

To Start the End . . .

What has brought us to this day inevitable, the beginning of the end of a foolish, selfish, man-made tradition?

In 1951, a fourteen-year-old Missouri farm girl, not yet married, became pregnant. By the time she was seventeen, she had two sons and was divorced. Shamed and stigmatized, she was told she was unfit to become a missionary. Yet, she remained faithful to the Church that condemned her. Was it she who brought us to this day?

What has brought us to this day inevitable, to start the end of a foolish selfish tradition made of man?

On a Sunday night in 1981, a newly elected deacon was on his knees before the Church, head bowed, and eager to receive the blessing of laying on of hands from the other deacons. He waited while, in open disapproval, two of the deacons walked past him with their hands clasped tightly behind their backs. Of course they had thought they had good reason since, after all, the newly elected deacon's wife was a divorcee. It wasn't relevant or even considered that she had had been divorced 30 years prior, to a man who was already deceased. Regretfully, this willing servant resigned the next morning in the pastor's office. Was it he who brought us to this day?

What has brought us to this day inevitable, to start the end of a foolish selfish tradition made of man?

We must not forget the housewife unwelcome at all the local fellowships because of their perception of her as a threat to the marital security of every couple. Why? Because her husband has left her and their children and they have just finalized the "big D," (divorce). Needing the

ministry and fellowship of the church more than ever, she instead experiences rejection and isolation. Is it she who brought us to this day?

What has brought us to this day inevitable, to start the end of a foolish selfish tradition made of man?

Could it be because a young soldier sent away from his young bride of one month to fight in Korea in 1938 received a letter from her one year later telling him she was divorcing him? Now years later, still called and still anointed, he continues to struggle with that "plague" (being judged and condemned for being divorced) which robs him of God's perfect will for his life. While active deacons in the church where he is not allowed to hold office are standing members of secret pagan organizations (take your pick), this man and his wife are held in contempt, if you will, by the "madness."

What has brought us to this day inevitable, to start the end of a foolish selfish tradition made of man?

Could it be for the mother of nine children whose husband has gotten away with killing two of those nine, and through the years has knocked every tooth from her head? Finally able to leave him and get her own place, she is sent back begging forgiveness at the direction of her pastor and elders who remind her, "God hates divorce!" And admonished, "you are breaking your vow you made to God to stay with this man "for better or worse, until death do us part."

What has brought us to this day inevitable, to start the end of a foolish selfish tradition made of man?

Could it be for the devout young father serving as a Sunday school teacher desiring to do more, but deemed unqualified to become an elected deacon in the church not because he had been divorced, but because before he fell in love with and married his wife, that she had previously been divorced?

What has brought us to this day inevitable, to start the end of a foolish selfish tradition made of man?

Or could it be the 49-year-old minister who at age 16 started preaching and was licensed by the First Baptist Church of his hometown? For, even at that young age, it was obvious to his pastor, and the youth/music leader, his high school voice teacher, and many of his classmates and members of the youth choir, that he was without a doubt “called,” or given a gift to be used in the Lord’s service. Yes, he was a singer for certain and he wondered at first if the “call” or God’s directive could possibly be music-related. However, the young man found no peace in this consolation, until something special happened to him. While singing Phillip Landgrave’s youth musical, “Purpose” on tour with the youth choir in Glorietta, New Mexico, the first words of the song began to make his calling clear. The words, “Do you have a purpose in life? Do you know that there is none unless you find it in Christ?” In that moment of illumination this young man heard and answered that call, and surrendered his life to do that which God created him to do. He felt God chose him to do this while still in his mother’s womb. (Gal. 1:15, KJV) “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace.” He would continue to sing while preaching with wisdom and power, and the results demonstrated by the lives that were changed.

Is it because when the young man was tragically divorced there was no longer a welcome from the prominent pastor who gladly preached his ordination message and declared at one time that the young minister could fill his pulpit without notice at any time? Or, when the young minister was finally considered by a small church in Missouri the vote was so split because he was “divorced” that he dare not have accepted? Or could it be possible God called him by mistake not knowing (God never learns anything!) he would later need to become divorced? Is the scripture not clear that, God’s call is “without repentance” (Rom. 11:29, KJV) “For

the gifts and calling of God are without repentance,” so that one may fulfill the plan and purpose, and provision of God for that person's life? Yet, the deceived/confused church ignores this clear statement of divine intention. The same deceived/confused church does not withdraw ordination papers when the divorce transpires, it just never asks for another resume. For the most part, the powers that be just do not speak to the former minister, now divorced. In essence the deceived/confused church, represented by its leadership, does not think enough of its stand against the divorced to take any governmental action. The unsaid reason could be they do not want to be caught taking action against a decision God has made in choosing this man for this specific call. Then again, it could just be simple economics. Were the powers that be to make a public statement of what they believe they would lose too much revenue.

What has brought us to this day, to start the end of a foolish selfish tradition made of men?

Could it be because a gifted, and anointed young man of God chosen year after year to play the part in the Easter program of Jesus suffering bleeding and dying on the cross cannot and would not think it right for himself to even think of becoming a minister or deacon in the First Baptist Church where he is a member since he was maimed by divorced, (in the opinion of a deceived/confused church) as a teenager, before he was barely full grown?

All of this and thousands of horror stories stacked for generations have brought us to this day inevitable to declare liberty to the captives and sight to the blind or to bring “shalom.” In short, to do the works of Jesus Christ our Lord as we are filled up with the light of His glory and grace. “Shalom” is the Jewish word that actually means blessing and peace to you and all that is yours, as it was in the garden. Isn't that the kind of “peace” God would offer? Jesus Christ the second Adam, “And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was

made a quickening Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 15:45, KJV) has redeemed us from the curse,” Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, “Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree:” Why? “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles (us), through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,” (Galatians 3:13-14, KJV) and restored us to our original position of dominion and peace enjoyed in the garden before the fall. This means we are no longer in bondage to the elements of the curse or subject to the death penalty. Whatever was offered as the atonement for sin was considered as bearing the punishment due to sin. If sin, sickness, pain, sufferings, death, hell, and all the effects of sin were a part of the curse and the result of it, then they are all atoned for and removed from us in God’s plan. It is clearly stated, “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.” Jesus Christ is the supreme sacrifice offered and He alone bears the punishment for our sin. It does not matter whom we have to blame for “the fall.” It never has mattered. When it is all said and done, all that really matters to each and everyone is “absolution.” In the end, no matter what we hold as meaningful and valuable, the soul is all that will be left. The question is put to all, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” The soul is only lost when the sin is not absolved. Absolution is forgiveness of sin gained through the blood sacrifice of Jesus.

However, it is the opinion of some that if one finds themselves divorced for whatever reason, that the life and works of Jesus Christ are not enough to deliver them from the awful ordeal and heal the wounds from which they suffer. Those who share this opinion, which implies that the redemptive work of Jesus is not enough, are believing the lie that says there is no absolution for the divorced. This ideology robs divorced people of a much needed healing for their own wounds, and holds them in bondage inflicted by the very “Doctor,” if you will, they subscribed

to for that healing. They are not offered “absolution” neither do they feel they have any. The reason the deceived/confused church cannot give away absolution is simple. One cannot give away that which one does not possess. Thus we have it, the present condition of the church: “deceived/confused.”

It is neither your opinion nor mine that really matters. It is what God says that matters. It is what lies within the heart of God that really matters. Some claim they know God and have an inside line to the point of passing judgment on His behalf. Whether they speak for God from a doctrinal standpoint or even by the Name of Jesus, these self-assuming judges are found to be those with “a form of godliness” who “deny the power thereof,” (2 Timothy 3:5, KJV) and are “contrary” (Acts 26:9, KJV) to the heart, and divine intentions, of our God the creator of all things, “from such turn away,” 2nd Timothy 3:5 goes on to say. Then in verse 7 we see clearly how they are “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Timothy 3:7, KJV) Jesus Himself says, “no man cometh to the Father except through me!” (John 14:6b, KJV) and “If you have seen me you have seen (comprehended) the Father;” (John 14:9, KJV), “for I and the Father are one” (John 10:30, KJV). Anyone who claims to know God and offers no “absolution” does not the works of Jesus Christ, the Son, who is the only way to God the Father.

You may have heard the adage, “the only Jesus Christ some will ever see (in this life on earth) is you.” It is scripturally sound and herein lies the “mystery” of the gospel at work. Do you remember singing, “Let others see Jesus in you, let others see Jesus in you, keep telling the story, be faithful and true, let others see Jesus in you?” By all means, let others see the Jesus that is in us. Let others see that He has transformed us by the work He has wrought in us. He forgives and forgets with full absolution when we confess and receive it by faith. God's wonderful gift of “absolu-