

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Revelation 3:1-5**.
- B. What kind of mental picture do you get of the congregation at Sardis? Run down, only 16 in attendance, a dusty and dirty building? Not me! I see a nice, big, beautiful building, with wall-to-wall carpet, A/C, nice pews, nice song books, and a paved parking lot for the chariots.
- C. But they were spiritually dead. That is why they could be called "the worldly church," because only in the world's mind could they be alive.
- D. Tonight, I want to talk about four substitutions that churches can make that will take them away from the spiritual to the worldly.

## I. THE WORLDLY CHURCH--SUBSTITUTES GOOD FOR THE GOSPEL.

- A. One's relationship with God must be right; this is first and foremost (1Cor. 15:1-4).
- B. But what usually happens is that the horizontal relationships get the "lion's share" of the time and teaching.
- C. To help with family problems, parental problems, neighbor problems or any "people problem" the root of that problem is sin. If we address the sin problem we can begin to work on the others too.
- D. It is good to see Breechen and Faulkner deal with marriage from the Biblical basis. They deal with problems in marriage with the good news of the gospel. What if they didn't? What good is it to talk about submission between a husband and wife, if you don't talk about submission to God?
- E. We can be involved in good things, good programs, benevolent works and helpful ministries. But what about people's souls?
- F. The church's number one concern is for the salvation of souls. May we balance our good works with the message of salvation.

## II. THE WORLDLY CHURCH--SUBSTITUTES "CHURCHIANITY" FOR CHRISTIANITY.

- A. Too many Xians have "edifice complex" if we allow our commitment to X, to be defined by the extent we are at the building. Is all that we do as Xians take place at this location? I certainly hope not!
- B. CHURCHIANITY is something that Xians practice much like the putting on the calendar, bridge, PTA, Weight Watchers, or anything else. We'll fit it in when we can along with everything else (Col. 3:4).
- C. Those who practice CHURCHIANITY see obstacles, not opportunities. We would rather find ways to save money, than figure out better ways to spend it. The same is true with one's personal finances. Money is not a problem to God (Phil. 4:19).
- D. CHURCHIANITY forgets there is a God in heaven. This is true because too many live with the vision that only carries them as far as they can see (2Cor. 5:7).
- E. Do not allow your commitment to X, become like a social engagement done only on Sundays.

## III. THE WORLDLY CHURCH--SUBSTITUTES A BED FOR A YOKE.

- A. Read Amos 6:1-7.
- B. Matthew 11:28-30 is known as the great invitation. Jesus invites us to rest, but to do so we must have a yoke.
- C. Have you ever gone up to someone and asked them how they are? Eight out of 10 will tell you, "I'm tired." Sometimes I wonder if I should give out *Geritol* rather than the gospel.
- D. A yoke makes the work load easier, it does not remove it. And even with a yoke, people sometimes need to be goaded.
- E. Do you need to be goaded or guided? The worldly church needs to be goaded from their beds of ivory, while faithful, spiritual Xians will be guided while wearing the yoke of X.

**IV. THE WORLDLY CHURCH--SUBSTITUTES COMMUNICATION FOR COMMITMENT.**

- A. I can talk a real good game. But it's commitment, not conversation that gets things done.
- B. Why are some religions in the world growing, and some "Christian churches?" It is not necessarily the methods they use, it is their commitment to their methods.
- C. The worldly church substitutes communication/conversation for commitment (1Jn. 1:6-7).
- D. Are you talking or are you walking?

**CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.**

- A. As I extend heaven's invitation, how many are playing church? Are we practicing CHURCHIANITY or CHRISTIANITY?
- B. Have you substituted:
  - 1. Good works for the gospel?
  - 2. A bed for a yoke?
  - 3. Communication for commitment?
- C. Rededicate yourself, this day, to not become part of a worldly church.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.