



THE PASTOR'S PEN

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Apathy: Who Cares?

Is apathy an issue for the people in our nation today? In many walks of life, it seems that more and more people in America are becoming apathetic and despondent about our government, about work, about education, about families and even about faith. As I was driving in downtown Pensacola last week I saw a car covered with bumper stickers. One of them read: "America's Greatest Problem is Apathy, But Who Cares?" In one of his comedy routines George Carlin said: "Scientists have just discovered a cure for apathy. However, no one has shown the slightest interest."

Perhaps you remember the Smothers Brothers. They did a routine on their TV show back in the 70's that went something like this:

Dick asked, "What's wrong Tommy? You seem despondent."

Tom replied, "I am! I'm worried about the state of American society!"

Dick said, "Well, what bothers you about it? Are you worried about poverty and hunger?"

Tom replied, "Oh, no, that doesn't really bother me."

Dick said, "I see. Well, are you concerned about the possibility of war?"

Tom replied, "No, that's not a worry of mine."

Dick asked, "Are you upset about the use of illegal drugs by the youth of America?"

Tom replied, "No, that doesn't bother me very much."

Dick said, Looking puzzled, Dick asked, "Well Tom, if you're not bothered by poverty and hunger, war and drugs, what are you worried about?"

Tom replied, "I'm worried about apathy."

It appears to me that many people of faith in Pensacola are a lot like Tommy Smothers. They worry about the results of apathy, but they do not care about any of the issues that might be causing the apathy. For example, there are people who complain about the lack of moral guidance that many of our young people demonstrate. At the same time however, they are not concerned about the lack of Sunday School teachers or working with youth evangelism to try and correct this problem.

Some people complain about a lack of giving and the shrinking financial support that their congregations are experiencing. Yet, they are not involved with the stewardship programs of their church nor do they practice biblical stewardship in their daily lives.

The result of people's not caring about the causes of their apathy is much like that famous quote from the old "Pogo" comic strip that stated: "We have met the enemy and they is us!" All too often we are contributors to the situations and problems that help create our apathy and then we do nothing to help correct the situation. We just sit in our pew and complain about the lack of interest that exists and problems that result.

Jesus saw this same problem in His day and so did Peter and Paul. In the book of James, the author deals with the matter by reminding all Christians of their responsibility to be a part of the solution and not be a part of the audience with the words:

2¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. ²⁰ You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless...4¹⁷ If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.

There is really no place for apathy in the Church. Why? Because we know that we are responsible for finding the solutions to our problems and working out our issues within the Body of Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit. So if you are despondent, concerned, apathetic, worried or upset about the future of the Church, don’t just sit there – get involved and help make the future a positive aspect of your congregation today. That is a responsibility that we all share and a duty that we must perform.

Working for a brighter future for the Church,

James

*“God deserves our best because he’s
only ever given his best to us.”
- Reverend Jason Anderson*