

“Leaving Phony Façades Behind

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Have you ever traveled in a big city where they have old warehouses and old factories that are not being torn down because it's too costly? To help improve the look of the area they paint pictures on the blank walls of windows and Greek columns to have passers-by be deceived by what it looks like but really isn't there. Those are a façade. A façade is a false appearance, a superficial appearance. The buildings haven't changed, but their look surely has!

During our midweek sermons we've been hearing that God's calling us home, and we've been learning what God's call means as we journey toward our true home in heaven. You can't take everything with you when you travel, so some things get left behind.

Façade. That's a fancy French word. We don't use it too much in our common speech but I think we all know what it means. There's a line from the Broadway play, *“The King and I.”* *“Whenever I feel afraid, I hold my head erect and whistle a happy tune so no one will suspect I'm afraid.”* That's a façade. It's a front we show the world but it's not necessarily who we really are.

I want to read you a quotation. It comes from a billboard posted in London in 1881 and it's inviting passers-by to come to church. Billboards were different back in those days. Today a billboard has only a few words so you can get the message as you whiz by in your car. People traveled much more slowly back in 1881, on a horse, in a carriage, or walking. So a billboard could have many more words than today. A passer-by would stop and read. So here's the quotation inviting people to come to church.

There is a poem called ‘The Buried Life’ of which I am often reminded. Your lives are busy, useful, and honest; but your faces are anxious and you are not all you want to be. (The billboard is getting behind the façade. “You are not all you want to be.”) There is within you another life, a buried life, which does not get free. In old days it got free through old forms of religion and then men had peace and were not afraid of anybody or anything. We can't go back to the old forms. They are gone with the old times and in the presence of the new learning of our days. Many therefore have given up religion altogether and carry around a buried life. It's buried but it's not dead.

When we go into public, we put nice façades on our buried lives. When our buried life really hears God's voice it will rise. Men will live spiritual as well as honest lives. They will rest on Some One greater than themselves and have peace. I don't think this life will be stirred by excitement or by irrational preaching—and not always by rational preaching; I believe in the quiet of a place full of good memories, in the sound of fine music, in the sympathy of fellow seekers, we may better wait God's call .

(Then the billboard invites people to services at a church.) Will you come and even give yourself ten minutes? It may be that as you listen to the silence, to the music, or to the worship of others, God will speak and that the buried life will arise and that you will have peace.”

That's the purpose of every worship service and today our purpose is to strive to leave phony façades behind and show the world who we followers of Jesus truly are.

Open to Mark 10. Jesus predicted to His disciples that He would be buried. Look at verses 32-34, *“And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve*

again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.” **Jesus was buried so that life could arise.**

The billboard suggested that there’s something good buried in all of us, something we’d love to get out, get past the façades we show the world. Well, there is one good thing deep down in our hearts. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, **God “has put eternity in man’s heart.”**

Deep down we yearn for the eternal, we yearn for God, but even that’s been corrupted by sin. We’re actually worse off than the billboard suggested. **You and I have buried lives because, we were dead in trespasses and sins.** That’s the big reason why you and I show false fronts to the world. We’re afraid, but we whistle a happy tune, but don’t always show hope!

We’re guilty, but we stuff our guilt away inside. We’re often not sincere in repentance. We’re ashamed of ourselves, but we hide it; we forget God sees everything. We put on our façades. We act like we’re still “*dead in trespasses and sins.*” Like the Walking dead! Zombies!

But those façades are phony when we really get what Jesus is about. That Bible verse says “*You were dead.*” Past tense! The reason we can leave phony façades behind is because God’s raised us! **God has made us alive with Christ.** Listen to Ephesians 2:1, 4-5, “*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.*”

Open to Romans 6. Because of God’s power and plan, Jesus’ buried life was destined to rise. Acts 2:24 says, “*God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, for it was not possible for him to be held by it.*” When you were baptized, you were buried with Christ. Your sin buries you, and you can’t get free. But Baptism raises you to newness of life just as Christ was raised!

Look at verses 4-5, “*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*”

So the question is why don’t we live transparent, honest, lives filled with faith, hope and joy? Why doesn’t the salvation poured into our lives through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ show when we face fear or guilt or shame? Why the contradiction between who we are and what we show the world?

Why not leave phony façades behind? Why not show people your true face, alive with Christ? That’s what you should pray God would do in you!

We need to pray, “*Almighty God, by Your great goodness mercifully look on me that I may be preserved forever in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, my Savior.*” You need to be living out your life in Christ. **It means to be a person of integrity!** You should be saying, “*World, you’re seeing the real person when you see me!*”

Leave phony façades behind! Show your true face, alive with your Savior, Jesus Christ!