

## 1 COUNTER CULTURE

### CHRISTIAN

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## 2 Patricia Heaton

- Being a Christian could ruin your career.
- So says Patricia Heaton, the two-time Emmy Award-winning actress from the hit TV show Everybody Loves Raymond, and other celebrity-types.
- Identifying yourself as a Christian can lead to exclusion and fewer work opportunities.
- Our culture expects one's faith, at least Christian faith, to be a private matter.
- So anyone who's an openly observant Christian -- raises a lot of red flags.

## 3 Taking a Stand

- When asked about the consequences of being a Christian in Hollywood, Heaton said, "As an actor in this town, it's so hard to maintain a career."
- Justified or not, Christians are often stereotyped as not as much fun, straight-laced misfits or radical fundamentalists of the non-PC type.
- Despite the setbacks, Heaton is determined to hold onto her faith even if there's a personal and professional cost.
- To her, it's worth it.

## 4 Jim Caviezel

- Jim Caviezel, the actor who could say "I'm not Jesus, I just played him in the movies," was ostracized following his portrayal of God's Son in The Passion of the Christ.
- An ardent Roman Catholic, Caviezel was warned by director Mel Gibson that taking this role could end his career.
- Caviezel decided that this was the role of a lifetime, and he was willing to take the risk.
- "We all have our crosses to bear," he decided.

## 5 Jim Caviezel

- Apparently, Gibson is a prophet as well as an actor and director.
- After playing the role of Jesus (to very good reviews) Caviezel was unable to find another director willing to cast him in a movie.
- For a while, he earned his living as a motivational speaker, often talking with congregations and confirmation classes about the cost of being true to one's faith.
- In his case, there was a statute of limitations on the cost of discipleship: Caviezel was recently cast in the hot new television series Person of Interest.

## 6 Observation

- Rich Lowry observed a few months ago in the New York Post (commenting on Denver Broncos QB Tim Tebow) that it's crazy, but it's now cutting edge to be a clean-cut guy, and counter-cultural to be an outspoken Christian.
- So do you want to be revolutionary and radical in today's culture?
- Just sign up to be an openly committed follower of Jesus Christ and welcome the response and controversy it invokes.

## 7 "Occupy Corinth"

- This brings us to one of the radicals and counter-revolutionaries of the mid-first century, and certainly the New Testament: Saul of Tarsus, who became known as the Apostle Paul.
- In his second epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 6:1-13), we're reminded that being a Christian can not only ruin your career, but also, be hazardous to one's health.
- Paul reminds the Corinthian church that he's got some street experience.
- He's been active in the underground. He's been on the front lines. He's been "occupying" territory for Jesus Christ.

## 8 Front Line Examples

- For proof he's been on the front lines, Paul gives the following examples:
  - Troubles
  - Hardships
  - Beatings
  - Riots
  - Sleepless nights
  - Imprisonment
  - Hard work
  - Hunger, and more
- Yet in all these things, Paul and his companions have maintained their composure and have not compromised their principles.
- Instead, he and his companions have labored for their cause "in purity, in understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God" (2 Cor. 6:6-7)

## 9 Front Line Trials

- Then Paul offers a series of contrasts that illustrate the give and take, ebb and flow, ups and downs of openly following Christ:
  - Through glory and dishonor; bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything. (2 Cor. 6:8-10 NIV).

## 10 Biblical Context

- What is impressive about Paul is not the problems and hardships he went through, but the way he responded to all the trials he suffered.
- Most people who go through hardships and trials become bitter and resentful.
- However, with the Apostle Paul and his companions, they gloried in the sufferings because they knew by responding to them in a godly and upright way was a sure sign of a sincere and genuine faith.
- The Corinthian church should have known this and given Paul their full support, but they didn't.
- Instead, the church had been seduced by false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ (2 Cor. 11:13 NIV), who eluded that Paul's troubles and problems were caused by his weak and compromised faith.

## 11 The Good fight of Faith

- Paul and his companions didn't have weak faith.
- They were indeed fighting the good fight of faith.
- They were [pursuing] righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. . . (1 Timothy 6:11 NIV), in spite of their many troubles, hardships, and trials.
- To Timothy, Paul writes, You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings — what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. (2 Timothy 3:10-11 NIV)

## 12 We will be Persecuted

- In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 Timothy 3:12-13 NIV)
- But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, . . . (2 Timothy 3:14 NIV)

## 13 Fighting the Good Fight of Faith

- Anyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted and face unjust suffering.
  - This will come from both the ungodly and those who have compromised their faith.
- This means, we too are going to need to fight the good fight of faith as well, so that we might not lose what we have worked for.

## 14 Fighting to Live

- Jimmy Valvano, was the head basketball coach at North Carolina State University, when they won the 1983 NCAA Basketball Tournament.
- It was a game in which his team was a heavy underdog and against all odds they won on a last second shot.
- Valvano is not only remembered for running up and down the court after winning the the game—in seemingly disbelief, but for the heroic way he fought cancer until he died.

## 15 The V Foundation for Cancer Research

## 16 Bent but Not Broken

- Last fall, Tim Tebow became a household word due to his football heroics and to his outspoken Christian faith in Jesus Christ.
- While many of Tim's games seemed to be the result of divine intervention and big wins that got the attention of the world, the Denver Broncos didn't win the Super Bowl.
- Tim was just as courageous and christlike in defeat as he was in winning.
- In fact, it probably should be said that Tim won in both winning and losing.

## 17 Winning & Losing

- As the saying goes, "it's not about winning or losing that's important, it is how you play the game."
- As the Apostle Paul says, Endure hardship with us . . . , if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. (2 Timothy 2:3-5 NIV)
- So then, when we are trying to serve the Lord 100% and trouble or hardship comes our way, let no one become bitter or resentful.
- As the writer of Hebrews says, See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. (Hebrews 12:15 NIV)

## 18 Pastor Dave's Rules for Radical Believers

- Remember, God has not promised us heaven on earth and that trials are good for us as they provide opportunity for us to use our faith so that it can grow.
- Be thankful for what you do have and the many blessings God has already given you. Being thankful brings on peace and the peace of God keeps us from fretting and complaining, which can separate us from the grace of God.
- Overcome evil by continuing to do good. God who sees everything is faithful and will reward you, if you don't give up.

## 19 Summary

- When we seek to live for God as a radical counter-culture Christian, we will stand out.

- We will stand out so much that it will probably result in us losing some friends, receiving hostility at work, and rejection from those who even call themselves Christians.
- In fact, when we try to live as true Christians, we will have a big bulls eye all over us.
- However, it is how we endure this trouble and hardship that will show the real quality of our faith.
- If we seek to payback evil with evil, we will lose. But if we overcome evil by doing what is right and good, we win.
- In fact, we win BIG!!!

## 20 Conclusion

- Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:2-3 NIV)
- Did Jesus win big?
- So can we, when we follow in his footsteps!