**WHAT COLOR IS YOUR MARRIAGE?**

We have all heard of an “Amber Alert” that tells us a child has just been abducted and everyone should be on the lookout for a described suspect or license plate. I’ve been in hospitals where a “Code Blue!” was called over the intercom and all medical staff stopped what they were doing and rushed to a life and death emergency (it means a heart attack or respiration crisis). “Code Red” means either a fire has broken out in the building, or (depending on the state), there is a massive postpartum hemorrhage threatening a mother. “Code Brown” means severe weather threatens the hospital at once. “Code Grey” means there is a combative person and security must respond immediately. “Code Clear” means the emergency has passed.

After the September 11th terrorist attacks in 2001 the United States officially formed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to address the new world of terrorism we now faced. In the process they instituted a color-coded alert signal that warns the public of the threat level we faced at any given moment. Before it was replaced in 2011 it had five levels of colors. Green was “Low” (No Known Threat risk). Blue was “Guarded” (General Risk). Yellow was “Elevated” (Significant Risk). Orange was “High” (Serious Risk). Red was “Severe” (Imminent Danger Risk). Do you remember those?

We all experienced color changes to the threat level of our country. It fluctuated between Yellow and Orange many times and was never lowered to either Blue or Green even once (which basically made it useless – which is why it was replaced). Only once since 9-11 did it ever reach Red Alert (“imminent danger”), and that was from August 10–September 14, 2006 when British officials uncovered a plot to blow up airplanes around the fifth anniversary of Al-Qaeda’s attacks on the U.S.

Our world changed that day almost 19 years ago. But that was not the worst catastrophe to hit our nation. Not by a long shot. The greatest terrorist attack to ever hit our land came from the evil mind and sinister plot of “*the great Dragon… that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives he whole world*” (Rev. 12:9). He knew full well that to fulfill his desire to retaliate against God, to whom he had rebelled long ago, he had to destroy the church (read Rev. 12 for the full story). To destroy the church he had to destroy the home and family from which comes the elders, deacons, and saints which fill it (Phil. 1:1). As goes the home, so goes the church. They stand or fall together.

If Satan could turn husbands against wives, and wives against husbands, then he knew there could never be thriving churches. Sound congregations fully depend on leadership from elders, deacons, evangelists and teachers (Eph. 4:11). This is why Paul told Titus, “*I left you in Crete that you should set in order the things that are lacking and appoint elders in every city*” (Tit. 1:5). Without godly leaders the church often becomes the blind leading the blind, and both fall in the ditch. Satan knows that and so tries to keep the church struggling by attacking the family. Dysfunctional and broken marriages disqualify men from serving in leadership roles (I Tim. 3:1-13). Preachers are required to “*be an example to the believers*” (I Tim. 4:12). A church filled with unhappy marriages will never become salt and light to the world (Matt. 5:13-16). That is why Satan took dead aim to turn good churches like Smyrna and Philadelphia (Rev. 2:8-11; 3:7-13) into struggling or dying churches like Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea (Rev. 2:1-7; 2:12-17; 2:18-29; 3:1-6; 3:14-22). Those seven churches of Asia in Revelation perfectly describe most marriages in the church, because they describe most relationships between Christ and us (His bride).

“What color is your marriage?”
Is it Green (no known threat, you truly love each other)?
Is it Blue (a few minor problems, but presently being worked on or fixed)?
Is it Yellow (some serious problems with significant risk of failure)?
Is it Orange (you are fast reaching a breaking point and considering divorce)?
Is it Red (it’s on life-support and you are filing for divorce)?

If I was to Color-Code the relationship of Christ to the seven churches in Revelation I would chart them like this:

Smyrna and Philadelphia are Green, for they had a great relationship with Christ.

Ephesus is Blue, for they seemed outwardly to have it all together with no great issues
dividing them, yet there was no passion for Christ.

Pergamos is Yellow, because they had some serious problems (“*I have a few things against you*”), yet seemed, at least outwardly, to try to work it out.

Thyatira and Laodicea are Orange, for even though Christ mentioned there was still some life left in their relationship, it was in very serious trouble.

Sardis is Red, for they are called by Christ “dead.” While some were on life-support “and ready to die,” most had already given up on Jesus.

What I’m trying to do in this article is to make you examine your marriage seriously. By looking at it through the eyes of Christ examining His “marriage” to the churches, it helps me know what I must do to bless my marriage. If I can get you to read Revelation 2-3 in light of your relationship with your spouse, and choose which one most closely resembles your marriage, you can then know what you need to do to either rekindle or to keep the “*lampstand*” (fellowship / relationship) burning bright.

Frankly, I believe those churches had no idea their marriage to Christ was in trouble until they read those letters. Only then could they take action to save their relationship with Jesus. Only when you have taken a hard look at where you are right now can you then know what you must do to make your marriage Green, thus great.

So, what color is your marriage?

Until next week… *“Marriage is not a noun; it’s a verb. It isn’t something you get. It’s something you do. It’s the way you love your partner every day.” – Barbara De Angelis*

 Benita, I love you. Rick