



Pastor's Page

“The Final Song”

I'd only met the lady once a few years ago and now here I was at her funeral. I must admit it felt strange for me to be at such an occasion and not be officiating. As we waited for the service to begin I flicked through the Crematorium hymn book and pondered what items might be included. Then we were invited to stand as the wooden coffin was brought in. The entry of the pall bearers was accompanied by a familiar tune that echoed through the small chapel. “And now the end is near, and so I face the final curtain.....” The song has a particular poignancy to it that initially seemed very appropriate for such an occasion. However, as I stared at the crematorium curtains in front of me I began to feel uncomfortable about the message of the song. Admittedly we only had about 20 seconds of it but I knew the number well enough to reflect on the content of the lyrics. Nearing the end of his life he proclaims “whatever I've done, good or bad, the one thing I can say (with some pride!) is that I always did things **my way**” At one level this may appear innocuous enough but at another it is quite disturbing. This song seems to encapsulate the big problem that we all have, namely that we live life “Our way” instead of ‘His way’ (God's way) And if when we meet our maker we have to admit that we've lived life “our way” surely it should be with absolute regret and remorse not pride and pleasure?

The story of the bible is the story of God's plan to reconcile a human race that has gone “Its way” instead of “His way”. We discover from scripture the enormity of God's love which went as far as the cross at Calvary where rebellious mankind (like you and me) put to death the creator. However the creator became our saviour as Jesus conquered death and rose from the grave. Jesus, who always did things His Father way (God's way) even when it hurt, made it possible for us too to live His way.

But even as Christians we can still suffer from doing things our way. Jeff Lucas (a teaching pastor in Colorado USA) emphasises this point as he talks about consumerism affecting the church. He says; *Sometimes we dress up our rank consumerism in the disguise of pursuing the radical for the sake of heaven above when in fact we are really on safari to try and find what suits us right down to the ground! Of course we will always have our preferences- but when we enthrone them, we end up believing that the church exists for us and worst of all, Jesus himself becomes yet another someone that we seek to manage and manipulate. Church consumerism quietly but firmly insists that Jesus be our subject rather than our sovereign.*

So even as Christians, we must be careful to pursue things his way for His sake and not our way for our sake. Frank Sinatra sang “For what is a man, what has he got, if not himself, then he is not” Graham Kendrick sang “For the joys and for the sorrows the best and worst of times for this moment for tomorrow, for all that lies behind..... for this I have Jesus”

Please take note; I'd like Kendrick not Sinatra at my funeral

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