

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

December 26, 2021

Itching Ear Syndrome

Decades ago, an elder minister told me, “Most people do not want you to tell them what God says. They want you to tell them what they already believe but do it in a new and exciting way!” Sadly, I have often found these words to be true. People gravitate to hear those who will reassure them in what they want to be true. Such behavior comes from a spiritual condition the Apostle described as *“having itching ears.”* II Timothy 4:3.

This generation seems to crave affirmation of predisposed positions. In politics, we refuse to listen to anything which does not tell us that “our side” is good and the “other side” is evil. If the politician we support does wrong, we want to hear that it was justifiable or excusable. If the politician we are opposed to does the same, we want to hear how evil they are and how they must be punished. It is the same concerning the COVID-19 pandemic and the vaccines which followed. We will not tolerate anything except it tells us what we want to be true.

“Itching ear” syndrome is also well entrenched in the modern church. This is evidenced when you consider the multitude of prophets in the land who promise to speak only “good things” to the

people. People may love to hear such a prophet, but speaking only good things is not an attribute of a prophet of God. God spoke of such, saying, *“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.”* Jeremiah 23:21. If a prophet is telling you what you want to hear it is almost certain they did not hear anything from God.

Paul told us this *“itching ear”* syndrome would cause people to forsake the truth and turn to *“fables.”* He said they would *“...not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”* II Timothy 4:3-4. It is astounding to realize that the most beloved doctrines of the modern church are simply *“made up.”* They are just *“fables.”* I challenge people to go to the scripture to show why you believe what you believe. If you believe *“The blood of Jesus covers your sin from the eyes of God,”* you will not be able to find it in the scripture. If you believe *“Those who die in their sin will go to heaven if they have believed in Christ,”* you will not find it in the scripture. If you believe the redeemed are still sinners who sin every day,” you will not find it in the scripture. These things are *“fables.”* They are just *“made up,”* but people with *“itching ear”* syndrome love to hear it.

Jesus Christ died on the cross and shed his blood to deliver you from the power and presence of

sin. Romans 6:22. Anything which denies this freedom cannot be the gospel of Christ because Jesus himself told us *"the truth shall make you free."* John 8:32. Why does this message of freedom from sin through Jesus Christ so disturb the hearts of many who hear it? The simple answer may be that it strips us of all excuse. If Jesus suffered and died to make us free, then the only reason for a person to be in the bondage of sin is either they have not heard, or they will not believe. Jesus confirms this, saying, *"the Comforter"* would *"...reprove the world ...of sin, because they believe not on me."* John 16:7-9. "Itching ear" syndrome will always cause a person to reject *"the truth"* and choose a *"fable,"* thereby condemning themselves to continue in sin's bondage.

Do not believe God because he has spoken something you like to hear, but rather believe God regardless of what he has spoken! If you seek to pick and choose what to believe, you will make all his word *"of none effect."* Mark 7:13. It is important to remember that whatever God speaks, he speaks for your profit. Even his reproof is for your good. Hide his word in your heart and believe it for exactly what it says. If it breaks your heart, it will also mend it. If it tears you down, it will also lift you up. If it reproves your sin, it will also make you free! John 8:32.