

You Are Welcome Here

“And he arose and came to his father; but, when he was a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him.” Luke 15:20

Are sinners *still* welcome in the church?

We live in a time where people are hurting, troubled and distressed by sin on every side. All of us are affected, directly or indirectly, by the dire consequences of it. From addiction to depression and anxiety to sexual promiscuity, the power and effects of sin has left many broken and blinded by hopelessness. Satan continues to succeed at his mission to steal, kill and destroy. Nevertheless, in spite of the desperate plight of mankind, there is still hope. In the midst of these dark times, God has left a light on this earth to guide people to the hope, help and healing they need. That light is the church. (Matthew 5:14-16). However, being an institution made up of sinners that was established to save sinners and placed in a world that is full of sinners, have we, the church, become an unwelcoming group to sinners looking for a Savior?

We, as members of the church, have been called and commissioned to carry on the work of Christ...to seek and save that which was lost. However, we will be unable to achieve this mission if the attitude of Christians (members of the church) toward those caught up in sin is not Christ-like. God never has and never will condone sin. To this day, sin is the only thing that can and does separate man from God. Nevertheless, although He hates sin, he loves and cares about those who are in bondage to sin. Believe it or not, God loves sinners (John 3:16). He loves sinners so much so, that He came down, suffered and died on the cross of Calvary to make a way for sinners to be set free from the penalty of sin through Jesus Christ.

While he was on this earth, Christ set the example for his church to follow when it comes to our attitude and actions toward those who are hurting, troubled and distressed by sin. Look at Christ's response to the woman caught in adultery in John 8:1-12. Christ did not come to condemn or shame sinners but to save sinners. This spirit of love, compassion, forgiveness and acceptance is what the followers of Christ must exhibit today if we want to connect sinners to God like Jesus did. Let's let those who are caught up in sin...*the addict, prostitute, homosexual, drunk, liar, thief, adulterer*...know that they are loved by God and His people and are welcome here to find the hope, help and healing they need through a meaningful and faithful relationship with Christ and his church. God is able!