

Articles and Sermons :: What is Happening to the Church? by Anton Bosch

What is Happening to the Church? by Anton Bosch - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2019/5/30 19:47

This is how Jesus describes how things will be for believers just before the end: "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved." (Matthew 24:9-13). There is a sense in which these things have always been with us, but there has never been a time when these things have all been fulfilled so completely as right now.

You will be hated by all nations (v9)

Over recent centuries, in the West, true believers have been tolerated and even enjoyed a brief period of popularity. But, in the last few years the tide has turned and even in Western nations like the US, Europe and Australia true believers are increasingly despised and hated. False churches are flourishing and false believers are still enjoying popularity and fame. However, in order to be accepted they have to sell their souls and enter into unholy alliances with the powers of darkness and with secular rulers. Those who are accepted by the world also do not look or behave any different to the world and thus the world does not even recognize them as being Christian.

The true church now finds itself in the same position as the prophets of the Old Testament: "They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented..." (Hebrews 11:37). At the moment, in the West, the persecution of true believers is mostly not physical, but it is real non-the-less. But, this is just the beginning. Every year from here on will get worse as true believers' and true churches' rights to practice their faith in accordance with the Scriptures will increasingly be eroded. Yes, even in the USA! Already there are many areas where believers are being prosecuted, are losing jobs and are generally being discriminated against, because they practice Biblical Christianity.

In future, the only options will either be to suffer for the faith or to compromise with the world. Sadly, for many who profess to be believers, the latter is the obvious choice.

Many will be offended and will betray one another (v10)

It is the "nations" (unbelievers) that will hate and persecute the believers. But when Jesus speaks about those who will be offended, betray and hate, he uses the words "one another". This is not the world but the so-called church. It is believers that will be offended by other believers, it is "Christians" who will betray and hate other Christians!

Surely not? Yes, indeed. The worst opposition will come from within! Did Jesus not say that the way He was treated would be the way His followers will be treated? (Luke 23:31). Jesus said: "...A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin." (John 15:20-22).

Over and over the Gospels record that many were offended because of Jesus and His message. (Matthew 13:57; Matthew 26:31ff; John 6:66ff etc.). The same happened to Paul (1Timothy 1:15; 2Timothy 4:10, 2Timothy 4:16 etc.). Over the past few years many churches and pastors testify to the fact that people who once walked with them have been offended by the truth and the Word and have turned aside to the world, a populist message, or to spiritual deadness. Just as Jesus and Paul lost friend after friend and disciple after disciple, so too true men of God are losing friends and followers by the day "and, it will only get worse.

Just as Jesus was betrayed to the unbelievers by a friend in order that they may put Him to death, so "believers" are turning against other believers and betraying them to the unbelievers on social media and the internet so that the world will turn against the true believers. "Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death." (Matthew 10:21). The worst form of betrayal is that of a "friend". Yet that is what Jesus endured and what many a saint is experiencing, right here in the USA, and elsewhere here. "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." (Psalm

s 41:9).

Many will hate one another (v10)

The quality that should mark the relationship between believers is that they love one another (John 13:35) yet, the thing that seems to mark the relationship between "believers" today is hate! Yes, I know you protest that this is not true, but it is. This is a new phenomenon of the last couple of years. I could nauseate you with many e-mails and other correspondence from "believers" and "ministries" that can only be described as hate mail, of the kind to which only the worst politicians descend.

While the world has become increasingly hateful of Christians, the "church" has intensified that hate, anger and venom. Every morning when I open my e-mail, it is with dread, knowing that the e-mail will likely contain hate mail; or news of yet another ministry compromised by sin, heresy, or a departure from the faith; or yet another "friend" who has been offended by the truth and is turning their back on me or has become my enemy. "Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16).

One of the new phenomena of recent times is that "Christians" and ministries instead of gathering around truth, now build relationships and fellowship around common enemies within the Christian community so that people who have very little in common, or were formally at loggerheads, become "friends" because of their shared hate of another believer!

No, this is not a pity party. I am not alone. Others who are willing to stand for truth are experiencing the same and we rejoice in being counted worthy to suffer for His Name (albeit in a small way) (Acts 5:41). It is the reality of what Jesus calls "the beginning of sorrows" (birth pangs) that will precede His coming. (Matthew 24:28). And it will get worse.

Many false prophets will deceive many (v11)

The last fifty years has been unparalleled for the rise of error, heresy and deception. What distinguishes the errors of the last fifty years, and that of the last couple of years, is that the false prophets are no longer outside the true "remnant" church, but within. There used to be a clear line between the true and the false churches but that has all changed. Many of the ministries that were set up to be "watchmen" have become deceivers themselves, propagating another gospel and another Jesus.

Many pastors and teachers who for many years stood for truth now embrace heresy, or will not defend the truth any longer. Some have been deceived themselves while others choose rather to compromise and remain accepted than stand for truth and suffer rejection. Of the few who have retained right doctrine, fewer still exhibit the fruit of the spirit but are rather identified by "hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions..." (Galatians 5:20).

Notice that the text says that "many false prophets will rise up and deceive many" (Matthew 24:11). These will not be, and are not, isolated exceptions but rather the case with the majority! (I know there are those who will say that I am not speaking truth, but this is the Word of God.)

Lawlessness will lead to love grown cold (v12).

The Greek word for lawlessness (anomia "without law") is used 15 times in the New Testament and in every other case it refers to spiritual lawlessness ("iniquity"). Therefore, it must be seen as spiritual here as well. One could also apply it to civil lawlessness but that is not the primary meaning of the word.

Never before have Christians so blatantly lived lifestyles contrary to the Scriptures. It seems the Bible has no authority or relevance anymore and every man is doing what is right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6). Immorality, addictions, lying, materialism, divisions, uncleanness, revelry, love of pleasure rather than of God is now all too common among "Bible believing" people and their leaders. The Bible is nothing more than a book of pleasant sayings and expressions of God's love for sinners. Ultimately, all will go to heaven irrespective of the evidence that they were not born again and lived in rank rebellion to God.

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." (Galatians 6:7-

8).

Because there are no absolutes and lawlessness has increased, the love of many is growing cold. The love here must refer to love of the Lord and love of one's neighbor. Loving the Lord has been replaced by love for pleasure (1 Timothy 3:4) and loving the Brothers has been replaced with love of self (2 Timothy 3:2). There are also some who still love the Bible and doctrine but their love for the Lord and His people has grown cold and thus they have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

We are indeed in the lukewarm Laodicean age (Revelation 3:14-22). Lukewarmness is not a small matter – it results in being rejected by the Lord (Revelation 3:16), and lovelessness is evidence of someone who has fallen (Revelation 2:4-5).

He who endures to the end shall be saved (v13)

Times are desperately evil. Masses are falling away from the faith, many that we once thought were immovable have stumbled, the most unlikely people have bought into heresy, and stalwarts of the faith have become enemies of the Church. Do not say it has not / will not happen to you – pride comes before the fall and let him who stands take heed lest he fall.

Yes, the days of serving the Lord in comfort and ease are over. We are down to the crunch. Now, more than ever, we need to – watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. (1 Corinthians 16:13). Those who still cleave to the Lord need to encourage one another, not with feint hope of revival but with the promise that – "...when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." (Luke 21:28).

Let us rescue those we can, cleave to the Lord, and speak often to one another to encourage and provoke one another to faith and good works (Malachi 3:16, Hebrews 10:24). Above all, we must endure to the end.

– Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Maranatha. Even so come Lord Jesus.

Re: What is Happening to the Church? by Anton Bosch - posted by JFW (), on: 2019/5/31 8:38

Yes Amen!!!

After having been woken up by the Lord from the leaven (worldliness) in my own life and being delivered from it, having my eyes opened once again to the truth it at once caused me to experience intense joy, though after looking round about me I could see how comfortable everyone was/is in their worldly sleep, not wanting to be awakened but attacking you if you attempted to rouse them- and my joy turned to mourning and my laughter to tears:/

This is the same message the Lord has put in my mouth and some have responded favorably to this message though many cannot withstand it not having an appetite for unleavened bread, they crave the world's yeast to which they have become accustomed/addicted.

It's a sobering thing to witness, especially in people whom you've personally known to be faithful to the Lord yet now have been drawn away by the cares and concerns of the world just as I had –

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2019/5/31 8:57

This is a timely and prophetic call thanks for posting it Greg.

Re: What is Happening to the Church? by Anton Bosch - posted by sherri2, on: 2019/5/31 10:30

Quote: "Now, more than ever, we need to watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong." (1 Corinthians 16:13). Those who still cleave to the Lord need to encourage one another, not with faint hope of revival but with the promise that "...when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." (Luke 21:28).

Let us rescue those we can, cleave to the Lord, and speak often to one another to encourage and provoke one another to faith and good works (Malachi 3:16, Hebrews 10:24). Above all, we must endure to the end.

Fletcher said: "Yes Amen!!!

After having been woken up by the Lord from the leaven (worldliness) in my own life and being delivered from it, having my eyes opened once again to the truth it at once caused me to experience intense joy,

Yes, the Lord is also waking me up with such godly sorrow in repentance, fear, and trembling!! Turning away from things that the eyes were so blinded to. Praise the Lord!!

Ephesians 6:10-20

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2019/5/31 17:25

Definitely a timely word.

As to hating the brethren, I would add that the idea of hating God's children doesn't necessarily require that we have ill will towards them as is described in the original post. To hate the brethren, also means a failure to help them in their need, spiritual or material. That is, a failure to love in the NT sense is deemed hate.

Indifference to need of God's children as described in 1 John 3:16 and following is a sure sign that the love of God is not in us and thus, there in the absence of affirmative sacrificial love, one hates. You don't

have to be actively hateful, just inactively loving. This is actually a big problem when one considers the daily needs of the saints in spiritually and physically difficult environments around the world. The righteous command to be burdened for and to love the brethren isn't restricted only to the local church's internal needs as some seem to restrict it. Thus, one could be hating without even realizing it.

Re: What is Happening to the Church? by Anton Bosch - posted by mynameisMark, on: 2019/5/31 21:01

An honest question to those who approve of Mr. Bosch's message:

How are you confident that you are in the right, and not part of the problem? That you are true, while so many are false? What is the grounding of your confidence?

I ask because so many articles and sermons on here are scathing about how lukewarm, compromising and generally bad and even hellbound the church is today. These messages often receive hearty 'amens' from folks whom I presume are confident that they are not one of the bad guys described.

I wonder what the use of such messages is supposed to be. I know for one that they nearly always leave me feeling utterly condemned, wondering if I'm a good enough Christian.

Re: honest question - posted by JFW (), on: 2019/5/31 21:53

Hi Mark,

That is a good question and tho I can ultimately only answer for myself there is a possibility that there will be a concord amongst the answers in that they share a specific quality.

That being the only answer fitting for such a question is "God told me so"...

Which is itself not a thing to trifle with or handle carelessly but something to fearfully confess and give testimony as a witness to what He has ministered to you.

The Lord has so pressed this upon me as of late that it is an inescapable reality to which I awaken each day with a definitive sense of urgency to "wake up" as many as possible before the whole thing is consumed.

So after reading this post it was no surprise but a certain confirmation and not just for me but many others, only some of whom posted a response here.

If you are feeling like you aren't "good enough" then you can always lend a hand so to speak,... it's in our weakness that His strength is made perfect and you'll find that those whom are the most effective are actually the ones most dependent on God. So in this group being "not good enough" means God can actually effectively use you because you don't think you can do it without Him.

Hope that helps :)

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2019/6/1 15:41

Mark: You might consider this.

messages like that which get amens (which I heartily give) serve not only to expose the sin in the camp, but to warn those within the camp that they are not immune to the very things they condemn.

The truth that all of us who 'amen-ed' that sermon should realize is we are all seduced in some form or another by the culture and sins prevalent in it. We realize that we are not immune, we are every moment at war with it, and it helps to hear a rally call to those who seek to love God and love the Church as we are commanded.

Articles like that don't stir the humble and repentant man to think "I'm glad I'm not like THAT men", instead he realizes his love requires a sacrifice of himself and the necessary steps it takes to help those who have been tricked by a cunning destroyer seeking to make castaways of us all.

Re: - posted by ManOfGod (), on: 2019/6/1 20:33

Mark, that is an excellent question. How do you know that you are right? The Bible says

2 Corinthians 13:5 KJV

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

The Bible says examine yourself and see if you be in the Faith. Also Notice what it didn't say. It didn't say see if you line up with your favorite preacher, a denomination, culture, society, the opinions of those around you, it says examine yourself to see if you be in the FAITH!

How do we get faith? Scripture says Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the WORD of GOD. To often people feel comfortable(or condemned) in their condition because they try to measure themselves by the standard of man instead of the WORD of God.

On the flip side we have churches today that are more interested in producing replicas and copies of them selves rather than discipling people to be more like Christ. They want everyone to be like them instead of being like Christ.

Without taking any more of your time, examine your life by the Scripture. The apostle James said The Bible is like a mirror

or.

Jesus said pray for them that despitefully you. Am I praying for them?

The Bible says Be holy for I am Holy. Am I living Holy?

When Jesus said forgive and it shall be forgiven you, am I Forgiving of those who wrong me? Even if they don't apologize?

Mark, when you line up with Jesus, that brings on confidence. Daniel had confidence in God because He knew the time he had spent in prayer and that he had been walking in obedience to God.

David had confidence that the giant would fall before him because he knew he had built a relationship with God while watching His father's sheep.

Confidence comes from experience. David had learned to trust and rely on God long before he faced Goliath. He was confident and testified to King Saul that He had already slayed a lion and a bear and The Same God that delivered them into David's hand would deliver the giant into his hands also.

So TLDR summary, examine yourself by the Bible. Regardless of how good and pleasant something sounds if it doesn't line up with Scripture don't believe it. Regardless of how charismatic someone may be, how well they may sing, preach, testify, or prophesy if they don't hold up to the scrutiny of God's Word, don't follow them. The Bible says Satan comes as an angel of light.

I've went on to long hope this helps in some way.

Re: - posted by mynameisMark, on: 2019/6/2 10:49

Fletcher & Marvin,

Thanks for those thoughtful responses.

Elijah,

I have always found the concept of these self examination tests difficult as I usually don't score too well in them. Try as I might, I don't seem to have enough Christ-likeness, enough love, enough holiness etc. to pass the test with flying colours.

If lining up with Jesus is the condition for confidence, then I don't think I will ever be good enough.

Re: Hi Mark - posted by JFW (), on: 2019/6/3 7:11

Honest question,...

How much time on average do you spend in fellowship or prayer or perhaps simply studying the scriptures per week?

BTW this is not to "condemn" you for falling short of some fictional time requirement, but is an honest question-

Thanks
Fletcher

Re: - posted by mynameisMark, on: 2019/6/3 15:49

Hey Fletcher

It's a fair question.

Fellowship - I'm part of a local church to which I attend every Sunday as well as a midweek bible group. I also meet with three other men every 2-3 weeks to pray for each other.

Prayer - I admit I struggle with prayer, and can never manage more than 5 minutes at a time. Part of it is that I get the idea that God isn't listening or is angry with me, which I find discouraging. Many talk about prayer in more experiential terms such as "communion" and "presence". Such experiences are foreign to me.

Bible Study - I have, a fairly good knowledge of scripture, though my reading is not consistent. Often I get discouraged at things I don't understand. I certainly find it interesting, and find theology fascinating (I have many books). However, I find it hard for anything I read in the Bible to really penetrate at the heart level (apart from sometimes a vague gloom and dread).

I would like a better approach to prayer and bible study - any suggestions would be very welcome

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2019/6/3 16:21

Brother, pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowing of Jesus and His deep love of you. Once your knowing of Jesus, your devotion to Jesus and your treasuring of Jesus as supreme above all else is growing, you won't have any assurance issues for as Scripture says, you will be filled with all the fullness of God and you will grow in maturity. Also, the Bible says we can be assured of our being in Christ and born again by several tests. 1 John is an excellent book to pour over and pour into your soul in this regard.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2019/6/3 16:39

Well it sure sounds like you're in position and ready to take the next step:)))

Your current testimony is probably far more familiar to those on SI than you might imagine, we all have to come to that place (in one way or another) before we look for a deeper relationship and understanding with the Lord.

Prayer is different for everyone, some keep it formal and others more a casual endeavor and others still somewhere in between-

Usually that is based on our view of God and our relationship with Him-

Personally, I don't see it as a right or wrong issue but it is important that we spend time with Him, you can't know someone you don't spend time with, right? And prayer is one of the primary means to that end....

One prayer model that really helped me get in shape (prayer is like unto a spiritual exercise in that we learn to labor in prayer) was the ACTS model-

A-adoration

C-confession

T-thanksgiving

S-supplication

In part A, you can just begin by proclaiming the attributes of God's greatness -

In part C, you confess any known sin, or struggles and then give space for Him to point out things to you that He sees that are inhibitors, being sure to confess or agree in those as well

In part T, just literally name everything you're thankful for... this will take a long time (like- Lord I thank you that my eyes work and I get to behold the beauty of your creation, cause some people have never seen it.... Lord I thank you that my legs work and I get to experience running- etc...)

In part S, you just talk to Him about your needs and again be open to Him giving light on things He wants you to ask for/to give you so you can grow stronger in your spiritual man:)

If you do this for 20 minutes a day you'll be amazed at how quickly you will grow- the point is to be deliberate so make sure when you do this that you've set aside this time and not allow yourself to be distracted- much like a

workout physically.

Also ask Him to give you ears to hear Him, and to help you hear and distinguish His voice so you can obey it (act in faith) - ask and He will give liberally:))

It's a decent place to start being more deliberately active in your spiritual growth,... draw near to Him and He will draw near to you

Hope that helps... and anytime you might want to fellowship my email is in my profile-

Re: - posted by mynameisMark, on: 2019/6/11 17:16

Fletcher & Robert,

Thank you for your advice. I have been trying to put it into practice this last week, especially the ACTS prayer order.

I still find it difficult - please pray that I would have the resolve to persevere and that I'd genuinely find deep joy in prayer and scripture.

Mark