

Sincerity

In the shallow, superficial, overly permissive society we live in today, the word “sincerity” is over used, misapplied and trivialized. But that is the way of the world. This paper, however, is not intended to be a discussion regarding the world, or how it works, but about sincerity as it applies to the Christian Body.

Webster defines the word sincere as “free of hypocrisy, deceit or calculation, honest, genuine; honest of purpose or character.” The substance of that definition should be an important component of every Christian soul. But in any meaningful discussion regarding sincerity the word has no value until it is applied to some defined belief. To say one is sincere necessitates an answer to the question, sincere about what? Sincerity carries with it no inherent virtue, for one can be sincerely wrong as well as sincerely right. Can anyone doubt the sincerity of faith of the 9-11 bombers as they crashed into the World Trade Center Towers? Likewise, can anyone question the sincerity of faith of the millions of Christians who suffered horrible tortures and death rather than renounce their faith? Who doubts the sincerity of the Jehovah Witnesses as they go door to door demonstrating the sincerity of their beliefs knowing hatred and verbal abuse most likely lies behind almost every door? Were not Stalin, Mao and Hitler sincere in their beliefs as they each killed tens of millions of people in order to advance their individual causes? We can even credit Satan with sincerity in his dedication of purpose to take as many as possible with him to eternal damnation.

In recent times, the secular world, surely with Satan’s help, has “discovered” that there are no absolute truths that everything is relative, that my truth is as valid as yours, and that truth changes with time and with changing situations. We might even add that truth, from the worldly perspective, can even change moment by moment to accommodate one’s comfort, convenience and carnal desire. So where does sincerity fit in this world? This answer seems to be, anywhere that it’s convenient, or anywhere that an expression of sincerity serves to advance one’s cause. It’s been said that the most important aptitude for a politician to acquire, if he or she is to be successful, is to be able to

convincingly fake sincerity. This seems to apply to essentially all other “successful,” worldly endeavors. Consider what television, the theater, and Hollywood represent: feigned sincerity! Isn’t that what acting is all about? A great actor, as with a great politician, is nothing more than one who postures the most convincingly and thereby convinces the largest number of people that he, in all sincerity, personifies the belief he professes. One might correctly observe that the vocation of acting is nothing more than acceptable, institutionalized, false sincerity. We can accept and enjoy the entertainment it provides when we know what is going on. Therefore, we all know this when it is in the theater, but what about when highly perfected false sincerity is the principal tool employed by educators, politicians, clergy, and the talking heads that shape rather than report the news on TV? Even Shakespeare, 500 years ago, observed that each of us is but a “poor player who struts and frets his brief hour on the stage and is heard of no more.” As players, or actors, by that very definition, we all fake a sincerity when we project ourselves to be better than who we know we really are. How all too common and tragic it is, for example, when the prospective bride and bridegroom, throughout their courtship, project with false sincerity, only their “best side.” Is it any wonder then, that when the true whole nature of each is later expressed, as it inevitably must, that there is so often such great disillusionment, suffering, and finally the breaking of the sacred bonds? Genuine sincerity and honesty from the very beginning would have prevented many such mis-matches. While not usually expressed, this bluntly, faked sincerity is today a well respected and admired ability. It’s essential not only for success in politics but also for salesmen and anyone wishing to “climb a corporate ladder,” or to advance almost anywhere in this world.

Also, consider the demonic monster called “political correctness.” This is legally mandated false sincerity, because any one having sincere views contrary to what has been decided as politically correct, is legally muzzled, or expected to compromise his or her beliefs. They must not speak or write their beliefs, for fear of loss of their jobs, or even imprisonment for committing a “hate crime.” For instance, in Germany, Canada, Austria, and several other countries, there are people in jail whose only crime was to publicly state or write that they believed that somewhat fewer than 6 million Jews were executed by the

Nazis. If this is hard to believe, check it out; it is true! An internationally respected historian of the World War II era named David Irving was just recently released from prison after serving 1 ½ years of a three year sentence as a hate criminal for simply having challenged the claim that this many Jews died in concentration camps. The sentence would have been much longer but was reduced because he “retracted” his early and sincere contentions. In other words, at age 67 he lied in order to avoid spending most, if not all, of the rest of his life in prison. You don’t have to go to another country to find such satanic absurdities. Here, it is unlawful to teach of God and creation. Only the lie of evolution is allowed in public schools. The absurd lie has been proven to be just that, many times over, yet all such proofs are ignored and the godless, Satan-controlled state demands that it is to be believed.

Why go into all of this, when the stated purpose here is to examine the meaning of the word “sincerity” as it applies to the Christian Body? It’s simply because “the world” and way too much of what it stands for, including political correctness, has entered into and become part of the Christian church. Think about this for a while. Can sincerity live comfortably with hypocrisy? And isn’t tolerance of wrong a clear expression of hypocrisy? We live in a world where this has become the norm rather than the exception.

The meaning and effectiveness of sincerity, as with almost everything else, has greatly suffered as a result of its “marriage to the world.” Christians today live much of their lives surrounded by, immersed in, and greatly influenced by the world and nearly all of its ways. Scripture tells us that we must live in the world but must not be of the world. Many Christians have no idea of what that means. As a result, the world has taken up full residency in the so-called Christian church. Because of this, I suspect that very little remains in the “church” that Jesus, or even the Apostles, would find tolerable. The prophesied “Laodicean” church of this age (Revelation 3) fits current conditions perfectly. The more we have allowed these influences into our lives and into the church, the more each has become like the world, until now there is little or no distinction between “the world” and the “Christian Body.”

Tolerance and compromise are two words not found in the Holy Bible, yet they are the cornerstones of that tragic heresy called ecumenicalism, which has seduced major portions of every formerly genuine Christian denomination. This merging of world and church is so extensive today that much, if not most, of the so-called Christian Body is composed of “nominal Christians” and merely dabblers in the faith, rather than genuine and uncompromising committed adherents to Jesus and His truths. As a result, we have what has been called the visible church that which is made up of all who even vaguely claim to profess the faith, and the comparatively small hidden church composed of the truly saved remnants, who actually possess the saving faith.

When one is born-again, he or she is “sanctified” in the Lord. Sanctified means set apart. Set apart from what? Set apart from the world! If you consider yourself a Christian, look deep into your soul and answer to yourself this question: are you sanctified, that is, set apart for Jesus? To be set apart, there must be something to be set apart from. Scripture tells us that we are to be set apart from the world. That means that we are to have as little as possible to do with the world, its ways, beliefs, activities, attitudes, amusements, and immoral behaviors. In many ways the Amish people are living examples of a very serious application of this doctrine.

Scripture also tells us that there are only two categories of people in the world, those who are saved and those who are not, that is, those who are sanctified, and those who are not, those whose destiny is eternal life with the Creator and those who will spend eternity in hell. Determining which category you belong to is not necessarily as simple as most preachers and teachers of this age indicate it to be, when the Whole of Scripture is taken into consideration as your basis for determination. Here, sincerity plays a vital part, but as stated before, of equal importance is, to what is that sincerity applied? To that should be added, how really sincere, or how watered down by world influences is that sincerity? The way the world has tossed around, twisted, and misused the meaning of the word; we must be very circumspect before we accept fully even the sincerity of what we believe to be our own sincerity. It is sincerity of belief in what Scripture tells is the way to salvation, which we must fully understand and properly apply, if we are to confirm that

we are truly saved. To this must be added repentances and obedience if we are to examine the whole of available evidence in the matter. I know! Scripture tells us we are “saved” by grace through faith. And “believe and ye are saved” and “confess with thy lips and believe in thine heart that Jesus is Lord and thou shall be saved,” etc. These are certainly God’s prerequisite instructions for salvation and are therefore, true and complete. However, the issue is, what do “believe” and “faith,” which have the same definition, really mean? It could be said that sincerity, belief, repentance, and obedience are the awesome foursome, which deal with genuine, evidenced, eternal salvation. But as previously noted, sincerity is meaningless until it is somewhere applied in order to add a quality to some idea or belief. Then it becomes an essential part of that idea. Thus there must be a sincerity of faith, and that faith must be in Jesus and in strict accordance with the whole of Scripture.

Now let’s look at repentance. To the world, the definition is that it’s simply a change of mind. In the Biblical context, it is far more; it is a complete turnaround from wherever one is, to a singular fully dedicated focus on Jesus. The validity of such repentance is dependant on the sincerity with which it manifests. Repentance, which lacks the slightest measure of sincerity, is not real repentance, and, therefore, has no place in the genuine Christian Body. Repentance and belief / faith are inexorably bound, for how can a sincere and complete faith manifest without a sincere and complete turning toward Jesus? Faith, therefore, must be sincere by the strongest meaning of the word, or else the faith cannot be a saving faith. Lest the seeker, and anyone who is new to the faith become disillusioned by such a seemingly unattainable standard, one should recognize that the Lord is patient, loving and long suffering for those who sincerely seek Him. Scripture tells us that a saving faith can be as small as a mustard seed. That speaks to its size, but not to any weakness of its sincerity. The described qualities do not necessarily all come at once. God knows where you are, and if you are sincerely seeking. If it is really Jesus you are seeking, you will find Him because the Holy Spirit will lead you to Him! We need only to see that there is a continuous evidence of growth in the right direction. God’s assistance in these matters is always available for those who ask in sincerity.

Then we come to obedience. That is the tough one that most of us would rather not know much about. Yet obedience is part of the salvation package although it is not a prerequisite. It is a very important part of the evidence of salvation, evidence of a growing faith and submission to the Lordship of Jesus. Of course, we are all sinners and to some degree will continue to sin to our last breath. Obedience is implicit in the meaning of true repentance. We are commanded to be perfect as our Lord is perfect. That must be the goal and the sincere work-in-process of every redeemed soul. Continuous sincere effort at obedience to God's Word is that work-in-process. If that is not the primary goal and also one's heart's desire, then perhaps one should look most prayerfully into the soul to determine whether or not God's redemptive grace is really there.

This brings us to the final thought regarding sincerity. Having briefly discussed the awesome foursome of sincerity, belief, repentance, and obedience, there is a fifth, very important, yet most highly neglected component of every genuine practicing, obedient Christian, and that is intimate, in depth, knowledge, and understanding of God's inerrant Holy Word, the Holy Bible. Many will tell you that this is not a prerequisite to salvation. Technically, that is true, and was probably much more frequently manifested in earlier simpler times. However, today with heresy, apostasy, ultra clever weavers of lies and half truths, and a myriad of other satanic devices all seeking control of every soul, knowing the real truth, which is found only in the Holy Bible, has become ever more essential, if one is to escape these snares. There is no other way to be certain that we have the real saving faith. Are you willing to stake your eternal security stumbling along some poorly lighted path, equipped only with biblical ignorance, ineptness or apathy as your principal sources of guidance along your way toward eternity? God Authored that precious Book just for us, so that we would be able to find our way with assurance, to that narrow gate, and also so we could actually get to know him, to know His purpose for us, and to know specifically just how we are expected to serve Him along our way to our permanent home. The Bible is a bright beacon of truth-light which can not only guide us most surely along that narrow path to heaven, but can also expose and steer us away from those many other false paths so cleverly designed to tempt us away from what God has

provided. You cannot effectively discover these things through weekly 30-minute sermons or by occasional reading of His Word.

When I first knew that I had come to believe in Jesus as my Savior, which was about nine years ago, I chose to read the whole Bible so as to learn all I could about Jesus. I read it through three times, as well as dozens of great Bible commentaries, before I ventured out to meet the first Christian and to attend what I hoped to be a real Christian church. I felt quite pleased then, with the seemingly “vast” knowledge of Scripture that I had acquired. It was all so wonderful that my heart surged with desire to spread this word to all who would hear. But who was around to hear, who cared, or wanted to hear? No one! Therefore, I resorted to the only outlet I could find, and which I believe the Lord led me to, that is writing these things in essays such as this one. However, as I began to write, it quickly became a very humbling experience when I found that my “great understanding” was mostly superficial and that if I was to actually “know” His truth and to write anything meaningful and scripturally defensible, I had to pray immensely, and of a single mind, for wisdom and discernment, knowledge and deeper understanding. Then, with His help, I needed to dig deep into every verse, seek the Greek or Hebrew meaning of the key words, and also determine the narrow as well as the broader context of every presented thought and concept. It was also important to me to try to understand the history and culture of the times of the Scripture writers so as to better understand to whom and why they were writing. The more of this that can be learned, the greater is the potential to understand the present day applications of their messages.

I know that this manner of biblical study is just my own particular calling, and is surely not a prerequisite to salvation, nor is it necessary for finding the particular ministry He has chosen for other saved souls. But some significant level of biblical knowledge, I believe, is essential if we are to know what He expects and has the right to obtain from each of us. Pray intensely for His wisdom and understanding and if you are His, He will give it to you! He will at first give you a little light, that is, some wisdom and understanding of what He has written. If you use it well, He will give you more. This is the ultimate case of use it or lose it. If you fail to use what He gives you, He will take

away even that which you have. This precept is expressed many times in Scripture; the classic case is found in Matthew Chapters 12 and 13. This is where Israel was given the magnificent light of Jesus' presence and failed to use it. Therefore, the light was removed. No more light was given. That's also how it works for each individual.

Notice earlier I mentioned how I realized that Jesus was my Savior. Only after a considerable amount of prayer and study did I fully apprehend His other role that He necessarily plays in the life of every saved soul. He is also our Lord in every sense of the word. Everyone conscious of his or her hopeless condition in sin wants a Savior. But we can't have one without the other. Jesus saved us by His sacrifice on the cross, thereby becoming qualified to be our Savior and is the Savior to all of those who believe in Him. But by doing so, He also purchased us with His blood; He purchased all of those who are willing to submit to His authority as Lord. In order to claim His saving grace, we must also accept His rule as Lord over our lives. One cannot be saved by being only a "half Christian," that is, accepting Him only as one's Savior. To be a whole saved Christian one must have Him as both Lord and Savior. As a so-called "free people," it is not our nature to accept a Lordship, or any autocratic authority. Scripture tells us all that we need to know in order to be His loyal subjects, those who are worthy of His name, Christian. If we are to give this Scriptural information a title we should call it OBEDEINECE.

How often do you hear the word obedience mentioned from the pulpit? If the frequency of its use was a fair measure of its importance, we could easily conclude that obedience is merely a figure of speech or surely something to be treated causally, as so many do. Jesus often spoke of obedience to His Word. Look at John 14:21 for instance, where Jesus says, "*He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I shall love him, and manifest myself in him*" Then in verses 23 and 24, just so that there can be no doubt as to what He means, He repeats the idea in reverse saying, "*If a man love me, he will keep my words...*" and "*He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings...*" These verses firmly tie together the love of God with obedience to His commandments, His Word, His sayings, and, therefore, everything our Lord Jesus has revealed in the Holy Bible. He commands

that we love Him with all of our heart, soul and mind. This is a genuine sincere love. This kind of love cannot ever exist in any heart not wholly dedicated to obedience.

One final note. Notice how often the word “fundamentalists” is used to describe modern terrorism. Having thus repeatedly identified the word with a group having evil intent, it is now more and more frequently being used to paint Christians with the same brush by referring to them as “right wing fundamentalist Christians.” If you are a sincere believer in Jesus as your Lord and Savior and believe that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, you certainly are a fundamental Christian. I suppose the word “right wing” is there to be certain no one is ever to consider a Christian as having “liberal” qualities. Liberal, of course, is being on the side of “good,” and right as being on the side of bad. But now the world has established through this one word, a hate filled connection between genuine Christianity and terrorist evil. The effect of this connect is presently in its infancy, but rest assured the monster will grow. But even more timely and equally insidious, is the confusion wrought by the world as it has invaded the very soul of Christianity by means of false teachers, prophets and pastors who convey false, or half Gospels as well as many other altered doctrines and compromises. This is probably the most insidious and successful device used today to deprive a seeker of salvation. Those who are seeking salvation seek the truth. But these servants of Satan are like sentries lined up along the path to the “narrow gate” availing themselves of every opportunity to point the seeker to other paths, all of which lead to hell.

So what is the answer? The answer is in the Word of God and nowhere else. Trust no one’s opinion, until you have confirmed its truth based on the whole Word of God. Don’t even trust a true quote from Scripture until you have examined it in the context of the whole Scripture. A most relied on ploy of false teachers is to piously and with cleverly disguised insincerity, quote Scripture and to apply it in a manner deviant from its God-given intent. Through this and similar devices Satan is able to produce legions of professors of the faith who sincerely believe they are saved, but who are not, because they relied only on human counsel and instruction without referring to God’s Word adequately, if at all. Don’t deal in presumptions or rationalizations formulated out of

earthly desires. The world teaches us to, “go with your heart,” and “to do what is right in your own eyes.” This sounds like the voice of wisdom, but it is advice straight out of hell, because it’s the exact opposite of what God has written. God tells us through Jeremiah in Chapter 17:9, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?*” In Deuteronomy 12:6 and Judges 18:6 God is critical of the people for doing what was right in their own eyes rather than living by God’s Word. Prayerfully read and study God’s Word, read and listen to biblical expositors and teachers, who faithfully explain without modifying God’s Word, and carefully examine and confirm all that they say as it is revealed in the Holy Bible. Then pray for God’s guidance. If you are saved you have two hearts, the dirty old wicked one which wants always to “do it its way” and the new one that came into you along with the permanently indwelling Holy Spirit that would, if it knew how, do it God’s way. Through sincere prayer, the new heart aided by the Holy Spirit, will lead you always, to and through God’s Word, to the right path. Absent this effort, the old heart is always waiting to send you down the carnal paths and away from God and from the eternal home it offers. All of this must be in a genuinely sincere quest for Godliness. This may seem like a great deal of work, but it isn’t, not when compared with how much your eternal salvation is worth.