

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 3/22/2024

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

A friend posted a message that said, “Some people will only agree with the Bible when it agrees with them.” This is very true. Many will only agree with those parts of the Bible when it conforms with what they believe. And rather than changing their beliefs to fit with what the Bible says, they will simply ignore it.

Then my friend said, “What’s sad is when it is pastors who do this.” My initial reaction to this was also agreement. It is tragic for the Kingdom of GOD when pastors ignore parts of the Bible that conflict with their personal beliefs. They are leading their members into false beliefs for the sake of comfort, or political agendas, or to shape the congregation they serve into what they want it to be.

But the more I thought about this, the more it led me to wonder about what pastors she was talking about. Indeed, some pastors misrepresent the message of scripture. Still, I couldn’t help but wonder if she had some pastors in mind specifically whose message disagreed with her own understanding of scripture. And this runs back to her initial statement. Does she believe those pastors are incorrect in their presentation of the Bible message because it is not what she believes? Is her comment about pastors a reflection of her clinging to her understanding of what the Bible says?

Many things in the Bible are open to interpretation. While I wish that GOD had made some things clearer, I trust that GOD wanted us to discuss things with open minds so that we can understand why someone else may read these parts differently. It is in the discussion that we come to a deeper understanding of who GOD is, even when a passage can be understood in varying ways.

That doesn’t mean that there are portions of scripture that we misunderstand because we have been misled as to true their meaning. Many of the Jews in JESUS’ time were very clear on what the MESSIAH would be, so when JESUS failed to meet their expectations, they called for HIS execution. But we would do well to be open to other interpretations and then seek the truth about what the Bible communicates. Some things are quite clear, but we have not always been presented with the correct interpretation. A different understanding should not make us defensive about our position. Instead, it should motivate us to look deeper so that we might find what the original message was and is. Part of that openness to search for truth must also include a willingness to discover that we were previously incorrect. Then we can rejoice that GOD has led us to a clearer understanding of GOD’s will for us and all people.

In CHRIST's love,
Pastor Jeffrey