

THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHRISTIAN TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE LOST AND WITHOUT CHRIST

I believe in what the Bible teaches regarding the eternal destiny of those who are lost and do not know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. They are headed for a place of eternal torment known as the lake of fire; where they will experience the judgement of God forever (Revelation 20:11-15). In the meantime, God has provided a way of escape through faith in Christ. This is the good news of the gospel which God expects His people to share with our lost and fallen world. What isn't necessary in these last days before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, is for Christians to possess an attitude of animosity toward those who are in need of experiencing God's plan of salvation. Here are three reminders that will help in our interactions with those who are unsaved.

It's not our calling to judge them, it is our mandate to save them – John 3:17

Jesus' testimony to that fact, recorded in John 3:17, is simply this: "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." Even though we are not capable of "saving" anyone, since that is something only God can do through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and an individual response of faith; we have a positive role to play in this redemptive process, namely, sharing our faith with those who need to hear the gospel. Just as Jesus spent His time on earth in salvation mode and not in judgment mode, so we as His followers must do the same (Matthew 28:18-20; John 17:18).

It's not our option to reject them, it is our responsibility to reach them – 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Paul tells us in v19 of that passage "that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." Those who permanently reject that word of reconciliation will one day be rejected by the Savior who was willing to die for them, in order to pay the penalty of their sin. But until that day, the message of the gospel is not one of rejection but acceptance with God through faith in Christ.

It's not our goal to defeat them, it is our objective to "win" them – 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

In this profound and beautiful passage where Paul shares his evangelistic methodology, he uses the word "win" five times. He was willing to adapt into whatever environment the providence of God placed him, for the benefit of whatever people group with which he was engaged. He concludes his perspective of interacting with the lost by saying this in v22b: "I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some." To what extent is this our ambition?

Shortly after my conversion to Christ in 1980, I began attending a Bible-believing church in Lewiston, N.Y. The pastor's messages helped me to grow spiritually as a new believer in Christ. But what I remember the most, even to this present day, is a story which he told one Sunday morning about taking his family to a Toronto Blue Jays baseball game. He found himself sitting in the vicinity of a foul-mouthed individual who kept cursing throughout the entire game. At one point, the pastor became so incensed that he asked God to strike that man down. He patiently waited for the judgment of God to fall upon this sinner, but nothing happened, and he couldn't understand why. On the way home, he had the following thought: "I guess God is more merciful than I am." God is more merciful than all of us combined. This why salvation is available to sinners like us and why Romans 9:23 refers to Christians as "vessels of mercy." May each of us be that vessel of mercy which God can use in sharing Christ with sinners in need of a Savior.