

The Church Response in 2022

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If we go back to the spring of last year, our world encountered something unprecedented; and it wasn't the outbreak of a novel virus, it was the introduction of globally-accepted totalitarian measures designed to keep a virus at bay. And what did we do in the name of public health and safety? We quarantined perfectly well people; we allowed businesses and livelihoods to be dismantled; we segregated the vulnerable that so desperately needed our help; and we utterly crushed an already struggling health service. The approach of lock-downs, mask-wearing and vaccine-after-vaccine has not been the way out of the pandemic; and yet these become the accepted practices in a world where governments, media and even science are not to be questioned, but to be followed.

For this isn't the first time in a nation like Scotland that we have faced the outbreak of a virus: it is the first time in the country's history instead of looking to the church for spiritual guidance and leadership, the government enforced the closure of their doors, and the majority of the church has willingly gone along with this and any and every measure and guideline thrown her way; even going above and beyond.

Churches that have argued in favour of government compliance in the name of Romans 13 and as it's been defined in God's word have not provided a defence for their actions these past few years, but they've been their own prosecution - to effectively allow the state to dictate whether the church of Jesus Christ could gather to worship her Lord, and accepting whatever parameters are placed upon her is an utter outrage before the word of God.

Now here's where we must start analysing Jesus the Lord an outreach before the word got here is we must start analysing what is going on within our church. These past two years have not suddenly made many churches weak and leaderless: no, this situation has exposed the weakness of our churches, and the lack of biblical leadership which has existed for far too long: where churches no longer call their people to repentance. Instead the church has allowed the world infiltrate and utterly submerge the content and application of biblical teaching: where we have allowed Satan to take control of our children: where woman fighting to become men: where men are no longer fighting to be anything; and where church leaders have all too often become more like glorified social workers or business managers; and the Lord has exposed that.

He is now coming in judgement against his wayward bride, and purging the sin from within. The church does not have a theology of suffering any more, but has adopted a posture of survival. Our survival has been more about grabbing hold of what we have held so dear in the world. Our life, our health, our security, our leisure; and the Lord has come and smashed these idols before the bride of Christ, and yet we still will not come in repentance.

This has not been an advert of how we love our neighbour, but this has exposed that we love ourselves; and we must repent as a church. We are called by the Lord Jesus Christ to deny ourselves and take up our cross in order to follow him. The church in the Western world has looked lovingly towards the cross of Christ and proclaimed such a message, but we have not felt the weight of that cross on our backs.

So if you stand as a Christian arguing that these past two years have not been about persecuting the church, then let me ask you: What matters going into 2022? Is it safety from a virus, or is it worship of the living God? If the latter is conditioned by the former then you are not living in obedience to God; and in order to live in obedience to God what we must communicate to our government is that their authority is not absolute and this is often the point where persecution of the church starts. It will barely be an overt command to deny Christ; and Caesar does not need us to openly deny Christ if we have willingly embraced Caesar as our lord.

Church leader if your message has been it's only a mask and it's not persecution, then please consider how far are we willing to go? Are we going to continue to segregate congregations on this basis? Are we going to have the mask-less and the unvaccinated waiting out in the cold on the basis of a mandate, or a misapplied foundation for earthly safety? Our Lord Jesus Christ did not come to keep us safe in this world, he came to set us free from this sinful world. He came to unite his bride by his blood spilt on Calvary, and that came at the cost of his life, that we may live life with our God.

That's what the church of Jesus Christ is. It means cost. It means sacrifice. It means that we are to be the refuse of this earth. Are we ready for this? Christian are you read? This is not primarily about fighting against Covid measures: this is about obedience to the Lord. That means being in submission to your local church where you are being disciple; where you are being admonished; where you are growing in your service to the Lord for his glory.

This is not the time to try to reinvent church because church leaders have gone astray. It is a time to be in submission to leaders who are standing upon the Scriptures. It means that we must be in prayer for church leaders across our world. That the Lord will sift out the wolves. That He will rebuke the lukewarm; and that many will come in repentance; and that the church will be reformed to the glory of God.
