

September 22, 2021

They Promise Liberty

A true minister is a “dispenser” of grace. That is why the Apostle Paul spoke of *“the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward.”* Ephesians 3:2. The minister receives “grace” from the Lord for the people and “dispenses” that grace as they minister the word of God. This eternal truth of ministry is found in the words of Peter when he said, *“...such as I have give I thee...”* Acts 3:6. Yet, Jesus’ words give us insight to the dangers of being “ministered to” by those who possess something which is not “grace.” He warned, *“If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”* Matthew 6:23. If those who minister to us are possessed by darkness they will “dispense” that same darkness unto those who receive them. **The words which we speak as ministers are only secondary to the spirit which possesses us.**

A few years ago, surveys were published which told us that over 50% of pastors in evangelical churches admitted to regularly viewing pornography. At first, I believed these numbers were exaggerated, but what I have seen in the last couple years makes me wonder if the situation was actually understated. If this is true,

these pastors are “dispensing” spiritual pollution into the hearts of those they minister to.

Some attempt to portray pornography as just a weakness which godly men are susceptible to. It is not! It is a sin of the sort of which Paul told us *“they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* Galatians 5:21. The words of Jesus perfectly describe the condition of those who partake of such things. He said, *“...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”* Matthew 5:28. **Pornography is the open manifestation of both adultery and fornication in the heart of those who consume it.**

The Apostle Peter warned of teachers who were themselves enslaved in darkness. He said they speak *“great swelling words of vanity,”* but are actually bringing the people of God back into the bondage of corruption. Peter said, *“While **they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption...**”* II Peter 2:19. These teachers could preach about great *“liberty”* in Christ, but they did not possess that liberty because they themselves were prisoners of corruption.

Peter explains this, saying, *“for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”* This statement is actually a reiteration of what Jesus told the Jews when he said, *“He that commits sin is a servant (slave) of sin.”* John 8:34. Sin is never independent of its source. The source of a sinful act is a sinful heart. The person who commits the act of sin does so

because of its dominion over them. The Apostle Paul also confirms this, saying, *“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, **his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?**”* Romans 6:16.

Peter was speaking of those who once knew the reality of Christ when he said, *“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.”* II Peter 2:20. These had been delivered from *“the pollutions of the world”* through Jesus Christ, but were now back in sin’s bondage and worse off than before they ever came to Christ.

This epidemic of pornography is only symptomatic of a church which has lost its way and no longer knows *“the truth of Christ”* which Jesus said *“make you free indeed!”* John 8:32-36. Until the church returns to the simple message of the *“cross of Christ”* which *“destroys the body of sin”* Romans 6:6, and the *“blood of Christ”* which washes it from our heart Revelation 1:5, sin in the ministry will stand as proof that the church has lost its answer, even as *“salt”* which *“has lost its savour.”* Matthew 5:13.