

JESUS

*From the Jesus People to the
Children of God – We Failed You*

By

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So much potential – 20 somethings in the middle of the so-called “Jesus Movement” of the early 1970s. We had the Word, we had the passion, we had the dreams, we had the music, most of all we had Jesus and He had us. We were going to change the world! So, what happened? What happened to our passion, our dreams, our hope for a new tomorrow? Where did it all go wrong?

More than 40 years later and all I can do right now is apologize. From the Jesus People of the '70s to the Children of God of the 21st century – we failed you, miserably.

40 years is a long time, plenty of time to get things right; plenty of time to see a generation of God's people turn the world upside down. The 1st century believers turned their world upside down in a lot less time than that. Why couldn't we?

I will admit a great deal of sadness as I write this. I remember how exciting it was to be part of a movement of God to bring our nation back to Him and to see millions of lost people rescued in the Name of the Lord. As I think back through all the years of so many young Christians praying, worshiping, teaching, preaching, sharing, weeping – I wonder why. Why didn't we see our nation turn to God? Why didn't we see millions of lost people rescued in the Name of the Lord? Is Satan too powerful? Is God too weak?

Would you be surprised if I told you the reason we haven't seen a powerful movement of God in our nation for more than 40 years is because of the young Christians of the '70s? Well, don't be. We are to blame. We had 40 years to make a difference and we didn't do it. We couldn't wait to get old enough to preach from the pulpit, teach the class, run the church. Well, we had our chance and we messed up, really messed up. And now we're handing over what's left to the young people of our churches, who are still in church.

75% of teenagers in American churches leave their church when they graduate from high school and don't attend another church. Very few of them ever attend church again. These are the kids who grew up in the church, made professions of faith in the church, sang in the church, prayed in the church. These are our kids, who grew up in our homes, watched us live out the Christian life in front of them, and they chose to leave. How pathetic we are.

I think back to another group of young Christians living during the '60s and '70s of the 1st Century of the Church. They had the Word, they had the passion, they had the dreams, they had the music, they had Christ's apostles teaching them, they had Jesus and He had them. God called them to turn their world upside down with the message of His love and grace, but most of them failed their generation – just like we have. What did they leave for their children?

It's not like Jesus didn't warn them. Toward the end of the 1st century, Jesus dictated letters to the Apostle John to send to seven of His churches. Jesus spoke directly, honestly and powerfully to the leaders and members of those churches.

He told them they had "left" their first love, Him; they had compromised His Message; they had put stumbling blocks in the path of people coming to Him; they had tolerated sexual immorality in the church and eaten food sacrificed to idols; even though they pretended to be busy in service to Him, they were dead; they had defiled themselves instead of living a life of holiness; they made Him sick and He wanted to vomit them out of His mouth; and even though they saw themselves as rich and in need of nothing, they were really wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

Do you see any difference between the 20 somethings of the 1st century and those of us who came of age in the 20th century? Haven't we also left our first love? Haven't we compromised His Message? Haven't we put stumbling blocks in the path of people coming to Him? Haven't we tolerated sexual immorality in the church? Haven't we eaten food sacrificed to idols by indulging ourselves in the things of this world? We pretend to be so busy serving God, but isn't our service to Him really dead? Haven't we defiled ourselves by living unholy lives? Don't we make Jesus sick to the point where He wants to vomit us out of His mouth? Don't we think of ourselves as rich and in need of nothing when we're really wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked? Do we honestly expect

God to bless us and answer our prayers when we have disobeyed Him for so long?

I don't. I have no reason to expect God to bless us and answer our prayers, except for one thing – **His love, mercy and grace.**

“I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’” Revelation 3:18-22

For those of us who were 20 somethings in the Church 40 years, that's our only hope. If we're not willing to obey our Lord this time, our time to make a difference is done.

Children of God, you can learn something from us. Don't do what we did. Don't look to us for an example because we're not it. Look to Jesus, listen to what He says, and do it. Don't let yourself be fooled into thinking you can do Church any other way than the way Jesus says. Remember, He's the One building His Church. If God is

merciful and gives you 20 something Christians 40 years to make a difference, thank Him for the time and do it right. We need you.

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