

EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH – March 2024

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Alistair Begg's "Downgrade" Counsel on Same-Sex Weddings

Charles Spurgeon was involved in the "Downgrade Controversy" regarding theological compromise in his day. In combating compromise he said, "For my part, I am quite willing to be eaten of dogs for the next fifty years; but the more distant future shall vindicate me." And it did! Right now, unrelenting pressure is on for the true Church to DOWNGRADE its stand on sexual purity (cf. Rom. 12:2; 1 Thess. 4:3).

The world DEMANDS acceptance and celebration of sexual perversion. And those who refuse to condone it or go along with it are called "unloving" and "judgmental" or worse! The world's version of acceptable Christianity is love without biblical holiness! But that "guts" true Christianity!

It is amazing how all things homosexual and transgender (and related perversions) have descended on society like an avalanche. And this trend has definitely impacted and influenced many in Christendom. This is not surprising concerning those teaching a false gospel, such as the Pope, who in recent days has approved the blessing of same-sex couples. But even some in the evangelical community have become flagrantly compromised on the issue of homosexuality (i.e., Andy Stanley, etc.).

It is in this context that one of the most famous evangelical Bible teachers named Alistair Begg has stepped into the fray. On a podcast, Begg dealt with a question that a grandmother posed to him regarding whether or not she should attend the wedding of her grandson, who was about to be married to a transgender person. Alistair said as long as the grandson understood about her belief in Jesus and that she couldn't affirm his choices in life, well then "As long as he knows that, then I suggest you do go to the ceremony. And I suggest that you buy them a gift." Alistair said that going to the ceremony would express love and would counter the charge of being judgmental and critical.

I believe that Alistair's counsel is wrong-headed and smacks of a downgrade trend. It seems totally contradictory. He says the grandmother should affirm to the grandson that she "can't countenance in any affirming way the choices that he has made in life" and yet turns right around and says go to the wedding and bring a gift. Is that not contradictory? Is that not in practice affirming? Does not bringing a gift even imply entering into the celebration of this abomination? It's like speaking out of both sides of your mouth! Sometimes actions speak so loudly you can't hear what the person is saying!

Alistair's counsel may be well intended (It's not my place to judge his motives), but it is consistent with "evangelical rot" that has come to characterize so much of what claims to be evangelical. Evangelicals, in general, have tried so hard to be acceptable to the world that they have often become unsalty (Lk. 14:34). Evangelicals have consistently sought to "win" the world by making concessions to it, seemingly not realizing that "friendship with the world is enmity with God" (Ja. 4:4).

John the Baptist did not get his head cut off for making nice with Herod. Rather he boldly confronted Herod about his immoral sin (Mt. 14). Jesus said the world hated Him, "because I testify of it that its works are evil." (Jn. 7:7). Jesus did not come to bring peace but rather division (Mt. 10:35-37). Of course, if we stand for holy truth the world will slander us. The Bible says, "he who is spiritual judges all things" and the world condemns this as evil (1 Cor. 2:15). Paul said, "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). It goes with the turf of taking a no-compromise godly stand! Paul further said, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" (Eph. 5:11).

Certainly, we are to love the lost "evangelistically" but we must not compromise our stand on holiness or truth in the process. Some we are to "save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating the garment defiled by the flesh" (Jude 23). Don't lose the love, but also don't lose the hate – properly applied biblically (Ps. 15:4). "You who love the LORD, hate evil." (Ps. 97:10)

Thot: God's viewpoint on perverse immorality was clearly demonstrated at Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19; and in the NT, 2 Peter 2:6 and Jude 7 make it very clear that He hasn't changed His mind!

Earnestly Contending, Pastor Dwight J. Oswald