



One Law and One Ordinance

“If an alien sojourns with you, or one who may be among you throughout your generations, and he wishes to make an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD, just as you do so he shall do. As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD.”

Numbers 15:14-16 (NASB)

There's been something rattling around my slow and rusty brain-pan concerning all the buzz these past few years about the need for churches to make their services “seeker sensitive”. This is one of the cornerstone principles of the Purpose Driven and church growth agendas. While there's an appealing ring to that phrase, something about its implementation has not settled quite right within me. Am I old fashioned? Am I too set in my ways to change? Maybe I'm just afraid of change and standing in the way of progress? Perhaps, but the gnawing inside me has actually been more along doctrinal lines than emotional, and I think these verses are helping the answer to congeal as to why I'm biblically uncomfortable with the concept of “seeker sensitive”: There's not supposed to be two sets of standards, only one.

How will “seekers” know that they're in the presence of the Answer to their searching if they don't see the Truth in our lives and actions? We're supposed to change the structure of our worship and fellowship so as to portray something “less threatening” than we'd engage in if it were “just us”? Doesn't this strike you as problematic, if not outright hypocritical? Are we **really** supposed to provide one face to visitors

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and then, when they "join the group", tell them about the other meetings in which we wear our "real" face? (I'm paraphrasing Rick Warren's oft-stated suggestion for putting off the "hard stuff".) It seems to me that at the end of this discussion what is really taking place is no longer focusing on Christ as the attractant but ourselves.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 5:14-16 (NASB)

The "seeker sensitive" advocates would have us re-interpret these verses to mean we should modify the light so as to more effectively attract seekers who might otherwise be intimidated by someone overtly and publicly living an exclusively Christian lifestyle. Do you really believe that Christ is providing a case for luring people in like stores which employ a bait-and-switch tactic to show one thing in order to sell you something else?

"There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you".

We are to worship and fellowship in the same, genuine way as the church regardless of who is present because the only thing that's going to actually change "the alien" is their response to **His** voice, not ours. If we want to make church more "seeker sensitive", we need to make **ourselves** more sensitive to His voice so that those joining us will themselves listen just as attentively.

Don't you find it interesting that when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-46) that the only thing the people present could do was roll away the stone so "the dead" could hear Jesus' voice? I find it even more fascinating that just prior to the miracle taking place, Jesus confirms with Mary that she truly believes He is the Messiah in whom there is resurrection from the dead. No one is asked to be something

else for the benefit of those present who don't believe – they're instead required to **affirm** the quality and presence of their faith publicly before all those present so as to be given an example of how true believers act in the presence of Christ.

I sometimes wonder if this doesn't apply at times to "programs" developed within basically good, *non-Purpose Driven* churches. I agree we need to re-contextualize the Gospel to make it understood by children, teens, or specific groups with identified needs, but it can't lead to establishing an alternate set of rules. It's presentation may be different or simpler or paraphrased somehow, but it must always and ultimately conform to the one doctrinal standard for everyone in the whole body of Christ.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NASB)

Yes, we can become set in our ways and unwilling to change the things which probably have no absolute state: the style of music, how we dress when attending church, almost anything that has to do with external appearances. But when it comes to doctrine – matters of faith and how our life reflects them, there is no biblical justification for following one set of standards for Christians and another when non-Christians are present. That's not God's purpose at all.

In His Love,

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