

Acceptance of Sin Isn't Love

Kole Farney

Many people who reject Christianity do so because of a perceived lack of love in churches. This rejection has caused a reactionary trend that seeks to soften God's disapproval of sin and magnify a kind of love which isn't really love at all. In order to reach a culture that thinks teaching about certain sins is graceless and unloving, some churches have closed the business of opposing evil.



Being wise in their own eyes, many churches have begun giving approval to those who practice all kinds of unrighteousness and calling it love (Rom. 1:32). Slander, murder, strife, homosexuality, envy, disobedience to parents and other sins that are normalized and approved by our society, are regrettably approved by many churches as well (see Rom. 1:18-32). In a quest to out-smart and out-love God, love itself has been redefined as unrestricted acceptance of sin.

What then do we need to remember and believe when that which is not love is said to be the highest love, and that which is authentic love is stamped as bigotry or intolerance?

Approval of Sin Mocks the Cross

First, we must remember the relationship between love and sin. The beloved apostle says, "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). The love of God in Jesus is all about delivering people from sin, not leaving them to live in it.

The world says that love *accepts* sin, but the Scriptures assert that love *exposes* it. At the cross of Jesus Christ, we see the greatest display of love the world will ever know, and the clearest demonstration of the horror of our sin. Sin is so bad that the only Son of God was slaughtered as a wrath-bearing sacrifice, and his love is so amazing that he was willing to die in our place. And it had to be that way so that God would be just in his forgiveness of sinners like us (Rom 3:26). Therefore, if we believe that love means accepting or ignoring sin, we mock the cross where Jesus made payment for it by his precious blood.

Good and Evil Shouldn't Be Confused

Second, we must refuse to call evil good in the name of tolerance. Listen to Isaiah, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and

light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" (Isa. 5:20). Redefining good and evil apart from God and the Bible is very dangerous and patently unloving. Woe to us if we try.

A comprehensive rebranding effort works for flailing companies, but it will not work for the church. If, in the name of tolerance, we stop speaking about the great need for salvation made plain by sin as defined by God in the Scriptures, then the cross of our Lord Jesus is useless, and our love is fabricated and phony.

Where to Go from Here

Suppose this is the sort of church you attend. A church where sin is not taken seriously, and the cross of Christ is not magnified. How can you make a difference? Two things must be done if undiscerning tolerance is to be ousted as the imposter that it is.

First, you must realize that judgment of sin is a very prevalent truth in the Bible. You could say, "But the Bible is all about love and forgiveness, right?" Yes, it is, but the forgiveness of God is necessary *because* wrath and judgment are real. Chemotherapy is necessary only when cancer is present. The forgiveness provided by the cross is the greatest love, not because it ignores sin, but because it deals with it.

Second, we must live in light of judgment and salvation. Maybe you have been thinking that letting sin remain in your own life or the lives of others around you has been the most loving thing to do. Consider, however, a blindfolded man walking toward the edge of a cliff. He does not see the edge approaching and likes the feeling of the blindfold on his face. The tolerant and unloving person lets him proceed because he does not want to offend him by pointing out error. The loving person runs after the man and pleads with him to remove the blindfold so that he might see the reality of his coming destruction.

If the tolerant person is blindfolded himself, that is one thing, but if the tolerant person sees clearly that the man will soon fall, that is another. The professing Christian who forsakes the truth of wrath and judgment upon sinful men and women forsakes love, and misses the beauty of the cross, where we find salvation.