

Preacher's Pen points

“Sorry, no exceptions!”



Among the gifts I received for Christmas this past year were two copies of Microsoft Windows XP computer software. Since I have only one computer, the second copy was not needed,; so I went to the store a few days ago to exchange it for something else. The clerk across the counter politely but unwaveringly pointed out that I was too late. The company's exchange policy is clearly printed on the receipt—"two week exchange". And in this case the store's exchange policy had been graciously extended from the usual 14 days to 30 days for gift items. The deadline for exchanging holiday gifts was January 25th ; I was two days late. Not easily deterred from my mission, I first sought to reason with her. "We bought lots of gifts here!" I said. I thought this would surely win me some consideration. "What could I possibly do with two copies of the same software for one computer!?" Surely, the clerk could see no useful purpose in that! However, no matter what argument I made, she smiled and in her most pleasant voice insisted that the company is very strict about the exchange policy. At last I called for a store manager. Surely she would understand my case and make an exception for me. With the same politeness of the customer service lady, she reiterated company policy with the same outcome—"Sorry, no exchange, no exceptions!"

Judgment Day!

My experience at that store is probably much like what it will be for many people when they face the Lord on the day of judgment. I can almost hear it now, "But Lord, I wasn't a bad person. I often did nice things for people. I know I wasn't baptized or anything, and that I was too busy for church and for Bible study; but surely there ought to be an exception for me!" And I can equally imagine the Lord's response, "I have always given my creatures my word so that they could know how to serve me; but you chose to live in sin. Even after you had rejected

me and my word, I graciously extended the invitation to serve me. I sent my Son to die for you and to reveal the way to eternal life. Everything you needed to know was clearly written in the Scripture. You just didn't come during the grace period! Sorry, no exceptions!"

Advance Warning!

Jesus predicted such conversations in the Sermon on the Mount. He warned that false prophets will lead people astray and that false disciples will hinder the way. He said, "*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father in heaven*" (Mt. 7:21). Moreover He has already told us that in spite of His revelation that some will seek an exception: "*Many will say to me in that day, 'But Lord did we not prophecy in your name and in your name cast out demons and in your name perform many wonderful works? And then I will say to them, 'Depart from me, you who work iniquity; I never knew you'*" (Mt. 7:22-23). Perhaps we could reason, "Surely there ought to be an exception for such well-meaning people who obviously thought they knew Jesus and who even appear to have done miraculous things". Yet, the truth is clearly written in God's book and He expects us all to read it, believe it and sincerely obey it.

Obey Him Now!

Don't make the mistake of not taking the time to read the terms of God's salvation. Don't assume that God will make an exception for you. Instead seek Him while He may be found, lest you find yourself unprepared. It's one thing to miss a company deadline and get stuck with an extra box of software you can't use; but it would be a tragedy to neglect the opportunity to know and do God's will and miss heaven! Don't let that happen to you! Remember, no exceptions! —Johnny Felker (www.truthchasers.com)