

Aldersgate UMC of Butte, Montana

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Message

Words of Wisdom, Part II

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Earlier we sang these words from O Come, O Come, Emmanuel:

*O Come, thou Wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and nigh
To us the path of knowledge show
And cause us in her ways to go*

There is Wisdom that comes from conventional sources we spoke of last week and then there is the unconventional wisdom of Yeshua.

First, for those not here last Sunday, here are some of my favorites of the conventional wisdom of this world:

*If you can't say something nice, don't say nothing at all.
Never let the sun go down upon your anger
Practice makes perfect
Is it nice? Is it true? Does it need to be said?
Treat others how you wish to be treated yourself.
Smile
Chew with your mouth closed
Mind your own business*

I had one on my list last week, but failed to share it. How many of you grew up hearing, “mind your p’s and q’s”?

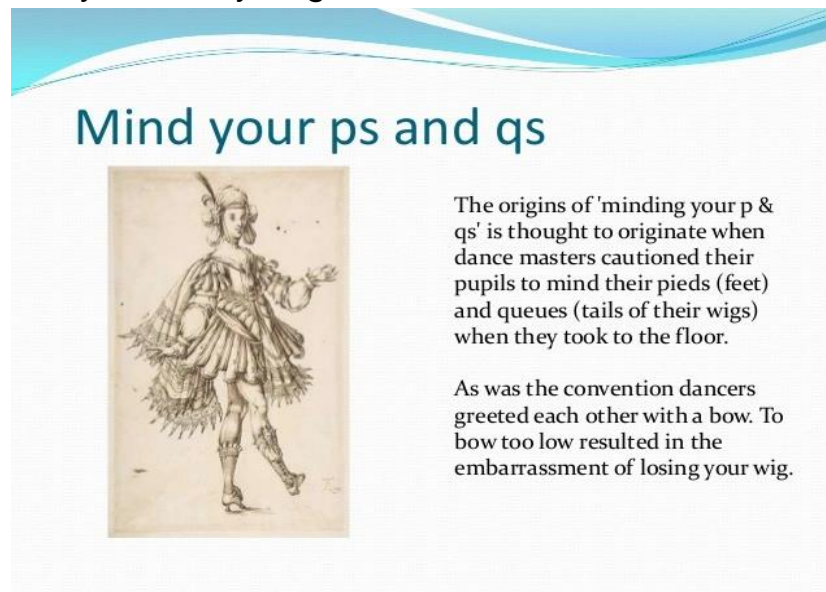
How many of you know what the letters p & q stand for?

Let me share with you one theory of what these letters stood for:



How many of you have heard this explanation before?

Okay, before you get too excited, there is another idea of the origin of this:



There is actually another theory about type set and how back in the early days of the printing press, typists got their p's and q's mixed up while setting up the type print which made for an interesting read as you might imagine. Who knows the exact origin of what it means to mind your p's and q's, but in our household, it meant, "*mind your manners.*"

Now as we share just a couple of verses of unconventional wisdom from Jesus, these words are the exact opposite of the conventional words of wisdom we heard earlier: "If you can't say something nice, don't say nothing at all." Jesus did not think like this. Why did Jesus not think like this because he said some pretty disturbing things like:

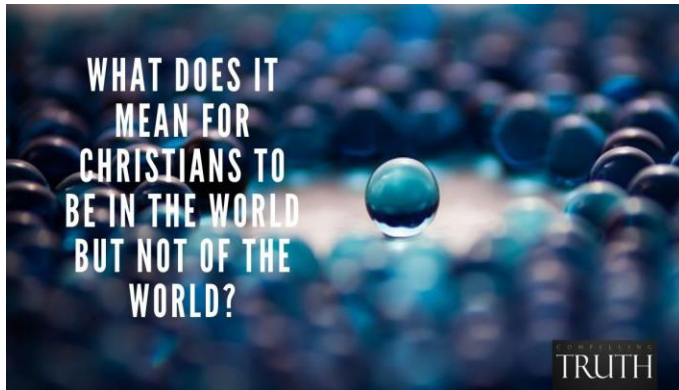
"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters--yes, even their own life--such a person cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:26

I confess that this verse has always troubled me, because it does not sound like the Yeshua I know and love. How could Jesus say such a thing? Well, maybe it is all in the translation. Hear this translation of this verse from the Jesus Seminar:

If you love your father and mother, or your son and daughter, more than me, you cannot follow me. Unless you take up your cross and let go of all you possess, you cannot truly follow me.

Many of you know that I cherish the Lost Gospel Q which was believed to be available either orally or maybe in some written form before the gospels were created. In the Lost Gospel Q the translation of this verse seems more like the Yeshua I follow but I am not a scholar who translates the Greek into English.

Now before I share some of the most challenging words of wisdom from Yeshua, these do not make sense without understanding where Jesus is coming from. Jesus pretty much spoke to his disciples about being in this world, but not of this world.



If we do not have an understanding of this, the unconventional words from Yeshua are not practical in today's world. There is no question that we are in this world, but we do not have to be of this world. We hear these words in the book of Romans:

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds." Paul the Apostle

Let's be honest: do we reflect more of the world in our lives, or do we reflect more of Jesus. If you were on trial for being a follower of Jesus, would there be enough evidence to convict you? In so many ways, this world has lost its way. While there is so much good in the world, there is also so much greed, self-centeredness, violence, arrogance, abuse, prejudice, racism and the list keeps on going ...

Hear from I John 2:15:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

I invite you to read this verse from I John again silently.

The theological foundation of this not being of the world stems from the Lord's Prayer:

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

This is not about the will of humans here. We see what happens to our nation as well as our planet when it is the Almighty Dollar that takes priority instead of the Almighty God!



We hold up a dollar bill and it says, “In God We Trust”. Do we really? I find that debatable. In Proverbs, we read these words of wisdom: *“Trust in God with all your heart and lean not into your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge God and God will direct your paths.”*

If we take these words seriously, these words being, *“thy kingdom come, thy will be done”* as well as *“In God We Trust,”* then we are praying for a world that is seeking first the kingdom of God and trusting in God. **Are we?** Seriously, as Christians are we seeking the kingdom of God first and foremost and are we truly trusting in God above all else?

The hymn we sang at the beginning of the service is a reminder of the wisdom to seek God first above all else.

As followers of Yeshua, we pray for the kingdom of God to come to us and the words of Jesus which are considered unconventional words of wisdom are these:



This is not possible if we are of this world. If we were truly to live out these words, how would this be possible?

Yes! By the grace of God!

Now think about someone who is extremely difficult to love? Could be a neighbor? Could be a relative? Could be a politician? Could even be yourself. Take a moment to bring this person to mind and simply pray that by the grace of God, you can love this person unconditionally just as God loves you unconditionally. This is possible by the grace of God. God's agape love transforms everything!

Let me ask you, are you praying for this Wisdom to transform you? Be careful what you pray for, it might just come to fruition:

*O Come, thou Wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and nigh
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May this indeed be our prayer for wisdom as we strive to be disciples of Jesus Christ, today and everyday. Amen.