**Keeping the Seed Untainted – By Thailer Jimerson**

I think we can all agree that to typically gentile ears, much of Moses’ legislation in the book of Leviticus can sound at best confusing and at worst averse. Such is the case with one particular law in **Leviticus 19.19**: *“‘You must keep my statutes: as for your domestic animals, you shall not cause two differing kinds to breed; as for your field, you shall not sow two differing kinds of seed; and, a garment of two differing kinds of woven material should not be worn on you.”* (**LEB**)

 Why be dogmatic about the separation of such insignificant, daily details? Why does it matter? Of course, the big-picture answer is that these were all in instilling within God’s covenant people the sense of separation, and separation *unto holiness*. Part of keeping the seed separate and untainted was the signification to onlookers that there is a divine purpose behind what we do, and to further serve as an invitation into that separateness for God’s sake.

 I’m going to stretch this injunction a little further than its immediate context and suggest that, employing it as a metaphor, we should take very strongly the responsibility to keep the seed of the gospel untainted. That is, as Christians God has given us brains and the will to do good, to make the world a better place for his glory. So far, so good. But this means being good Bible students: i.e., seeking to understand the life of our Lord in its purity, and being very careful about confusing his commandments with our cultural understandings and mixing that pure seed of his word with any non-canonical baggage we’ve adopted from the prevailing thoughts of the day.

(Some quick ways this applies: (a) No, “Cleanliness is next to Godliness” is NOT in your Bible (though I could wish it were), unless you’re finding it in 3 Hezekiah, chapter 87; and (b) No, Christ has not stated that those who wear their Sunday best are holier before him and readier to worship than those who don’t. Okay, okay – that’s easy fodder.)

 But let me show you how this came home to me. The other day, Amber was asking me questions about the origins of Christianity as we know it and particular where the missionary imperialism came from. We’re talking about the spirit of the inquisition, that historical phenomenon in Christendom that sought to conquer other cultures in the name of Christ and make them adopt our lifestyles, too. Now, I don’t know the specifics of when and where it began, but I can tell you it’s not biblical. It’s not found in the pages of your New Testament. And in hindsight, we can say it was wrong and emphatically unbiblical.

 Here’s what is biblical. Jesus rose from the grave, proving his claims to be God’s unique Son, the messiah inaugurating his kingdom in the here and now, through his believing followers. With this resurrection, he commissioned his followers to bear this message everywhere, that he had all authority and we were to baptize people in his name and teach them to observe his ways. This makes Christianity a conversion-centered religion and one that is expected to be universal in its enterprise. Wherever Christianity lands it’s supposed to be flexible enough to adapt to all cultures, times and places, creating not a people who are homogenous in attire and externalities, but who are homogenous in love and spirit. To prove this, namely that Christianity was to be universal, assimilating all sorts of peoples and cultures, just look at the fourteenth chapter of Romans. We have principles laid out to make this possible, to make it possible for Christ to be the Lord of both Africans and Chinese, though those two cultures look very different.

 Here’s what’s not biblical (and gets people killed). As I’ve been reading about the spread of Christianity to Japan, I’ve learned many lessons about missionary strategy and mishaps. Christ washed upon the shores of Japan in the early 16th century with the Jesuit missionaries. Many people were converted to Catholicism. However, what eventually led to the iron foot of the Tokugawa-led persecution squashing the remnants of faith out was…can you guess? Mixing the seed. See, the Jesuits didn’t bring the untainted message of the New Testament – it also brought the governmental powers of Portugal and France. It sought to lay upon the people a gospel tainted with man’s monarchy (which is separated from Christ’s rule in his church in the Bible), and man’s customs, and man’s financial interests. It was colonialism in a mask. It was mixed seed. It was a gospel with unbiblical baggage – which is no gospel at all. So, what does this tell the ruling warlords of Japan? It tells them that Christianity is not the good news of Christ, as it was meant to be; instead, it signals to them this is a pretense for a foreign invader and we need to scrub it out.

 Here’s the question: When we plant the seed of the gospel in the hearts of our community – does it come pure, untainted? Or has it been mixed?