

Come as You Are... and Then?

One of the ways congregations used to attract visitors was to tell them to “come as you are.” You can see this phrase on church signs, websites, and Facebook pages. Since Jesus spent lots of time with sinners in their environment and invited sinners to join him, we should do the same thing.

The problem arises when some of these congregations do not voice the expectation that Jesus has for sinners to change. It seems the attraction is that you can come as you are and stay as you are. Whatever makes you happy is okay. Jesus just wants you to be happy. Change is not needed.

We know this is wrong. Jesus wants sinners to come to Him, but He requires change. When the scribes and Pharisees brought the adulterous woman to Jesus (John 8:1-12), she had no choice but to come to Him as she was. She was caught in the act of adultery and brought to Him. Although Jesus told her He did not condemn her, He did say, “Go and sin no more.” Jesus required her to change.

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus, he told Jesus that he kept the commandments (Matthew 19, Mark 10, Luke 18). The young man was very secure in his belief that he would have eternal life. Jesus knew the young ruler’s heart though and told him to sell all that he had, give to the poor, and follow Him. The man was sorrowful and left without changing.

Romans 12:2 tells us, “Do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

So, we should invite people to come as they are. Jesus associated with sinners, and so should we. We must, however, always ensure that while you should come as you are, you should not stay that way. Do not be conformed to the world.

For the elders,
Tony Turner