

Why Christians Are Abandoning Jesus?

There have been billions of people around the world who have, one time or another, tried their hands on various lotteries, some declaring hundreds of US\$ millions for the jackpot and millions more for secondary and lesser prizes! And billions of people have given up completely because the odds of winning were so staggering – billions to one, save the hard-core gamblers and they are in the millions! Still trying for the jackpot! Is it faith or addiction to gambling that have sustained them?

I invite you to pause and think deeply on **this reality**.

Don't rush, take your time and relate **that** reality to **the other** reality of hundreds of millions turning their backs on Jesus, not because of any numerical odds as in a lottery, **but because they see no relevance of Jesus in their lives**.

Why???

As a generalisation, and in one sentence, we may summarise that **we are too bleeding busy working our butts off to provide the best for ourselves and our families!** And in the process, we have at one time or another prayed and wished for fulfilment but was left empty-handed and in despair. With each unanswered pray or wish, we started giving up hope until such time when we gave up praying or wishing altogether and plodded on, trying to cope as best as we can.

Conveniently, every charlatan of Hope, Inspiration, Motivation, Success and Salvation has made a fortune selling their message of riches and redemption. It's a multi-billion US\$ industry, especially the "selling" of Jesus. And those who buy into such messages get an instant "Spiritual High" and the "Habit" or "Addiction" is maintained by attending, weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual mega "Jesus Gatherings". The sale of "spiritual paraphernalia" rope in US\$ billions more! This "spiritual drug" is as, if not more, addictive than heroin addiction.

Selling GOD is big, very big global business!

So, why have we been gluttons for such punishments, propaganda and brainwashing!

The answer is simple. We did not read, listen and analyse what was in plain sight - the teachings and discipline that were required of all of us, **as a condition precedent**, to have Jesus **IN US, WITH US**.

Jesus gave us eyes to see, but we see not; ears to listen but we hear not.

I cannot but repeat and quote once again what Jesus said:

“Blesses are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see but have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.” (Luke, 10:23-24)

More importantly, we should be weary of those who speak in the name of Jesus for gain, specifically financial gain. There are even churches, where the congregation consist of rich and mighty adherents!

Yet, Jesus told his disciples how they must behave when explaining His message to the people.

“Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road.” (Luke, 10:3-4)

Compare and contrast the grandeur, opulence and display of wealth of the churches and the “preachers” adorned with gold and precious stones, travelling in style befitting pop stars.

More importantly, Jesus compares himself as a “Good Shepherd” and his message is plain and simple. His apostles were fishermen

and disciples were simple folks, not “Priests” and “Levites” and the exemplary neighbour was a “Samaritan”.

Is it not common, that sermons and speeches tend to be intellectually and scholarly in context and approach and the “Leaders”, “Elders”, “Ranked Clergies” have been and are formally trained in various kinds of theological institutions? And the novices are then bestowed with scholarly qualifications such as “BSc in Theology”, “Masters’ Degree in Theology and Philosophy”, “Doctorate - PhD in Biblical Studies” etc., to legitimise their command and knowledge of God. Only such “Modern Levites” can speak with authority on God and Jesus. Experiencing Jesus in a living way, every day is but a footnote.

In the result, we as a “Collective” (the “Flock”) invariably ***“miss the forest for the trees”!***

In my First Epistle to fellow Malaysian posted on the 6th December, 2019, to my website, I deliberately quoted St Paul, who before becoming a Missionary for Jesus was a rabid persecutor of Christians and much later on the road to Damascus was “found”. His Hebrew name was “Saul of Tarsus” and he preached to the gentiles in the first century following the death and resurrection of Jesus.

I will quote St. Paul again because what he said and wrote is just too important for those who have given up hope:

“...the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to HIS saints. To them God WILLED to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles, which is CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY.”

(Colossians 1:26-27)

I can anticipate the cry and protest, “how can we seek the “Christ-in-You” when our prayers and wishes were unanswered?

I can empathise with the frustrations embedded in the question and I can say that I have suffered my share of un-answered prayers and they are much more than my share of answered prayers only because ***I had never counted the blessings of my answered prayers throughout my life.***

Jesus works in mysterious ways. Jesus does not come “into you” by the mere studying of the Bible, listening to sermons and attending mega religious events etc.

“Jesus-in-You” is an experience in all sorts of ways. No one knows it or feels it except you, and in an intimacy beyond human comprehension or explanation.

Let me share with you an experience.

It was in 2010. I was incarcerated in solitary confinement in the Kajang prison in Malaysia for Contempt of Court by an abusive judge. I went on a hunger-strike to protest against this gross injustice. Suffice for this Epistle, hunger strike is an excruciating painful experience, an extreme mental struggle to retain one’s sanity and faith that justice would prevail and that Jesus would grant his mercy, if He WILLs it so.

The pangs of hunger would hit the very core of my being, and kept me in a state of paralysis, In order, to survive, I had to conserve energy by being still, an unmoving zombie. The sheer mental exhaustion would render me unconscious numerous times.

Time is the greatest physical enemy. Without time, it is almost impossible to prepare and adapt to the time when your body demands food and energy. There was no clock in my cell.

The clanging of the keys to cell door brings a cup of tea in the morning (nothing else); the cell door opens once more for the insertion of a tray, the lunch and finally, the cell door opens for the dinner tray. I found out later, that breakfast was at 7am, lunch at 12 noon and dinner followed at 3 pm. Nothing thereafter is served till the next morning and the cycle repeats itself. The trays would be removed accordingly, on the scheduled time. The aroma of prison food would awaken every fibre and senses in my body and the hunger pangs would come as a shock as I was not able to anticipate and prepare for the mental onslaught on my mind. The hunger

pangs were unbearable. I beg and beg for mercy and strength to persevere. I beg and prayed for TIME to show herself to me in anyway, so that I may prepare for the hunger pangs. On the third day, I suffered internal bleeding and bled out dark red loose lumps.

“TIME, TIME where the hell are you, where are you hiding? Damn you!”

No one heard my mental cries. No clocks, no chiming of clocks that could be heard in my cell or in the vicinity of my cell. Silence, but for my mental anguished cries!

On the first day of my imprisonment, I made a written declaration (signed and sealed with my thumb print) that I will not hold any wardens, officers, guards at my cell etc. responsible for any injuries or death arising from my hunger-strike. They were just doing their duty in monitoring my condition. My declaration was given to the mass media.

The sky was pitched dark, an eerie silence greeted me and only my fingers were heightened to the sense of touch. Then, from a distance, a voice resonated in my feeble mind – the first and morning “Call to Prayer” from a mosque. Is it real or imagined? It did not matter as it was morning as far as I was concerned. I waited anxiously for the Call to be repeated four more times. At long last, I had my special clock and the Call to Prayer was the chiming of my miracle clock.

I endured and could bear the burden and pain of the hunger-strike with more strength and resilience. Ultimately, I survived.

An Appellate Court intervened following an application by a “Good Samaritan” (a stranger to me) to over-turn the High Court Order and I was released from imprisonment. He even offered to pay the fine, if his application was rejected. It was not necessary, as my imprisonment was a gross abuse of judicial power and an injustice.

Was this experience an answered prayer?

I need not write more on this experience. Suffice for me to write that I had experienced a miraculous moment. The healing balm of mercy and the protective shield of faith healed me, gave me strength and delivered me from the jaws of death.

In conclusion, let me share these words of hope:

“... He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I shall be his God and he shall be My son.”

(Revelation 21:6-7)

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone, who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

(Luke, 11: 9-10)

Amen