

**MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

4 November 2018

"Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28)

Address: 63 Cranwell Road, Singapore 509851

E-mail: maranatha.bpc@pacific.net.sg

Sunday School: 10 am

Sunday English / Chinese Worship Service: 10.45 am Sunday Chinese Worship Service: 7.30 pm

Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8.00 pm

Rev Colin Wong (HP : 9665 8160); Elder Daniel Tau (HP : 9761 5415); Elder Peter Ong (HP : 9626 7045)

THE PSEUDO-CHRISTIAN

People from all walks of life like to adorn themselves with fake goods, be it a replica Gucci handbag or Armani sunglasses or Cartier or Omega watches or fake designer clothes or fake iPhone or iPad. They just want to feel good or just want to be seen to have a richer lifestyle. Needless to say, such products can't actually change a person's status, but a new study suggests that they can change people's behaviour, and for the worse.

Francesca Gino from the University of North Carolina has shown that counterfeit products actually make people behave more dishonestly. They cheat more in tests and they judge others as unethical with greater abandon. Even worse, they are completely unaware of this impact. This effect is heavily ironic. People often buy fake goods to look good to other people. But Gino's study shows that these products can affect our moral choices precisely because they make us look worse to ourselves. As she writes, "Feeling like a fraud makes people more likely to commit fraud" (Discover Magazine).

The world is full of people buying fake products to look good to other people. The local church is also filled with pseudo Christians speaking religious lingo to look pious to other Christians. We need the Spirit of God to help us to discern who is a genuine Christian and who is not. Is there a standard by which we can discern the difference? Here is a simple working definition: A pseudo-Christian is one who claims to be Christian but in actual fact, he distorts and denies every fundamental and distinctive doctrine of the Christian Faith. He often talks, debates, writes and shares about his beliefs, and he even lives like a Christian, but upon closer examination, it becomes clear that he does not believe what is taught in the Bible.

The Bible says that it is never easy to identify a pseudo-Christian. Like Satan who disguises himself to look like an angel of light, a pseudo-Christian disguises himself to look like a real Christian or a servant of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). He speaks the Christian language. He uses Christian vocabulary. He speaks the Christian lingo. That is why it is so hard to discern his true identity. Therefore, what is needed is discernment which comes from above to expose his falsities.

Jesus said, “Ye shall know them by their fruits?” (Matthew 7:16, 20) but in the same breath, He predicted that in that day many people will say to Him, “Didn’t we preach in your name, in your name did cast out demons and in your name did do many miracles?” Then He will declare to them, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:22, 23). Was He contradicting Himself? May it never be!

Though these “many” did preach in His name, in His name did cast out demons and in His name did do many miracles, only Jesus knows, for He is all-knowing, whether these “many” are doing the will of God or not. In the preceding verse, He said that not everyone who addresses Him as Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of His heavenly Father (Matthew 7:21). Jesus knows who will do His Father’s bidding. He is the final Judge. Therefore, we can rest assured that when He judges, He is always right (Psalm 51:4). Nothing can escape His eyes (Hebrews 4:13).

There are ample stories of pseudo-healing ministry that were subsequently exposed as frauds. Many of these pseudo-healers claimed to heal, speak in tongues, prophesy and perform miracles. Although the secular media is hostile to Christianity in general, but what it observes and concludes is completely valid that nothing supernatural or miraculous really happened to those who came for healing as these pseudo-healers had claimed. Many of these faith healers were interrogated by the Media and were asked to prove their miracles. But unfortunately, none of them could give a firm answer to what had actually happened and worst still, some even went unheeded. The fact is that some of the sick or diseased ones whom these pseudo-faith healers claimed were healed died shortly of that sickness or disease. What will happen to these pseudo-faith healers? Jesus said that in that day – the day of reckoning and of judgment – they will be rejected from entering into the kingdom of heaven and cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14, 15).

Having said that, I believe God does heal today. Through Elijah God raised a boy back to life (2 Kings 4:32-35). Jesus went about healing people with all kinds of diseases and sickness and demonic possession (Matthew 8:2, 3, 16; 9:1-8; 4:24; Mark 5; John 5). He also brought to life a widow’s son (Luke 7:12-15). Jesus’ disciples were given power and authority to heal and to cast out demons (Luke 10:17; Acts 3). Paul healed a lame man (Acts 14:8-10). But he did not heal the sick or disabled all the time. A good example was Paul himself. He prayed three times to ask God to remove his thorn in the flesh but God’s answer to him was, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9a). Epaphroditus was sick to the point of death but Paul did not heal him (Philippians 2:25-27). Young Timothy had a stomach problem but he advised him to take some wine which is a recommendation for medical treatment (1 Timothy 5:23). And there is no doubt that God would do the same today.

However, God does not intend to heal everyone as we have seen in the case of Paul and others because He has a divine purpose (2 Corinthians 12:7). The purpose for Paul was not only to humble him but also to show him that in his weakness he would experience the power of Christ resting on him (2 Corinthians 12:9b). That is why God sometimes permits Satan to try us just as he did with Job (Job 23:10). The purpose is the same – spiritual maturity (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6, 7). Concerning the trials of life, Peter’s advice is: “Wherefore let them that suffer

according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (1 Peter 4:19).

Pseudo-Christians are everywhere. You see them in the church all the time. You may have spoken to them. You might even be one of them. Let me give you a typical Lord’s Day scenario: You walk into church and you are greeted by them and soon you are forgotten by them. When the worship leader starts to sing the first hymn, you see them looking like robots, staring at the words of the hymn and mouthing in unison while their eyes and posture suggest their mind is somewhere else. Next, it’s offering time! The Bible says, “For God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7). But you don’t really see any cheerful looks on the faces of these so-called Christians as they reluctantly drop their tithes and offering in the collection bags. Then it comes to the ministry of the Word. When the pastor begins his sermon introduction, you see them sit and stare blankly at the pastor. You wonder how many of them can tell you what the pastor preached on at the end of the sermon? Worst still, when he overshot his time you take a look around from behind the pews and count the people looking at their watches. Some even chitter and jitter. You would be surprised or maybe you wouldn’t because you are one of the time-keepers yourself.

Dearly beloved, if you have ever felt that way, perhaps it’s time for you to look at yourself honestly and check your commitment to God, “except ye be reprobates” (2 Corinthians 13:5). Here are some heart-searching questions for your perusal: Are you putting on a show for other people to see at the worship service? (Matthew 6:5) Are you speaking religious lingo to look pious to other people? (Matthew 23:5-7) Do you only pay lip service to God? Is your heart really far away from Him during worship service? (Mark 7:6) Do you claim to know God but by your actions you deny Him? (Titus 1:16) Are you having a form of godliness but denying its power? (2 Timothy 3:5)

May God help us to strip off all hypocrisies and all fakes and all forms of godliness so as to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord and to the glory of God! John said, “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:6). Amen.

Set Us Free

From the hypocritical masks we wear during the week
To the proper and holy aura we project on Sundays
From the shackles we've helped the world put on us
To the freedom we take for granted and abuse
From the material objects we place above You
To the void in our lives we seek to fill,
Set us free as only You can, Lord Jesus.
(Unknown)

Pastor Colin Wong

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**MBPC 25th Thanksgiving Baptismal Anniversary
Combined Worship Service
28 October 2018**

Theme for the Quarter :

**LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE WORLD
(The Study of the Epistle of James)**

English Worship Service

Rev Colin Wong
speaks on

The Passion For Self-Gratification, Part 2

(Scripture Text : James 4:10-12; Responsive Reading : Hosea 2)

[End of MM]