the best Bargain the world will ever see: Bring weariness and heavy loads, I will give you rest....Bring sins as Scarlet, I will give white-as-snow cleanness..... bring Me rejection, I will give you acceptance, etc

Unfortunately, not all trades are bargains.

We have traded the TRUTH for a lie. We have swapped statesmen for politicians, philanthropers for philanderers, leaders for bleeders, those with grand goals for those with goal glands. Those who were supposed to stand in the front and give reason for direction, now stand in the back and take polls to see which way to go. We have bartered away principle for popularity, love for lust, commitment for convenience, morals for morons, surplus for debt, solidness for a foundationless house of cards. Investigative reporting has been traded in for propaganda. Actual fact, and reputable research, has been swapped out for prime-time ratings. Thinkers have been traded for stinkers, studies for buddies, Degrees for temperature, education for sports prominence, depositories for suppositories, honor for ambition, integrity for ladder climbing, honesty for salesmanship. Our heroes are no longer those who sacrifice for the good of a cause greater than themselves, but for those who can lie and deceive the most openly without being noticed. "Reality TV", anyone? Hollywood stars?? Washington DC politicians? And all this came about because we traded the truth for a lie.

Well, at least it isn't in the church.

Really?

Pilpiteers have been swapped out for puppeteers. Christ centered Doctrine has been replaced by Systematic Theology. We have traded fathering for furthering, development for mental education, wisdom for knowledge, belief of heart for belief of head, Creation for Theistic evolution, fact for myth, history for hysteria, past for post, spirituality for spiritism, maturity for macho-ism, and real thinking has been traded in on inventive Scripture dismissal. The most quoted verse has gone from " For God so loved the world...." to " judge not....". We have traded in righteousness for a cheap one-way ticket, holiness for happiness, Godliness for gain, Salvation for salivation, and have turned Grace into a license to sin. (Jude 4) ' Hate the world' has been negotiated to the more sensible ' Love the world' motto, and " Jesus, Holy, separate from sinners" has been exchanged for " Jesus, friend of sinners". (hate to pop your bubble, but God never said that about Jesus, His critics did) Separation has been traded for amalgamation, hatred toward sin for tolerance, right living has been metamorphasized into religion. Pride is now happiness, rebellion and dishonor to parents is free thinking, selfishness is growth, and independence is the pathway to success. Swords have been traded in for white flags of surrender, and the fight has been traded for "peace", persecution has been traded for partnership, power for preeminence, authority traded in on debate.

I simply never hear sermons about hell anymore. The vast majority of folks under 24, in the church today, have never heard one in their lives. Knowledge of judgement has been swapped out for pass-out experiences. Anointing has been traded for announcing, gifting for grasping, and preaching for parroting. Obedience has become a very bad word. Fear of God, and fear of hell, have been replaced by a fear of being called judgemental. Thankfulness was bargained out on a selfishness drive.

All because we have not LOVED the TRUTH.

II Thess. states clearly that a time is coming when deception will sweep over---- and further, that it will do so on the basis for a lack of love for Truth. I always wondered what that would look like... and perhaps this is what it looks like? "Don't worry, be Happy" chimes the fish on the wall. After all, we are a developed, educated, society..... just accept folks ideas and negotiate to middle ground.

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Holiness has been gently swapped out with tolerance. Respect traded for distance. Unity has been traded on various flavors of unionism and uniformity. Christ-centered Gospel has been changed to a gospel all about me. We have traded sanity for insanity, then traded our insanity for medication. Closeness has been traded for closedness, even while facetime was swapped for facebook.

Meanwhile, our society traded women for men. We seem to stand in shock as men choose other men instead of women. Well, why not? After all, love for nature has been swapped out for nature worship. And Romans 1 is explicitly clear that this curse will follow, if folks change the TRUTH into a LIE. So we change motherer into murderer, and her doctor into a butcher. Meanwhile, seeking the Divine has been switched to divination.

As in John 3:19, we have traded light for darkness.... but only because we traded doing what we know is right for doing what we know is wrong. We have traded modesty for Madison Avenue, decency for decadence, stewardship for Wall Street, Eternal for temporal, His Glory for our human fulfillment, our birthright for a bowl of soup. We casually cashed in our representation of the Bride for a presentation of a ride. We tried to trade Moses for Joshua, but got Agag instead, as law was traded in for lawlessness. We traded God's Whole grain realities for a sifted, branless, iron-enriched version of spiritual non-nutrition. Accountability was swapped for privacy, worship for emotional highs, devotion for delusion, sanctification for insensitivity, conscience for convenience, sincerity for crocodile tears, revival for revisited emotional orgasms.

" Because they received not the love of the TRUTH...." (II Thess 2)

Is there no light at the end of the tunnel?

Better question..... WHY are we in a tunnel?

Yes there is HOPE. His Name is Jesus. He will come when He is truly desired..... when we are willing to cast down the things that have gotten too high, and fill in the low places, and remove the things that offend, when we are sick of our failing walls and untempered mortar, when we make straight His paths. (Luke 3:4-6) He will come when we choose to trade our repetition for REPENTANCE.

Awwwwwww. The word flows over my spirit like a sweet balm, a healing salve, a ray of hope, a cold drink in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. REPENTANCE..... Oh Lord let 2013 be a year of repentance. Let it be a year of trade.... a year where I see the little pieces, individually, of my humanity, chase them down and tackle them to the ground---- and drag them to the cross, not fearing their yelps of pain, nailing them to the cross--- then fall down in a flood of tears and be washed over by the Divine Trade, where human is stripped away and replaced by Divine.

Dear Lord, let us trade our pains for progress, our wounds for worship, our hurts for hearts on fire, our passiveness for passion, our lies for Your Truth, our humanity for Christ.