

## A DIFFERENT DRUM

By

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Jesus called people to follow Him as opposed to following the way of the world. Examples given in scripture tell of tough choices being made. They were made harder by the fact that they were to be permanent. A follower of Jesus was never to look back; he could not alternate back and forth between following the Lord and the world. When one becomes a follower of Christ, he is called out of the world to follow a different course which leads to a different destiny.

For this reason Jesus said that the world would hate His disciples (John 15:19). Not for any legitimate reason, but because His disciples reject the world, its purpose and principles and go the opposite direction. Such action is a form of judgment, just as it is said of Noah, that in obeying God “he condemned the world” (Heb. 11:7). To follow Jesus is to align with the Creator who has pronounced judgment on all that is contrary to His order.

When God created, He did so with a definite plan. It hasn't changed because God does not change. “For I, Jehovah, change not” (Mal. 3:6). Therefore, His purpose is called the eternal purpose and remains the same today as in the beginning. It is no mystery, as some would have us believe by suggesting that each person is to try to “find God's will for his life....” He expressed His will in the beginning when He said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). When Jesus challenged people to follow Him, it was for the purpose of making them like Him Who is “the very image of (God's) substance” (Heb. 1:3). Paul wrote that as we behold the glory of the Lord we are “transformed into the same image” (II Cor. 3:18).

As long as man reflected the image of God — conformed his thoughts and desires to God's thoughts and desires — he was in fellowship with his Creator, but when he departed from the Creator's will, the fellowship was destroyed, and the creature, severed from the Giver of life, died.

The only solution to man's problem is in the plan of God, and that solution is in Christ. By always doing the will of the Father, Jesus revealed what it means to be conformed to God's image. Even without any of the supports we usually deem essential for happiness, Jesus lived a complete and satisfying life because it was in perfect harmony with the Father. On the cross, when He assumed our guilt and “became sin on our behalf” (II Cor. 5:21), He paid sin's penalty of death, making it possible for us to be free of sin and death that we might live in God's image and in fellowship with Him. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is our assurance that such a plan can and will be fulfilled, in spite of all obstacles.

But, there's a catch and a reason why so few actually become full partakers in the plan.

**We must abandon all other plans.** This applies in all areas of life. As God is Creator of all things, He also sets them in order by His own laws. “God made the world and all things therein, He, being Lord of heaven and earth...” (Acts 17:24). When we see the disaster and grief that is wrought by man's rebellion, we see proof of God's

revelation, that the breaking of His law brings disorder, defeat and finally death. God's plan cannot be fulfilled in one who allows himself to be conformed to the world's fashion. "You cannot serve God and mammon." Life must be considered to be lost to the world if it is to be gained for the purpose of God.

The tragedy of twentieth century Christianity is that man has tried to build the Christian church to fit into the world, to be acceptable to the world and to gain the world's approval and support. Certain scriptural doctrines are affirmed and religious rituals faithfully performed, but great effort is made to avoid confrontation with the world and to make the worldly feel at home.

The result is that the edge is taken from the Christian faith. One who is so devoted to Christ that he is obviously different from the world may not feel at home in the average modern Church where football players are better known than Bible characters and where every effort is made, from the music to the sermon, to make the program as much like the world as possible.

To the contrary, Jesus taught that we are to overcome the world, which means we are to apply God's laws in all relationships and activities in the world. He did not suggest that we withdraw from the world and try to live apart from it and indifferent to it but that we are to be to it salt and light, holding forth the word of life and bearing a witness to the world of the truth Christ has revealed and the commandments which are to be applied in all areas of human life.

Following this agenda will bring confrontation with the world. It will mean loss of esteem in the world, loss of a job or possible promotion and what the world calls financial success. For many it has meant imprisonment and death, but according to Jesus and His apostles, this does not mean failure. God's purpose is to produce new creatures, not merely more new technology and more gadgets. He seeks to have people in fellowship with Him, and this does not depend on one's popularity in the world. Jesus was despised and maligned by the socially elite of His day, as have been faithful saints ever since. When we look for examples of joy, peace and true happiness, we do not look to the rich and famous of the world but to those who have renounced the world in order to live in fellowship with One whom the world rejected.

Jesus said, "In the world you have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Tribulation abounds. As long as man tries to operate outside of God's order, he will bring suffering to the world and all will be affected. Obedience to God is the only way to overcome the chaos of the world. It sets the disciple of Christ to the rhythm of a different drum and on a different course, the only course that fulfills the Creator's plan.

All else is to fail, and failure, in the end, is death. Life is promised only to those who are ultimately to be a part of the completed plan — man in God's image.

From the beginning the lie has been promulgated: "Thou shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4, John 8:44). Its world-wide acceptance is evidence of fallen humanity's propensity to choose the false rather than the true and to find ways to circumvent the Creator's plan. Through sin we have forfeited life, and the only way to have it given again is through the Savior Jesus Christ. It is promised only to those who believe Him and turn from the world to His kingdom.

We can march to a different drum because we are living for a different purpose and marching to a different destiny. We must not be slaves of the world, allowing its

goals to influence us or its evil and corruption to take hold of us and determine our actions, our character and our destiny. The world belongs to Him Who created it. We can trust our lives to Him and realize the fulfillment of His plan in us from day to day.

“He that lives his life loses it; and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me” (John 12:25–26).

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