

Monday Morning Rewind - April 14, 2008

Good morning! Ready to ditch the t-shirt and start living an authentic Christian life? On Sabbath we defined "T-shirt religion" as missing out on the adventure of following Christ and settling instead for a souvenir or "token" Christianity that invites boredom and disappointment.

Saying Yes to God isn't supposed to get you a pew, a Sabbath School study guide, and a membership in the "t-shirt-of-the-month" club. Saying Yes to God is signing on to a life you never dreamed possible. And no, it's not all popcorn and cotton candy. Jesus never said it was. In fact He said there was a cross along the way. But it's a life that is abundantly above all we can ask or think. It's a life of companionship with the Almighty. And it's a life that ultimately leads to life eternal. But you've got to say Yes to the journey and you've got to say No to the t-shirt.

How do you reject t-shirt religion? The four steps we identified from the words of Jesus were: 1) "Come"; 2) "Follow"; 3) "Stay" (Abide); and 4) "Go." We must first respond to Jesus' invitation to "come and see" who He is and what He offers (John 1:35-39). After we come to Jesus, the next step is not to sit on the bench (pew), but to get in the game and "follow" (emulate, imitate, mimic, copy) the Leader (John 1:43). If we're following Jesus, we'll sometimes end up in some scary places because the dark, messy places in life are where Jesus hangs out. He's about setting captives free, bringing light to dark places, and giving beauty for ashes. If I'm following Him, that's what I'll be about, too.

Once we're following Jesus, He wants us to "stay" and abide in Him (John 15:4, 5). To "Abide" means to "live within." Jesus wants more than a relationship, He wants me to live inside of him and he in me. Think of an unborn baby inside its mother's womb. *That's* a little more than a "relationship." If you want more than t-shirt religion, concentrate on the connection. Don't look for the exits. Through prayer, the Word, service and renewal, stay with Jesus.

Lastly, it is only natural that those who come and follow and abide in Jesus, will also "go" and invite others to come, follow, and abide in Jesus. It's what disciples do (John 1:45, 46; Matthew 28:19, 20).

Many of you raised your hands Sabbath to say Yes to Jesus in one of these four areas. I don't want you to think of that as just another appeal at the end of a service. I believe God was speaking to each of us during that service and if we don't take action, we'll lose what God was saying in the noise and confusion of our everyday lives. Here's what I want you to do. If you raised your hand Sabbath acknowledging your need to "come" or to "come back" to Jesus, seeing for yourself that He is real and that you need to begin or restart the journey with God, would you send me an email and tell me about that decision? And if you raised your hand to needing to "follow" or "stay" or "Go," get out a piece of paper, or sit down at the computer, and write a letter to God explaining what you heard during the message and why you feel a need to improve in whatever area you chose. Then, if you feel comfortable doing so, would you share your thoughts with me in an email? Don't hit "reply all." Just send it to randymax@cablone.net. I want to include you and your need in my prayers. And please pray for me. We're all on this journey together, and God wants us all to ditch our religious t-shirts! Let's *go!!* -Pastor Randy

p.s. This coming Sabbath, April 19, we'll have our first prayerwalk of 2008 following our church potluck. I know praying with strangers isn't for everybody. But if you're wanting to capture some of the excitement of following Jesus where He leads, consider taking a walk on the "wow" side with us as we minister to people in Kuna with prayer. The weather forecast shows a cool 55 degrees on Sabbath, so a coat may help your comfort level. We'll gather after lunch and be out for about 30-45 minutes. See you then.