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# Matt Walsh: Dear Christians, there's nothing 'compassionate' about helping people get to Hell

Matt Walsh (<http://www.theblaze.com/matt-walsh>) May 2, 2017 2:55 pm



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I received this email yesterday. The subject line, as you could guess, was “Compassion”:

*Matt, you call yourself a Christian but you have no compassion. The Jesus I believe in just wants people to be compassionate towards each other. We are not told to be judgmental to others because of who they love or what lifestyle they choose to have or what gender they identify as. Who are you to say what is wrong or right? We shouldn't be focused on talking about “sin” or telling other people that they might be going to Hell. You have no right to say what a “sin” is. Our job is to be compassionate to all! Compassionate isn't when you're judging or telling other people about their sins. I pray that you realize the error of your ways.*

This is a good example of the bland salad of empty feeling and meaningless sentiment that often passes for “Christianity” in this country. You'll notice that the adherents to this false version of the faith — and they certainly outnumber Christ's true disciples by a large margin in our culture — have kidnapped, tortured, and destroyed many words that were previously very useful to Christians. A word like “judge,” for instance, has been so often misapplied and misconstrued by the Sentimental Christians that the rest of us almost have to leave off using it.

No word or concept, though, has been more thoroughly ruined by the Sentimentalists than “compassion.” They have settled on “compassion” as the most noble euphemism for their self-centered and lackadaisical theology, and now they can’t seem to talk about their faith for 2 minutes without tossing it out a dozen times. Unfortunately, there is no indication that they actually know what the word means.

The word compassion comes from the Latin for “co-suffering.” When we are “compassionate” towards another, we take on their suffering in the hopes of helping them towards some good end. This is what Christ did in the most perfect way when He came to Earth to suffer and die for the sins of Man. It was the greatest act of compassion in the history of the universe. The key point in Christ’s compassion is that it was a saving act. He didn’t just come down and give us a hug and say, “Hey, you guys are super. No need to change anything! Good job! Well, anyway, see ya later!” Rather, He shed light on the darkness and corruption of the world and then *did* something about it. He sacrificed Himself. He suffered with us and for us so that we can go to Heaven.

This is what it means to be compassionate. Compassion is an act, it is a sacrifice, it is suffering, it is intended to help others get to Heaven. We obviously cannot win salvation for others, or even for ourselves, but we can still be compassionate in a way that imitates Christ’s compassion. The relativistic, indifferent “compassion” described in the email above — the same type often preached from the pulpits of our churches — has nothing to do with the compassion of Christ. For the Sentimentalists, “compassion” is a synonym for “nice,” and “nice” means being tolerant and accepting of whatever a person decides to do or however they decide to live. To them, compassion is always polite, always easy going, always enabling, always passive. Compassion is a feeling. A nod of approval. A pat on the back.

Conveniently, their “compassion” can be exercised from the comfort of their living rooms. Simply by virtue of lounging on the couch and not intruding in the affairs of others they have shown compassion. Every moment they spend watching Netflix and eating Doritos is a moment of Heavenly compassion because it does not interfere with anyone. You’ll notice that their compassion isn’t really modeled after Christ so much as it’s modeled after The Dude from *The Big Lebowski*. It’s totally chill and, like, not all up in your face, you know?

This compassion never rebukes sin or calls anyone to repentance (except when it is rebuking those who rebuke, which appears to be one form of rebuking that these “compassionate” and “non-judgmental” types are quite comfortable with). It doesn’t concern itself at all with the fate of souls. This kind of “compassionate” person just wants others to be comfortable here on Earth, whatever the cost. He doesn’t care about helping people get to Heaven. He is concerned only with the here and now.

Naturally, what this “compassionate” person desires most is his own comfort. Helping others overcome sin and temptation would make him uncomfortable because it would force him to confront the darkness in his own soul, so he says nothing and does nothing, and he tells himself that his selfishness is love and his cowardice is courage. His compassion is a compassion entirely devoid of compassion. In fact, his compassion is a grave injustice. When he says we ought to “accept” all “lifestyles,” however sinful, and that we ought never speak of Hell or call anything a sin, he is doing actual harm to his brothers and sisters in Christ. It’s not just that he’s failing to help them, but that he’s actively hurting them. With this attitude and approach — this “compassion” — he causes great damage to two groups:

First, the habitual and unrepentant sinner whose sin is being so politely and nicely tolerated. It may be true that this person will feel relieved to be encouraged in his wickedness and told that it’s really very good and natural for him to do whatever it is he wants to do. He may be grateful for such an assurance.

For now. But the wickedness he partakes in still destroys him all the same. He is brought closer to eternal damnation all the same. And for us to facilitate this easy and casual descent into the fires of Hell is not compassionate. It's rather like injecting morphine into a man's hand so that he no longer feels pain when he places his palm on a hot stove. Not feeling pain is nice, but the problem is that the guy's hand is still getting burnt to a crisp. Better that he feel the pain and save his hand. Better that the sinner feel the weight of his sin and save his soul.

The second group of people deeply harmed by this fake "compassion" are those who wish to avoid sinning. This is perhaps the most neglected group in all of western Christendom — those who are filthy sinners but who actually want to be holy, and need some help and encouragement in that direction. It seems that the church has nothing at all to say to these folks, except that they're wasting their energy and should just relax and go with the flow.

As a member of this second group (and sometimes a member of the first), I can testify to the poisonous effects of our culture's permissive "compassion." I admit I take it personally when these "compassionate" folks go around saying that there is no sin and everything is fine. I take it personally because I can look in my own soul and see this for the insidious, Satanic lie that it is. I know I'm a sinner. I know I'm weak. I know I'm a coward. If left to my own devices, cut off from the grace of God, encouraged to indulge in my basest instincts, Lord only knows the evil I could commit.

The moral obligations of our faith are a great challenge for me, as I am such a frail and flimsy human being. I am always looking for an escape hatch. A way out. A rationalization. An excuse. "Well, this isn't so bad. I can do this. I can carry on this way. It's alright. Everyone's doing it." These are the words Satan whispers in my ear every hour of the day, and I wish sometimes that they were true.

The absolute worst thing you could do, then, is feed into or encourage my weakest and most selfish inclinations. The least compassionate response on your part would be to agree with the devil on my shoulder. Now, I may love you in the moment for it — "Hooray! You told me what I want to hear! You made my life easier!" — but if I listen to you, if I really take your words to heart and convince myself that my sins are not sins, that my wickedness is not so wicked, then I imagine that one day I'll be cursing your name forever in the pit of Hell. And perhaps, if you continue carrying on with this "compassion" of yours, eventually I'll be able to do so in person.

The world is full of weak, pitiful sinners like myself; those just looking for a way around our duties and obligations. A way to follow Christ without taking up our cross. A way to be a Christian without making sacrifices. A way to enter Heaven while holding onto a piece of Earth. How does your so-called compassion help us? How have you equipped and strengthened us in our spiritual battle by telling us that we need not battle? And how is this "compassion" any different from the "compassion" of the Devil?

The fight to be forthright, chaste, modest, courageous, and pure in this decadent and decaying culture is constant and exhausting and often quite confusing. Those of us who even so much as desire, on some level, to be good, to be true — even if we are so incredibly terrible at following through — are already in a small minority. And so the most compassionate thing you can do for us is to say:

"Yes, you're right to struggle. You're right to fight. You're right to resist Satan at any cost. You are not wasting your energies. And when you fail, you're right to crawl back to God on your hands and knees begging for mercy. You're right to do these things. Keep doing them. It is worth it in the end. Resist sin. Lean on God's understanding, not your own. Put on the whole armor of God. Beat back the Evil One with all you've got, scratching, and clawing, and gouging at his eyes. Keep going. What you fight against, this

sin you struggle against, it *is* as horrible and disgusting as you believe it to be, and more so. Do not give into it. The fate of your soul hangs in the balance. You can't give up. Keep fighting. Let me help you. Let me fight with you. Let me suffer with you. Let me walk ahead of you and show you the way. Let me demonstrate the obedient Christian life for you. Let me be a light in the storm."

This is what Christ has said to all of us, and our job as compassionate Christians is to echo His words and say to each other what He would say if He were standing physically in our midst. This is the truly compassionate message. Maybe it's not the easy version or the fashionable one or the one that makes for pithy slogans and Facebook memes, but this is how we ought to be encouraging, exhorting, and edifying each other. That is, if we actually love each other. If we actually want each other to go to Heaven. But if we're satisfied to have as much fun as possible now and pay the bill later in eternity, then by all means we ought to continue with that more tolerant and popular form of compassion. We will be walking to our own destruction, but at least we'll be comfortable until we get there.