



A Weak Christ and A Broken Church

I consider myself to be an extremely blessed man; not because of anything tangible or even concrete. But because I have had so many rich experiences in my life. To be a “country boy” who was raised in the backwoods of the Piney Woods region of south Mississippi, I've had many rich experiences indeed. Having been able to travel and see places that my parents and grandparents have only read about or seen on television, I've been able to do ministry in five different countries and to see God express Himself in a multiplicity of ways.

God has unveiled His nature and has allowed me to see genuine miracles and even to be a helping hand to those who were in need. I've been there when families, who were in turmoil, were restored and fathers embraced their estranged children... I've been there when sick children were healed, and heavyhearted parents began to weep because God had come through... I have been there when families could not conceive and God wrought a creative miracle, which is what happened in the life of my wife and I... Many rich experiences indeed...

I have been there when the destitute would raise their hands for salvation after having preached at a street meeting in the inner city of New Orleans where prostitutes and drug addicts would weep and raise their hands in surrender to receive Christ. I have preached from the streets, to the prisons, to the rehabs, to the homeless shelters all the way to some of the greatest Churches in America and around the World. And in all of this, I am very thankful and grateful.

But I've also been there in the tough times when a diagnosis of cancer has been given and a life is taken too soon. I've been there when a mother and father lose children in a horrible tragedy. I've been there to help a grieving family suffer through the pains of infidelity. I've been there after a bad decision lead to suicide and had to embrace a shattered family. I have been there when people couldn't be phony. No covers, No masks, just the naked, raw and real person with naked, raw and real emotion.

No spirituality, no shout, no religiosity; only tears and a broken heart.

I have been there when young sons decided that they didn't want to have a girlfriend and they wanted a boyfriend, which crushed brokenhearted parents. I've been there when young women had given themselves to young men, who had no intentions of being husbands or fathers, and leave that young woman pregnant and scared. But in all of this, sadly the church, by in large, has remained utterly silent; seemingly mortified to embrace the weight of our current reality. Could it be that we, individually, are afraid to face the greatest enemy of our existence, an enemy that each one of us know all too well, an enemy whose face we see when we close our eyes... the enemy in the mirror?

When a Spirit filled Christian meditates on the current state of the Church, he or she might find themselves totally dismayed and frustrated with the lack of power, unity, and demonstration of Holy Ghost Power in the current state of Christendom. The lack of Personal Morality, Christian Character, and Biblical Discipline simply causes any true believer to look towards heaven and ask, "Where is the power?"

When you read the Scriptures and know the stories, does the lack of power bother you at all? The saddening reality is that the power isn't there not because God doesn't want it but rather because it is us that do not want it. It is due to this lack of power and true passion for the Kingdom of God that the Church is so impoverished and so blind.

We must get our Theology right and our doctrinal focus in line with the Word of the Living God. Hear me well this morning, we make a grievous mistake when we build our entire Theology and system of belief based upon captions of thought that we deem equal with Biblical Scripture. It is as if our thoughts, experiences, and ideologies are the equivalent of reading the Bible therefore we only use one Scripture to validate our perspective or desire which is based upon our fleshly cravings and not the Word of God.

(Well Pastor, you are being legalistic!) My concern is not having a “legalistic” perspective as much as it is the fact that we have a movement within modern Christendom that wants to figure out just how close they can live to the border of Hell and still make it through the Gates of Heaven. They strive to figure out just how close they can get to the line without stepping over it.

This, my friends, is not what we should be doing. The Bible is still the ultimate authority on life and living; Holiness is still Right; and if our life contradicts the teachings of the Word then it is our lives that need to change and not the Word! Your temporal life does not reserve the right to alter the Eternal Word and if your life conflicts with the Word, it's not the Word that needs to change; it's YOU. Francis Chan said it best when he said, “Whenever I read the Bible and come across something that I disagree with, I have to assume I'm wrong!”

Our Churches are Broken because We have Preached a Weak Christ! And it is because of this, in our Americanized churches, that we want (no better yet we demand by our words and our very deeds) the following!

1. We want the Gospel without the Blood!

i) We want a sanitized story that doesn't involve the Whipping Post, the Via Delarosa, the Hammer, the Nails, or a Cruel Cross. "Just gloss over those parts preacher and tell me about how much Jesus loves me and has a plan for my life!" Church Family, you will never understand His love for you until you understand His story; you cannot have His salvation without His story. Salvation is Free but it cost Heaven its highest price!

ii) 1 Corinthians 1:18 records, "For the Word of the Cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

iii) The Gospel of Jesus Christ is found in the Cross of Jesus Christ and it is through His sacrifice that we are saved! The Word of the Cross is the Power of God! But in this day and age, there are churches who have disbanded the Cross and the teachings thereof because it might offend a guest but listen to me clearly, the Cross is supposed to offend people! The Cross is supposed to offend you! It was built as an offense to all people!

iv) The Cross is an offense because it is a blaring sign to all of humanity that “You Are A Sinner” and that you can’t save yourself! No one likes to be told that they are not good enough but that’s exactly what the Cross of Jesus Christ does!

v) The Apostle Paul wrote in the Book of Romans 9:33, “: as it is written, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” “Well Pastor I am offended”

vi) Listen friend, I would rather offend you with the truth than charm you with a lie! There are too many sooth-sayers who call themselves preachers that will lie to you to get access to your pocketbook; but I am not a sooth-sayer and as a Man of God, I am not after your resources, I am after your soul today!

vii) But not only do we want the Gospel without the Blood,
(Number 2)

2. We want Christ without the Cross!

i) We want the Cross of Christ to Save us but not the Cross of Christ Break us!

ii) Jesus said in the Gospel of Saint Luke 9:23-24, “And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily (DAILY AND NOT JUST ON SUNDAY) and

follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”

- iii) We all love to hear about how God wants to bless us, and protect us and walk with us etc. but we don't want to hear about the Burdens and the Breakings that come from Carrying our own Cross!
- iv) Everyone wants Christ to die for them but no one wants to die to themselves! Your shoulders are only available to carry your Cross or your Offenses but they cannot carry both. So many people live their lives in a perpetual state of offense and they surround themselves with others who are of the same spirit. It has been said that birds of a feather flock together, but let me state emphatically that those who are of the same spirit operate demonically together.
- v) You are either going to be a Disciple or be Offended, but you can't be both; there's no such thing as an Offended Disciple! You show me an offended person and I'll show you a person who hasn't carried their cross lately!
- vi) But not only do we want Christ without the Cross, (Number 3)

3. We want Redemption without Responsibility

- i) We do not want to take responsibility for our own actions and eat the fruit of our poor decisions!
- ii) The Gospel of Saint Mathew 12:36-37 records, “³⁶I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, ³⁷ for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”
- iii) The Prophet Ezekiel 18:20 records, “The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”
- iv) How you speak and how you live after you are born again matters! How you think matters! Because your life not only affects you but it also sets the course for your children! If you want your children to live for Christ then you must live for Christ! If you want your children to be faithful to the Church then you must be faithful to the Church! (And being at Church once a month is not faithful church attendance; it’s dropping by for a visit)

v) If you want your children to be filled with the Holy Ghost then you must be filled with the Holy Ghost! The Greatest Disciples of your life live inside your home! The Righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself; so which are you?

vi) But not only do we want Redemption without Responsibility,
(Number 4)

4. We want Confession without Repentance!

i) Just cover my sins so my conscience can be silenced so I can go wallow in the very sin I just confessed to doing all over again.

ii) 1 John 1:9-10 states, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

iii) But too many of us are like the adulterous woman in Proverbs 7:10-20, “And behold, the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart. ¹¹ She is loud and wayward; her feet do not stay at home; ¹² now in the street, now in the market, and at every corner she lies in wait. ¹³ She seizes him and kisses him, and with bold face she says to him, ¹⁴ “I had to offer sacrifices, and today

I have paid my vows; ¹⁵ so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you. ¹⁶ I have spread my couch with coverings, colored linens from Egyptian linen; ¹⁷ I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. ¹⁸ Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love. ¹⁹ For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; ²⁰ he took a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home.”

- iv) And like this adulterous woman, we too state the very same thing by our actions! “Today I offered sacrifices and I paid my vows! I went to church on Sunday, I sang the songs and listened to the preacher and threw a few dollars in the offering plate so I can go and live like I want to, party like I want to, sleep around like I want to, be unfaithful like I want to, lie and deceive like I want to and live in blatant unrepentant Sin because all I got to do is be at Church on Sunday so all my sins will be washed away again!”
- v) Here me well today! Confession without Repentance is just bragging! Confession with Repentance is Consecration! So which do you want to be? Arrogant or Sanctified? Stop confessing your sin and start repenting of it!

vi) It's time for you to decide to come out of the world rather than depending on a quick Sunday bath to wash the smell of the world out of your clothes! Come out of her my people lest you partake of her sins and of her plagues!

vii) But not only do we want Confession without Repentance,
(Number 5)

5. We want the Holy Ghost without Obligation!

- i) We want intimacy without commitment! Too many of us approach Christ the same way we approach every other relationship in our lives, we want a cheap thrill with no strings attached! We want to Hold Hands with Jesus but Wink at the Devil or better yet, we want to shack up with the Devil and expect Jesus to pay the rent!
- ii) We want to speak in tongues but gossip about folks with the same tongue because gossip always comes disguised as concern; especially amongst religious spirits! We talk about leadership in the Church due of our cowardice because we would rather be rebellious than restorative. We would rather be Facebook Theologians than Disciples of Christ! Rebellious Spirits always seek to play the victim when Spiritual Authority corrects their rebellion!

- iii) The Bible says that the Sin of Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft! You can be in Witchcraft and not have a witch's costume on. You can be a Witch and have a Choir Robe on! Jesus isn't concerned with your costumes, he's concerned with your heart but too many in the Church nowadays want to try and justify their divination by calling it discernment; Sowing seeds of rebellion and calling it Prophecy.
- iv) I've met witches in pulpits, witches behind keyboards, witches in pews, witches consumed with titles and influence and still want to call themselves a Christian! But The Devil Is A Lie! That Spirit is not going to be tolerated to operate in this House!
- v) How are you going to say that you have the Holy Ghost and you have NO Love for Others, NO Peace to Speak Of, NO Patience to Muster, NO Kindness to Demonstrate, NO Goodness to Share, NO Track Record of Faithfulness, NO Gentleness to Display and NO Self-Control to Exhibit?
- vi) Too many of us are Pentecostal in expression only with no fruit to speak of because we would rather impress others with our gifts than resource others with our fruit!
- vii) But not only do we want the Holy Ghost without Obligation,
(Number 6)

6. We want A Word without knowing The Word!

i) 2 Timothy 4:1-5, “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound¹ teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. ⁵ As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

ii) But in our Americanized, Self-Focused, Self-Help Churches, we are consumed with having our ears scratched because we would rather be lied to for the sake of silencing our consciences than be told the truth therefore being forced to face the mess that we’ve made of our lives!

iii) We want sermons without the demand of servanthood or sacrifice! “Just prophely to me pastor! Just Prophely! (Notice I didn’t say Prophecy; I said Prophely!) Lull me to sleep in my sins!” And if that is the kind of Pastor you are looking for then you are in the wrong Church this morning!

- iv) We want to be told how God has a plan for our lives as it relates to our finances, our titles, our positions and our futures; but we do not want to be told that His plan includes persecution, difficulty, trials, and fiery attacks of the Devil!
- v) You want to know what God's plan is for your life? Die to Yourself! That is God's plan for you! Choose to Die to Yourself! He can't do anything else with you until you choose to do so! He can't make you alive in Christ until you are dead to yourself!
- vi) Dead to Your Passions! Dead to Your Sins! Dead to Your Foolishness! Dead to Your Rebellion! Dead to Your Selfish Agendas! Dead to your Spirit of Offenses; everybody wants to be offended, no one wants to be submitted.
- vii) Galatians 2:20 declares, ²⁰ "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." But none of us want to be crucified; we all want to be coddled! Because we would rather be comfortably sinful than painfully saved!
- viii) You think that "Church" is about you but the Church is not about you, it exists because of YOU!!! I preach the Gospel TODAY because of Man's Sins Yesterday!

- ix) 1 Corinthians 15:31 declares, “³¹ I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!”
- x) If you never choose to die to yourself then you will never live for Christ!
- xi) But not only do we want A Word without knowing The Word, (Number 7)

7. We want Position without Accountability

- i) Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ²Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.”

- ii) Note what Paul said, if someone desires to be in leadership in the church, he desires a good thing however there are some points of accountability that need to be enforced.
- iii) But too many in our modern day want positions of influence but don't want to be held accountable to anyone. We don't want accountability; we just want to have power over people so we can feel powerful!
- iv) Accountability has become a curse word in the modern day Church because we think our positions, or our titles, or who we know makes up for our lack of character!
- v) And based off of some yall's Facebook posts, responses, and inappropriate comments on other people's posts, I wonder if some of you are actually even born again because out of the heart of a man, the mouth speaks and your words will always tell the truth concerning the current state of your heart!
- vi) But not only do we want Position without Accountability,
(Number 8)

8. We follow Personalities instead of Character

- i) The Apostle Paul addressed this very issue in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 when he recorded in verses 10-15, “¹⁰I appeal to you, brothers,^[a] by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. ¹¹For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. ¹²What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” ¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name.”
- ii) We would rather a man with a loud personality than a man of strong character because we prefer giftedness over godliness.
- iii) The problem is that we are following powerless men with no character because they preach better than they live.
- iv) Charlatans who are consumed with your pocketbooks rather than caring for your souls, self-proclaimed ministers who consider the church a temporary assignment rather than an eternal responsibility.

v) Too many preachers are in love with Ministry but not in love with Christ! Consumed with what Ministry does for them rather than what Christ can do in them! We should test the Spirit of a Man to see if he truly be of Christ! Why would you ever trust a man to guard over your soul when He can't even keep guard over his own life?

vi) The Apostle John declared in 1 John 4:1-2, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God:"

vii) We have become so consumed with charisma and personality and have lost touch with the fact that a man's character, a man's fruit, and a man's spirit are more valuable than his charisma and his personality and his gifting. Polished smiles, flashy personalities, self-named ministries and eloquent preaching do not have the power to cast out a devil, help you heal your marriage or walk with you through the valleys of life!

viii) You hear me well today! If they are not willing to walk through Hell with you then they are not Heaven Sent! If they are willing to abandon you in the tough times then they are not worthy to be followed in the good times!

ix) But not only do we follow Personalities instead of Character,
(Number 9)

9. We want the Blessing without the Burden!

- i) We want His abundance without the responsibility that comes with it because we are lazy and all we want to be is comfortable and its preaching like this that makes us uncomfortable!
- ii) We want His blessing on our finances but we don't want the Burden of Tithing!
- iii) We want His blessing on our Families but we don't want the Burden of Faithfulness!
- iv) We want His blessing on our Church but we don't want the Burden of taking Ownership to help take care of His Church!
- v) But not only do we want the Blessing without the Burden,
(Number 10)

(Pastor Brad, if you will come...)

10. We want the Title without Separation

- i) We want to be called a Christian but we don't want to "be ye separate from the world!"
- ii) "Well Pastor, I'm a Christian! How dare you challenge my salvation. You aren't God!"

- iii) You are right I am not God but I am not blind either! You aren't called a Christian because those around you can't tell you apart from those who are in the world!
- iv) We talk like the world, we watch what the world watches, we drink what the world drinks, we party how the world parties, we live how the world lives, we act how the world acts, we lie cheat and steal like those in the world but want to claim a title of Christian because you sit in a building once a week and listen to me preach for 45 minutes.
- v) Acts 11:26 records, “²⁶ and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.” They were called Christians, not by other Christians, but by those who were in the world who could tell them apart. Worldly people called them Christian because there was something about their lives, their words, and their love for others that bore fruit that others did not have.
- vi) Don't talk to me about how anointed you are when I know how you treat your family; you want to demonstrate your giftings and anointings to a Church on Sunday so you try and convince those around you that you are something that you are not. If your family has no respect for you then your anointing is invalid.

vii) How you live daily determines your impact on Sunday and your impact upon the Church!

Church, It is Time to Repent!

We Preach a Weak Christ because we believe that He has the Power to Save but not the power to do much else.... Christians Church Family! Where's the Fruit of our conversion? Where's the peace, patience, longsuffering, temperance, gentleness or kindness?

We come to Church, we shout, we speak in Tongues and then go to lunch after service and treat our waiters like second class citizens, we demean our coworkers, we allow ungodly speech to come out of our mouths about our brothers and sisters in Christ and even Church Leadership.

Do you not realize that you are putting your mouth on people who are Blood washed and when it comes to Church Leadership, which are those whom Christ set in place? Where's the proof in your life that you are truly following Jesus?" If you are truly born again, then the outward evidence to all men is a Life of Righteousness and Biblical Standard!

Titus 2:11-14 records, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present

age,¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”

Jesus made it clear in the Gospel of John 3:3, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “Well pastor, I know that God loves me”, yes but are you born again? “Well I know John 3:16”, yes but are you born again? “Well I go to church”, yes but are you born again? I am not asking what you know; What I am asking you is if you died right now, are you assured of Heaven as if you were already there?

When you are truly born again, there is an inward evidence of salvation that is the direct witness of the Spirit. Romans 8:16-17 states, “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” When you are born again, you will know it and everyone around you will see it. So I ask all of you today... Do You Know Jesus? Are You Living For Christ? Because if you are not, Today is the Day of Salvation! Today is the Day of Rededication!