

MISERABLE RELIGION

The religion of Christ is a religion characterized by joy (Phil.4:4), peace (Rom.5:1), and contentment (Heb.13:5). Christ came that we might not only have the hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2), but also that we might have an abundant life while upon earth (John 10:10). Of all people in the world, the child of God should be the most optimistic, the happiest, the most serene and most contented person that could be found. We have every reason to rejoice and be thankful, and we should display this demeanor and attitude to those outside of Christ Jesus so that the lost might be drawn to the Savior. Whatever we undertake in service to our Lord should be done with great fervency and zeal (Col.3:23), reflecting the joy, peace, and contentment that are ours in Jesus. The philosophy of the faithful, devoted child of God is not "how little can I do to get by," but rather, "What more can I do to serve my Lord, my brethren, and my neighbors?" Those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb will sing a happy tune as they involve themselves in the Lord's work.

Sadly, some of God's children have just enough religion to make themselves miserable. They realize they are commanded to be in the assembly on the Lord's day (Heb.10:25), and so they grudgingly drag themselves into the worship assembly, arriving after services begin and often leaving before it is over, satisfied that they have met their divine obligations. These won't show up for Bible class (perhaps assuming they already know enough of the word of God, or more likely not caring that they are not growing in grace and knowledge), they don't support the work programs of the church (visitation teams, fellowship activities, etc.), and they will not darken the doors of the church during faith-building events aside from the worship assemblies (gospel meetings, VBS, etc.). These have just enough faith to feel obligated to make an appearance, give their dollar, take a bite of unleavened bread and a drink of grape juice, and go on their merry way. Their service to the Lord never goes beyond the Sunday morning worship assembly. Generally speaking, these are the first to criticize those who are endeavoring to do what is right in the local congregation, and the last to do anything to serve the church. Those who are striving to do all that they can in service to God should truly pity those with miserable religion.

Jesus instructed those who would consider following him to sit down and count the cost (Luke 14:28-33). He gave all for us (John 15:13-14), and he asks that we give him our all in return (Luke 9:23). If you are not going to live for him each day, and serve him with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength, then you may as well not render any service to him at all. If the Lord does not have your whole heart, he has none of it. Why not trade a miserable

religion for one full of joy, peace, and contentment? Fully embrace the religion of Christ, and your life and your soul will be eternally better for it!

Patrick Morrison