

Speaking to the soul



Evil behaviour

So get rid of all evil behaviour. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy and all unkind speech. 1 Peter 2:1

In the previous chapter Peter commanded his readers to love one another. He now spells out what that will involve, because if we are truly to love other people then bad behaviour must stop. There's no way in which a church can be dominated by love when there is deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy and gossip. All of those things destroy the love, peace and joy that God wants to dominate the lives of Christians.

I have often heard people tell me that they have found their church deeply disappointing. Very often there is a problem with gossip, which so easily develops within any close community. And most odious of all is when Christians talk the talk, but fail to walk the walk. They are quick to criticise others for their failings, but are fail just as much themselves. It should never be a surprise that Christians often get it wrong, because we are all sinners. But what is tragic is when bad behaviour is not challenged. For love's sake we need to ensure that we identify and root out bad behaviour.

When we become Christians, Jesus becomes the Lord of our lives but that doesn't mean that we are no longer able to make bad decisions. We are still entirely able to act in a destructive and unhelpful way. The onus is on us to take effective action. The expression in Greek that Peter uses here is to strip off all bad behaviour, and he uses the verb for taking off one's clothes. Your clothes won't fall off you just because it's the end of the day and you're tired! You need to take action. It's exactly the same with our bad actions and attitudes. Much as the Lord wants us to remove them, it is down to us to take action and get rid of them. God will give us the strength to do so but we have to strip them off ourselves.

QUESTION

Be completely honest. What bad attitudes or actions do you need to strip off?

PRAYER

Loving God, give us your strength to become the people that you want us to be. Amen

Window - York Minster

