

Church Family and Friends,

As a coach, we will work with our team, teaching them offensive and defensive schemes and systems to reach the goals we have set. Different skills are learned and combined together, and when they are put into practice, the result is (hopefully) a win. But when the team does not conform to what we ask, or doesn't put the game plan into action (most frustrating when they just flat out refuse to do the things they have been taught!), then most likely our goals will not be met. However, we cannot get upset at our players if they fail to do something we have not first taught them. A very successful coach once told us, "a skill is not taught until it is learned". In other words, we must continually be teaching the skills we want instilled into our players, not stopping until the skill is learned and consistently put into practice.

Now with this in mind, what have we done with Christianity concerning growing the Church universal? As a society, we have watered down the Gospel in such a manner that we now get offended when our sin is in fact called sin. We do not want the things we like to do, or the way we feel, to be called sin. After all, if I believe that I am just made that way, how can it be sin?

Whether we like it or not, sin is anything that separates us from God, or hinders our relationship with God. Those things that we elevate in front of God, making false idols out of behaviors and feelings. We were created to live in a relationship with Him, but our sin cuts us off from our Creator. But while "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God", the good news is, the Gospel is, that "God demonstrates His own love toward us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." To think we will be able to reconcile ourselves to God any other way than through the shed blood of Christ shows our arrogance and pride.

But I think here is where we mislead ourselves. We think that once we "accept Jesus into our hearts" as Lord and Savior, then that gives us free license to do as we please, or that our struggle with sin will automatically go away. The reality is that once saved from this life of sin we do not get up and miraculously in our own power sin no more. The scripture tells us that we are taught and disciplined to walk towards sanctification. This is sometimes called working out our salvation, a lifelong journey of becoming more like Christ. A lifetime of being taught, of learning to live like Him. This is accomplished through discipleship, through studying the scriptures, through prayer, through walking, learning, living alongside other Christians as we daily learn more about our Lord.

A sweet little boy shouted while trying to be taught to catch a ball by Craig and Issac.... "I can't learn nothing!" This statement rings true here.... We can't learn what we haven't been taught. If we are not sitting at the feet of Christ trying to hear from Him, we are not practicing Christian living. We are here to learn the truth from Christ. Not my truth, not your truth, not the world's truth, but the Truth, Christ Jesus.