

People Prefer Safe Space Over Conflict – Go Along To Get Along

It is possible to learn things in the strangest of places and in the strangest of conversations.

I have always been a bit intrigued by prison life and exactly what goes on behind the walls of the penal institutions. We have all heard the horror tales of rapes, muggings, and “jailhouse justice,” and certainly being incarcerated for an extended period of time would seem to be such a waste of life.

Just this week I had a discussion with a friend who had spent some time in the clink and is now radically saved which has led to a total change in lifestyle. His testimony is miraculous and a real eye-opener about the power of Jesus to transform a life. He now credits his time in jail as God’s plan to rescue him from sure destruction.

During the course of the discussion I asked him if it was true that prison was a dangerous place.

“It can be,” he said. “But it is really no different than the outside world in that regard. Most of the trouble you get in to is trouble that you brought upon yourself. If you lay low and simply do your time you can get through it without much trouble. You just keep your mouth shut, head down, and count the days until you are outta there.”

“Is there a lot of violence inside? Do guys get beat up a lot by other inmates?” I asked.

“Sometimes. But if you really sense that there is trouble lurking on the yard you simply stay safe in the cage.” He said.

"Huh? Safe in the cage? What does that mean, Bill?" I queried.

"Your cell. The cell is a cage. In order to protect themselves from thugs some guys simply spend all of their time sitting in their cell. There are guards around and it is very hard for someone to get into another guy's cell. Safe in the cage. You have no freedom...but there is also less danger. Life is always safer if you stay in the cage."

"Hmmm. Did you ever spend much time in your cage?" I asked.

"Not much," he said. "I always tried to avoid the conflicts and controversy. I didn't go out of my way looking for trouble."

"Wow," I murmured. "Sorta like church. Is that what you mean?"

"I'm not following you, Coach. What do you mean by that?"

"Safe in the cage. That is the way I see most Christians living their lives. The church is the cage and it is a safe place for them to run to when things get a little bit scary out in the world. Instead of standing up and pushing back against the forces that are attempting to intimidate them, they run to church because it is "safe in the cage." They can hunker down, avoid the controversy out in the real world, and breeze through their time until their time of release occurs. Just like the men in prison."

"Dude! I have never looked at it that way!"

"Yeah. Think about it. Most Christians that I have been around my entire Christian walk are some of the most passive, non-confrontational people you would ever want to be around. They are good people, but they really are not interested in ruffling anyone's feelings. No matter how much crazy stuff is going on around them they don't seem to want to do anything

about it.”

“Look at the schools,” I continued. “The public schools are teaching their kids all kinds of crazy things...gender issues...homo sex...secular beliefs and the parents never make a peep. The government takes their tax dollars and spend it on crazy things like abortion, macro evolution...things that go in direct conflict with what the parents believe in their home, yet they never voice a complaint to anyone about their displeasure.”

“Ahhh.” He moaned. “Now I’m picking up what you are laying down. The parents keep their mouths shut because they don’t want to make any waves. They know that if they speak out they run the risk of making someone mad and then they will have to deal with the consequences of what they stood up for. It’s safe in the cage! You’re right Coach! The parent’s unwillingness to speak out actually imprisons their own children. By going-along-to-get-along they are actually bringing harm to the one’s they claim to love.”

“You got it! In a funny sort of way the church has adopted the same mentality as the men who are locked in America’s prisons. In order to avoid any problems they simply sit in their church and wait for their time here on earth to run out. Why cause trouble when they are simply passing through. This world is not there home. Sometime very soon the Lord is going to come and set them free.”

“Yep. Safe in the cage. I never looked at it that way. Jesus came to set us free, not to simply keep us locked in a church. Although it might be safe, warm, and void of conflict in the cage, hiding from controversy is no way for a Christian to live.”

“That’s it, Bill,” I sighed. “Avoiding conflict may be a safe way to live, but it sure is a waste of life. Somehow I don’t think that Jesus came just to make our time spent here on

earth more comfortable. Fear is a prison in itself. There is nothing wrong with BEING afraid...but there is something wrong with STAYING afraid.”

“Man,” Bill replied. “It looks to me like I have simply traded one form of bondage for another. Hiding from controversy in the church really isn’t much different than hiding form controversy inside the prison.”

“That’s what I am saying. Jesus came to set us free, not simply change our cage.”

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