

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

A Call to Radical Christianity

BY JESSE MORRELL

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“And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables. And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.”

~ *John 2:15-17*

“I'm convinced that the carnal, cunning, conniving, crooked crooks that Jesus drove out of the Temple are still among us today. These modern day moneychangers are forever devising new and deceptive doctrines to defraud God's people out of His/their money. These masters of deceit have now set up their changing tables throughout the Christian television industry. I'm absolutely certain that if Jesus returned today He would walk into the vast majority of these television studios and overthrow the cameras, lights, monitors, and soundboards. He would unplug the microphones and scatter the makeup colors around as He went about destroying the stages and backdrops.”

~ *David Ravenhill*

“That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *that* will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.”

~ *Isaiah 30:9-10*

“A preacher who preaches the truth uncompromisingly will be asked, ‘Does your preaching always have to be so pointy? Does it always have to be so sharp?’ And of course the answer is no. He can blunt his message if he'd like and become just as dull as the average preacher.”

~ *Jesse Morrell*

~ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ~

I praise God for His great mercy, for reaching out to me, opening my eyes, convicting my heart, drawing me unto Himself, dying for my sins, and giving me newness of life. If it wasn't for the Lord and what He has done in my life, I'd likely be dead and in hell today. He bought me and brought me unto Himself and without Him I am less than nothing.

~ DEDICATION ~

This book is dedicated to my precious little children. You are such wonderful blessings from the Lord and I pray that my writings will be a great blessing to you in the future. Nothing could make me happier than to know that all of you grow up to love and serve the Lord with all of your hearts. I hope that these writings encourage and edify you in your walk with God.

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~ FORWARD ~

I first heard of Jesse Morrell back in the Spring of 2005. I had been open air preaching a few years and was regularly searching the internet to learn all I could on the subject. I found an article he had written where he had been arrested while preaching called, “Two Days and a Night in the Smith County Jail.” I immediately contacted him and we began corresponding. I have been following his ministry since then and our friendship has continued to grow.

As God has continued to bless his ministry he has continued to develop his many gifts. He is not only an effective open air preacher but also a gifted Bible teacher, writer, theologian, filmmaker, and disciple maker. Through all of this he has maintained an excellent humble spirit using his gifts, favor and influence not to exalt his own ministry but to help others in ministry for the purpose of advancing the kingdom of God.

I firmly believe “As the preacher goes so goes the church. As the church goes so goes the world.” The effectiveness of the church depends upon the preachers. E.M. Bounds said, “The glory and efficiency of the gospel is staked on the men who proclaim it.”¹ The closer to God the preacher is, the more thorough his consecration, the more Christ-like he is, the more prayerful he is, the more burdened he is, the more the Spirit of God can live and move and work through him, the more effective he will be and the greater impact his preaching will have. Before the temple could be a house of prayer where the Lord Jesus Christ

¹ Power through Prayer, Men of Prayer Needed.

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could dwell and manifest Himself to destroy the works of the devil it first had to be cleansed.

Written from personal experience on the front lines of battle in the furnace of affliction, Jesse Morrell lays the axe to the root of the tree getting to the heart of the matter. Excuses, difficulties, hindrances, and obstacles to the church making a biblical impact upon our culture are pinpointed and exposed. This is a voice crying in the wilderness, preparing the way of the Lord and making His paths straight. The valleys are filled, the mountains are brought low, the crooked places are made straight and the rough places are made smooth. Subjects such as heart issues facing the preacher, to the effects of false doctrine on the church, and difficulties reaching the lost are all dealt with. You will be challenged to examine yourself and stirred, encouraged and equipped to be more effective.

It is my prayer and belief this book will be used by God to purify and perfect His church to do the work of the ministry and raise up laborers for the harvest. It is packed with scripture, anecdotes, historical nuggets, personal examples and testimonies. It is not necessarily a devotional book but it will challenge you to seek the Lord. It is not necessarily a book on doctrine but it is full of sound doctrine and will make you want to read your Bible. It is not necessarily an open air training manual but will prepare you for open air ministry.

~ Micah Armstrong, 2016

~ PREFACE ~

What you hold in your hands is a compilation of articles that I wrote a few years after coming to Christ as a teenager. These were my very first writings for the Lord – my humble attempt at eloquent essays. The very first articles were, “*Time is Passing*,” “*Truth is Fallen in the Streets*,” “*Deserted to the Desert*,” and “*As in the Days of Noah*.” These were the initial articles and they continued from there.

I began writing these when I was eighteen years old in 2003. Some were written as late as 2006. It is now 2015 and I am thirty years old. I thought it is time to finally publish them together as a book for the benefit of the body of Christ.

Since this is a compilation book and I had no intention of writing a book when I wrote these individual articles, each chapter stands on its own. The chapters were not written with the previous or the subsequent chapter in mind. I organized these articles in a way that seemed to me to have the most logical flow. Some chapters, you will see, are longer or shorter than others. This is a book primarily about purity, prayer, preaching, and persecution.

When I first attempted to write for the Lord, it was like pulling teeth. I couldn’t write much at all. But I prayed and fasted and then one night I woke up and felt that I could write and write. I got up and sat down and began to write the articles in this book. The words were flowing out with ease and I haven’t been able to stop writing since. I know what it is like to have “the pen of a ready writer” (Ps. 45:1).

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Anything good that I wrote in this book I give all the credit and glory to God for. Any errors or mistakes are purely mine and I take full responsibility for them.

When I originally wrote these articles I published them individually through the internet. They circulated worldwide through my email newsletter along with the help of others like Andrew Strom and also Greg Gordon of Sermon Index. I am by no means a professional writer but I am a passionate writer. Even given my poor education, I was encouraged as a new writer by the feedback I received for these writing and my preaching.

Ron Luce, founder and President of Teen Mania Ministries, said, “You are very good with words.”

David Hasz, Director of the Honor Academy², said, “You speak with clarity and purpose.”

Ray Comfort, president of Living Waters said, “You write very well.”

Mark Spence, Dean of the School of Biblical Evangelism, said, “Ray [Comfort] gave me a handful of CD’s by you and insisted that I listen to them.”

Mark Cahill, author of *One Thing You Can’t Do In Heaven*, said, “You are a faithful man of God. You are one that Satan wants to knock off, to get off the hunt. It sounds like he picked the wrong man here!”

Winkie Pratney, author of *Youth Aflame* and *The Nature and Character of God* said, “I have followed your posts with interest and affection. You have done an excellent work summarizing much of what is central to proper Gospel responsibility.”

Andrew Strom, a writer and preacher, said these articles were “very powerful,” “classic,” and “well written.”

David Kirkwood, author of *The Disciple-Making Minister* and *The Great Gospel Deception*, said, “I’m sure others

² Dave Hasz went on to become the CEO of Teen Mania and then Executive Vice President of Bethany Global University.

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have told you, but you are a gifted writer and teacher. Keep up the good work.”

After I began to compile these articles into a manuscript for a book, I shared it with my friend Heath Stoner. At the time Heath was the Director of Student Leadership at Teen Mania’s Honor Academy. He said, “I can hear the call of God in every sentence I read. I hear an alarm sounding as the Titanic of Christianity is going down – false worship, sleepy eyes, and impotent lives.”

I feel that the Lord had given me an anointing in writing these articles as He has a message for the churches today.

I had submitted the manuscript to a couple of publishers in 2005 but it was turned down. I moved on to other things. I had gotten married, had three children, traveled and preached in the open-air on over 100 universities and colleges across the nation, and published other books like “The Natural Ability of Man: A Study on Free Will & Human Nature.” But I believe that the content of these articles are still for the church today and since the ability to publish is easier than ever, I humbly submit this book to the public’s eye for the good of your soul and the glory of Christ. It is my earnest prayer that the Lord will use this book for the advancement of His kingdom and the honor of His name.

~ INTRODUCTION ~

Cleansing is the need in this dark hour. Cleansing has been the need ever since sin entered into the world. We need the Lord to cleanse our hearts, cleanse our minds, and cleanse our lives. Our culture and our churches are in a desperate need of a mighty cleansing.

When the pollution of sin dirties our streets, we need a purging! When compromise and corruption are common place in the churches, we need a cleansing! And before anyone will cry out to God for deliverance their eyes must first be opened to their defilement.

I long to see a mighty army cleansed believers who are part of a cleansed church. I pray that this book will be used for that purpose. May the truths written in these pages be the occasion for many to examine their lives and their walks with God and cleanse whatever is necessary out of their lives and out of their churches that we might be holy and blameless without spot, wrinkle or blemish and useful vessels in the hands of the Lord.

God can only do a mighty work *through us* if we first allow Him to do a mighty work *in us*. Before we can bring cleansing power to the world, we must first cleanse ourselves by the fear and love of God.

“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared for every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21).

Section One
Cleansing the Christian

*“By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.”
King Solomon*

*“But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him,
which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I
say unto you, Fear him.” Jesus Christ*

Chapter One

Guilty as Charged: My testimony

It was another day in court. By now it had all become routine to me. There were shackles around my legs which made it hurt when I walked and a big chain around my waist which my wrists were cuffed to. Only one thought was going through my mind while I was sitting in the small room behind the court with all the other criminals. It was the same thought going through everyone's mind in that room: Will I be imprisoned or will I be released?

A woman went into the main room right outside the doorway of our holding room and was speaking to the guards. My name was mentioned in the quick conversation so I knew she had come for me. The guard called me out of the small room into the main room where I was greeted by Shannon, my probation officer. She took me into the hallway and explained to me how the court session was going to go.

At the age of fifteen everyone thinks they are invincible and that is exactly how I felt. She could tell by the expressions on my face that I was not taking this very seriously. Every time I had gone to court in the past nothing serious happened. I expected that it would be the same this time. Expressions soon changed as she continued to speak to me. Though I was going to court for violation of probation, since I had gotten into a fight which resulted in my neck being slit by a knife, she told me of new charges that were pending. It was for larceny in the first degree. And she said that since it would be my second felony (the first was when I assaulted an older kid with a glass beer bottle) I

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would be tried as an adult and would face five to ten years in prison.

As a fifteen year old kid thinking about five to ten years in prison, panic gripped my heart, disbelief entered my mind and tears started to form in my eyes. The guards lead me into the court room where my eyes glanced upon my mother who was nervously waiting for the court session to begin. It is a blessing when someone who lived the way I was living reaches rock bottom. Some never reach the point where enough is enough, so their lives continually get increasing worse. This was the first time I had reached the bottom. Devastation is the only way to describe it. How could I have been so blind to live so recklessly and now face five to ten years in prison? How is my mother going to handle this when she hears the news? How am I going to survive such a long time in a cell and maintain my sanity?

The entire court room knew what my emotions were as I entered. The tears must have given it away or maybe it was the fact that I couldn't even lift up his head to see the judge because of shame and remorse. Maybe the judge will see my broken spirit and be lenient. But receiving grace was an unrealistic fantasy. They all knew me as a very violent, drug addicted, felon. I knew doom was inevitable.

Prayers from a Cell

After the court hearing they brought me back to the Juvenal Detention Center on Whalley Avenue in New Haven Connecticut where I was placed in a cell.

It was here a few weeks earlier that I had heard a preacher that preached about sin and hell. I was not invited to his meeting in the lobby because I was in a fist fight a few days earlier and was not allowed out of my cell, but he was loud enough for me to hear. He shared his testimony of how he was a criminal locked up in prison and then Jesus Christ changed his life. He asked all the inmates there, "How many of you think you are going to heaven when you die?" I looked out my cell and saw that they all

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raised their hands. He then said, “That is such ignorance. You think you can live in sin and still go to heaven? Who then will go to hell?” His preaching was straightforward, fiery, bold and sincere. He didn’t even know I was there or that I was listening but under his preaching I came under serious conviction and realized for the first time in my life that I was going to hell for my sins. The Holy Spirit came into my cell and was heavily dealing with me. He opened my eyes and I saw how rotten I was and that I deserved to be the kindling of hell.

I had been roasting in the conviction from that experience for weeks now, still trying to sin but couldn’t do it with ease anymore. I knew I was in trouble with God. And now facing five to ten years in prison I saw how my sins were completely ruining my life and my eternity.

I expected to wait in that cell until my next court date. Prayer was my only resort. I knew that it would have to take the hand and power of God to get me out of this. I prayed that if God gets me out of this devastating situation, I will do everything that I am supposed to do. No longer would drug abusing and drug selling be a part of my life. No longer would I be involved with the people that I was involved with. Fights would not be a part of my life or anything else that my conscience warned me was wrong and displeasing to God. Everything would change if only God would somehow get me out of this.

The Spirit of God continued to work in my life and my eyes were opened to just how filthy and wrong my life was. I saw how horribly wrong I had been! How filthy I was! I saw my heart as extremely vile and polluted with iniquity. The Lord brought me to the point where I said to Him, “Lord, even if I have to spend five to ten years in prison, I am not going to live this way anymore. I can’t do it! I must serve you!” Even if I had to spend years in a prison full of sin, I did not want to live another second in such filth.

Due to a previous court case in which I had violated my probation multiple times by failing five drug tests (all four with

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marijuana and one with cocaine), I had been put on a waiting list for rehab. It was only a few weeks earlier when they had put me on the waiting list. All they were waiting for was an open bed.

After a little while of being locked up in the Detention Center I was transferred to a type of halfway house for a couple months and then was transferred to a rehab.

I had initially forgotten that I was on the waiting list for a rehab so when I was transferred I was surprised. So before I had my next court appearance I was transferred to a forty five day rehabilitation program.

Reborn in Rehab

While I was in rehab I learned everything I could about staying sober. As a teenager all that I knew was drugs. The word sober itself was from a foreign language. It wasn't part of my vocabulary because it wasn't part of my life.

One day in rehab I saw another patient sitting on a couch in the living area reading a big black book. I asked, "Is that a Bible?" She said, "Yes." I asked, "Can I borrow that sometime? To read it?" She said, "You want to read the Bible?" I was not the type that you would have thought would want anything to do with the Bible. My head was shaved like a skinhead, the scar on my neck was red and bulging, and my knuckles were broken and swollen from the constant fist fights. I remember overhearing other patients in the bathroom talking about who the scariest person in the rehab was. One man said, "Jesse Morrell. Have you seen his knuckles?" Another patient, during a group discussion, said, "We need to talk about Jesse's demons. He has demons." So this girl reading the Bible was very surprised that I would ask for it. But I was insistent and sincere. She let me borrow it and it changed my life.

At first I read about the priests sacrificing animals and spilling their blood upon the altar. I thought this was very strange and thought to myself, "Wow! I've never seen my priest do that! Do they do that after the Mass when we all leave? This must be

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a private event because I've never seen them sacrifice animals in my church."

There was a Christian counselor there that would minister to us, though this was not a Christian rehab. I talked to him about this and he explained to me that this was not talking about Catholic Priests but Levitical Priests and that it was the Old Covenant. Now that we have a New Covenant in which Christ shed His blood for us, he explained, we do not sacrifice animals anymore. He encouraged me to read the New Testament and so that is where I continued.

I read Jesus saying that you should love your enemies. That was so contrary to everything I knew in the world that I knew that was not from man but from God.³ And I read where Jesus said you must be born again. I was taught as a Catholic to stay away from "born-again Christians" but here Jesus preached that you must be born again.

I asked this Christian counselor many questions about the Bible and he was the first person to ever explain to me that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins, that through his sacrifice I could be saved and forgiven. He asked me, "Have you ever said the sinner's prayer?" I had never heard of such a thing but said, "No, but if anyone needs to say that prayer it is me." He explained to me what it was, that it was a prayer for forgiveness and the new birth. So I went into my room and prayed alone, crying out to God to forgive me of my sins through Jesus Christ and make me born again. It was a sincere prayer of intense desire for a new life and I was radically changed that day from the inside out! I had a new heart, a new mind and a new life! I had been cleansed and purged and washed clean from the inside out! I was wonderfully and marvelously born again by the Spirit of God.

³ I later read that Daniel Webster thought the same thing. He said, "The sermon on the mount cannot be merely a human production. – This belief enters into the very depth of my conscience. – The whole history of man proves it." The New Dictionary of Thoughts, 1971, P. 241

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Other counselors in the rehab noticed the difference. They were not Christians so they were the first people I ever witnessed to. They said, "Jesse, there is something different about you." I said, "I've been born again." They said, "We can tell. Don't take this personally, but when you first arrived here at the rehab there was like a very dark and scary presence about you. We saw your writings and they looked very disturbed. But now, it is like your face and your eyes are glowing!" I said, "Yes, I am a new man. Jesus Christ has changed my life!" They said, "You are not the same man that first came in here."

I continued the program and then my forty five days were up. I was released from rehab on a "promise to appear" in court. My first day out I went to a church service, to start my new life out right. But I knew it wasn't be too long before I would be in court again and I was worried about the new larceny charge and the possibility of facing five to ten years in prison.

Eventually that day arrived. It was early in the morning when my mother and I went to the court house. The guards and the public defender were standing by the metal detectors. As my mother and I walked into the building we saw the public defender speaking to the guards. They were laughing and smiling. I thought to myself, "This is a very serious day for me and they are laughing and smiling?" It didn't seem right.

As I started to empty my pockets to go through the metal detectors my public defender said, "You don't have to do that." Assuming that he couldn't have been speaking to me I continued to empty my pockets. Then the defender gently grabbed my arm and said "You don't have to do that, you can turn around and go home right now." I was shocked. What did he mean I could turn around and go home? It was only about three months earlier that my probation officer told me that I would be facing 5-10 years for a possible second felony.

That's when my mother stepped up and said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "I already went and talked to the judge and the prosecutor. They have agreed to drop everything."

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I was in disbelief. My mother said, “What about probation?” He said, “No more probation. No more drug tests. No more court dates.” He looked at me and said, “You are a completely free man. Now go and live your life.”

The Lord has answered my prayer and He did much more than that. He saved me from prison in this world and prison in the next. He reached out to me, opened my eyes, convicted my heart, died for my sins, ministered to me the gospel, brought me to repentance, and gave me newness of life. And I have never been the same since.

The change in my life was very drastic and very deep. I joined a local church and the youth group and after studying the Bible at youth group we would all go back to my mother’s house to study the Bible even more. It used to be that I would sit with friends in my house when my mother was away to do drugs and alcohol. Now I was bringing friends home to study the Bible and pray and worship!

One day after youth group I was driving with some friends back to my house for more bible study. My friend Gary was driving and his black car looked suspicious with tinted windows and chrome rims so he was often pulled over. On the way from the church to my house Gary was pulled over.

The Officer asked him, “Where are you going?”

Gary said, “To my friends house for a Bible study.”

The Officer said, “Who is your friend?”

Gary said, “Jesse Morrell.”

The Officer said, “Jesse Morrell is your friend?”

Gary said, “Yes. He’s sitting in the back seat right now.”

The Officer then put his head in the window and looked back at me sitting there with my Bible. He said, “Jesse Morrell!” I said, “Hello” awkwardly. He said, “You don’t know me, but when I was a rookie on the force the first person in town that they briefed me about was you. They said that you were the worse criminal in town. In all my life I have never seen anyone turn

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their life around like you have. Whatever you are doing, keep it up.” I was able to witness to him and testified, “The Lord has changed my life. I have been born again.”

What About You?

Do you see how I didn't take my charges seriously until I realized how serious the punishment was? I was continually breaking the law but never received any serious punishment so I didn't take the law seriously. Maybe you are just like I was except with Gods law. Maybe you're continually breaking Gods holy law. Maybe you are living in sin and aren't taking it seriously because nothing too serious has happened yet. God promises that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment" (Heb. 9:27). You may be living in sin now and are not taking Gods law seriously, but Judgment Day is coming. Remember this and think soberly and seriously about it: you too will have your day in court. Once judgment is passed on that great and terrible day there will be no appeals. You can't have your charges dropped on that day. You can't have a fancy lawyer for yourself but rather you yourself will give an account to God. Be sure about it, you will give an account “in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16).

How do you know if you should be worried about giving God an account? You might be thinking to yourself, “Well that's fine, I will tell God all the good things I've ever done.” God says that even your “righteousness is as filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6), until you get a new heart with pure motives. When God looks at your life tell me, what is He going to see? Remember that nothing is hidden from His eyes. Every deed done in darkness will be brought to light. Have you any secret sins that you wouldn't want God to see?

The 10 Commandments will be there on that day. Have you ever told a lie? Have you ever used God's name in vain? Have you ever stolen anything? Did you know that Jesus said that

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if you look at another person to lust then you commit adultery? Have you ever done that? If you have then you're a lying, blaspheming, stealing, adulterer at heart who is in big trouble when you die and stand before God.

The Bible says, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived" (1 Corinthians 6:9). The Apostle says "do not be deceived" because deception on this point is possible. Many who are living unrighteous think they will go to heaven when they die. But as sure as God is good, they will not.

Get honest with yourself and admit that you have "fallen short of the glory of God." "The wages of sin is death" God warns us. Well what sin? All sin, no matter if it is big or small in our eyes. Is not all sin rebellion against God who deserves our complete obedience to his Kingship? All sin leads to damnation. It does not matter who you are, if you have ever sinned against God then you deserve to go to hell. The punishment for sinning against the King of kings is eternal death - a never ending execution. In hell you will be an ever dying soul in an ever burning flame!

Just like me, you deserve the wrath of God. It doesn't matter if you're a janitor or if you're a politician. It doesn't matter if you are rich or if you are poor. You deserve hell for your sins. Even your socially descent good works, done for selfish reasons, are sins – sins for which you deserve hell. But let me say this: I don't care who you are, if you have sinned against God, you could be pardoned of all of it and restored back to God!

Two thousand years ago Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born of a virgin and lived a sinless so that He could be the "unspotted Lamb" to "take away the sin of the world." He provided an atonement to substitute our damnation. He suffered on the cross so that you don't have to suffer in hell. Every bit of wrath that you're sinning stored up for yourself, through Christ, can be remitted by God's grace and mercy. It was prophesied, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruise for our

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iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). Get honest and admit that “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

Through Christ God offers you a full pardon for your crimes. If you will turn from your sins and turn to Christ, God will turn away from His wrath and anger that He has against you for your sinning. If you have never turned away and forsaken your sins before then you need to do that right now. Tomorrow is not promised but Judgment Day is, so get right with God today. Jesus said that you need to be “born again” in order to see the Kingdom of God. If you turn away from your rebellion against God and trust in Christ as your Lord and Savior, God will grant you the free gift of everlasting life by His grace and mercy. The greatest gift you could ever receive is eternal life and the greatest gift you could ever reject is the mercy of God. Don’t be foolish with your soul. It is the most valuable thing that you possess – so valuable that Christ paid the price of His own precious blood to redeem it from eternal damnation.

The best thing that ever happened to me was when my life was the worst and I hit rock bottom, as I then sought the Lord. How long does sin have to ruin your life and bring your soul closer and closer to damnation before you will open your eyes and turn to the Lord?

If Jesus Christ can cleanse me, surely He can cleanse anyone who cries out to Him! If you have sins in your life today, repent and cry out to God for cleansing! Christ gave His life for you, now you ought to give your life to Him.

GUILTY AS CHARGED

Guilty as Charged

The guilt of sin had seized my conscience,
My defense was gone, I had no reliance.
But it's when you're stripped that the Lord can clothe,
With the blood of Christ, the Messiah foretold.

This covering for sin is offered to you.
The judgment is coming so what will you do?
Flee to Christ and find His protection,
Be transformed by His Spirit, moving on to perfection.

Since the Lord can save me
He can surely save you.
Although many are called
The chosen are few.

"The Gospel does not save whom it does not sanctify."

Charles Finney

Chapter Two

Working Faith: A Faith that Works

Faith - has anything been doubted more severely and has anything been more passionately believed? Throughout time kings have tried to slay it, politicians have tried to outlaw it, mobs have tried to beat it, and yet it's alive and well today! The strongest force in the world is faith. Faith calms the storm and walks on water. It has humbled the intellectual and has enlightened the uneducated. Faith stands tall on its feet in strength when mighty empires crumble and fall to their knees. Though faith seems like foolishness to a foolish world, faith has overcome the world when all else has succumbed to it (1 John 5:4).

We live in an era of complacent Christian living. Complacency is rotting the very bones of the Church. Men desire to have the least amount of responsibility towards Christ and yet receive the most amounts of rewards from Christ. As weeds are to a field so are the unfruitful to the Church (Matthew 13:24-43). The attitude and message today is "believe and receive" while the biblical message has always been "repent and believe" (Mark 1:15).

I had a recent talk with a pastor who told me about a conversation he had with one of his church members. Their conversation was regarding the relationship between believing and repenting, and the responsibility the lost has of doing both of those. "All the lost has to do is confess and believe. That's it. If they confess and believe they will be saved," a lady insisted. I found the pastors response to be very wise. "Yes, I completely

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agree. All someone has to do is confess and believe and they will be saved (Romans 10:9). But now we must define what ‘believe’ means” as he explained that true faith is always accompanied by action.

The Bible says, “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed God; and when out, not knowing whither he went” (Heb. 11:8). Notice it says, “By faith Abraham obeyed God.” There are many today who are claiming to be justified by faith like Abraham was when they are not obedient by faith like Abraham was. If you do not have Abrahamic obedience then you do not have Abrahamic faith and consequently you do not have Abrahamic justification. Are you willing to leave all to follow where God leads? Are you willing to offer up your Isaac upon the altar? That is the type of faith that God imputed as righteousness.

Joseph Alleine said, “the unsanctified are unjustified and unpardoned.”⁴

You can be sure of this: A faith that does not sanctify is a faith that does not justify. Just as the Bible speaks of being “justified by faith” (Rom. 5:1), it just as equally talks about being “sanctified by faith” (Acts 26:18). A man whose faith does not cleanse him from the practice of sin is a man whose faith does not save him from the penalty of his sin. True faith does not merely bring a covering for our sins but also a mighty cleansing from our sins!

Saving faith entails and includes much more than many are willing to admit. A backslidden compromised church has to lower the standard and minimize the fruits and effects of faith. It is a common thought and message today that repentance is not necessary for salvation because you’d be “adding works to faith”. While it is faith that saves us and not any “good” work, I don’t

⁴ An Alarm to Unconverted Sinners, published by the America Tract Society, P. 114

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see how you can separate faith from works. Or how can you separate faith from repentance? What is one without the other? Repentance without faith is not real repentance and faith without repentance is not real faith.

Faith that works is truly a working faith. Real faith is an active faith. A faith that moves mountains is far from being idle! Faith that is real is violently forceful spiritually and aggressively active physically. We do not need to add works to faith because they should already be there.

If a man desperately needs a car and he hears over the radio that a certain car dealership is giving away all their cars for free, yet he doesn't act, we would all safely conclude that he had no faith. He must not have trusted the offer. Had he trusted it, he would have found his way to the dealership even if he had to run to it. Likewise when a man hears the claims of salvation and says "Oh I believe all that" yet he is not willing to leave his sin for the Savior and serve Him, it can be safely concluded that he had no faith. He does not trust the gospel!

Under the disguise of not wanting to "*add*" works to faith many have actually "*subtracted*" works from their lives. You cannot remove works from faith anymore then you could remove moister from water. What good is a perfume without a fragrance or without a scent? And what good is inward faith that does not produce outward acts of love and charity? "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2).

We are justified by a living faith that works, not by the dead disobedient faith of devils. "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!" (James 2:19). Our faith, meaning our trust in God and confidence in His Word, ought to cause us to be willing to do anything that He asks and commands of us. Our faith in God makes us willing and wanting to serve Him because of who He is, what He has done, and what He is going to do! Any lack of obedience towards God is a reflection of a lack of confidence in Him!

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How many professing Christians are there today who are nothing more than “statue” Christians. They look good, even as good as a statue, but do absolutely nothing except sit and stand idly all day long? In essence many preachers ultimately teach “you can have your sin, you can live entirely for yourself, and you can get to heaven at the end of your life as well”! This is appalling to a God who is worthy of all the fruit we could possibly bear to Him. God will destroy the fig tree if He comes to it at a time when it has no fruit (Matt 21:19). Works is the expression of a living active faith. Works are the branches that spring up from the roots of faith. I asked a brother recently, “If you saw a tree without any branches or leaves what would you think of it?” Without a moment’s hesitation he simply said “Dead”. A tree without branches and leaves is a dead tree! “But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (James 2:20). “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26).

T. T. Eaton wrote in his 1906 publication “Faith and the Faith” that “The relationship between faith and works is the relationship between doing and deeds. To say: ‘show me thy faith without thy works and I will show thee my faith by my works (James 2:18),’ is equivalent to saying – show me thy doing without thy deeds and I will show thee my doings by my deeds. Of course there can be no doing without deeds and no deeds without doing.”⁵

He went on to write, “New Testament faith is far more than the mere acceptance of certain teaching. Faith is more than believing. A man might believe everything in the Bible, from lid to lid, and still be lost. Gospel faith is a heart trust in Christ as Savior and Lord, the heart including the will, so that actions follow. Faith is not passive. It is the doing. Christian faith

⁵ T. T. Eaton “Faith and the Faith” copyright 1906, Fleming H. Revell Company, p.10

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involves turning from sin to God, surrendering the will to Christ, and throwing one's whole power into His service."⁶

What student and believer in the Word can genuinely deny that a faithful man must work in light of the Scriptures? Was John Baptist out of line when he said "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Matt 3:8)? Did Christ intend to have a stagnate Church when he said "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven"? (Mt 5:16). Will a Christian be judged by his faith or by his works? You are saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9), but you are judged and rewarded by your works! (2 Cor 5:10, 1 Pet. 1:17, Rev. 2:23). Our attitude must be that of our Lord Himself who said "I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day" (John 9:4)

A couple hundred years ago the old Methodists would sing a hymn which would do us some good if we learn it today. The fifth stanza sums it up plainly and painfully. May this be our prayer!

"Lord, shall we live so sluggish still,
And never act our part?
Come, Holy Dove, from the' heavenly hill,
And warm our frozen hearts!"⁷

While the questions of a child are innumerable - the value of their answers at time are equally immeasurable. Children have a way of educating adults sometimes. As a family returned home from church, the child asked, "Mommy, the preacher said that God lives inside of us. Is that true?" The mother with a smile responded, "Yes dear, God lives inside of us." With a look of confusion on the child's face he asked, "Isn't God bigger than us?" "Yes, God is bigger than us" the mother said. After some

⁶ Ibid, p.35

⁷ Methodist Hymns published by Swormstedt & Poe, 1857 edition, stanza 5 of "Unfaithfulness Mourned," p.507.

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quick thoughts the child said, “Then, wouldn’t He show through?”

When God is living *in* you God will be working *through* you. And likewise, when faith in God is *in* your heart faithfulness *to* God will be seen in your actions. True faith cannot help but to work. If it fails to work it fails to be living faith. A Christian cannot help but to bear fruit to His Lord so long as he has living faith. If He fails to serve, He fails to be a servant. A mirror cannot help but to reflect. That is just what it does. We are to be mirror images of the Christ who served and loved God by serving and loving men. “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor 13:18).

Moses was a man who was a friend of God, who walked with God, and had been in God’s presence so much that his face brightly shined and needed to be veiled. As one preacher once said, “When Moses left nobody knew where he went, but when he returned everyone knew where he had been.”

God must shine through or God is not there. A bush that doesn’t burn does not have God. The Christian must shine with “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22-23) or the Spirit of God is not in him. There are many veiled faces and mute mouths today. We’ve played the fool and have put our lamps under the bed (Mark 4:21). It’s time that our light shines through to brighten this dark world. It’s time that we allow our faith to flow out so that it can flood and fill this dry land!

The Hall of Fame of Heavens Hero’s, Hebrews chapter eleven, describes to our shame the tremendous works of faith God has done through men. Their faith was always accompanied by works. It says, “who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned

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to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.” (Heb 11:33-35). The works of faith are not meager but mighty! They are not sparse, scarce, or skimpy! They are amazing and abundant! Especially notice it says "through faith... worked righteousness..." Righteous works will proceed from biblical faith. Where there are no righteous works there is no biblical faith.

Faith conquers the world, the flesh and the devil! Men of greatest faith will do the greatest works! A faithful church will be a world changing church. The men who have done the greatest good to all of mankind have all had faith which was faithfully married to works. Never ever should a preacher divorce biblical works from biblical faith. Our great need today calls for great works of faith.

Let me give a final warning in ending. Just as surely as faith without works is dead, so also works without faith is dead. Men try to use works to bring the assurance which doubt holds captive. There is a type of works which flows from a loving heart of faith, and then there is works created to fill the void of non existing faith. Many do not have the assurance of salvation by grace through faith. They feel they must perform certain duties and works in an attempt to secure their salvation and to feel saved. These are not faithful works because they do not proceed from saving faith.

Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matt 7:21-23).

What a frightful day it will be for those at the judgment who start boastfully spouting off all their works when they ought

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to be thanking Christ for the cross! They will expect their deeds to be the keys which open up the gates of Heaven. How shocking it will be when those expecting life receive death. The staff of good works for salvation is a weak one. It will one day break and those leaning on it will be pierced by the very thing they thought would save them. These men haven't faith, meaning they haven't trust or confidence in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They trust in themselves and in their works to save their guilty souls, not knowing they are adding to their guilt. These men are not known by the Lord, but "He knows those who trust in Him." (Nahum 1:7).

The Judgment Day will be "great and very terrible" (Joel 2:11) for those who have faith without works and for those who have works without faith. Therefore, may your faith be full of works and may your works be full of faith that we may all be faithful workers to the Lord!

*“Smart men walked on the moon, daring men walked on
the ocean floor, but wise men walk with God.”*

Leonard Ravenhill

*“The man who would truly know God
must give time to Him.” A. W. Tozer*

Chapter Three

Walking with God

“Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.” Genesis 5:24

Never has there been more said about a man than this one single sentence. There have been great men of history who have thousands of pages of biography written in volume sets about their unmatched achievements, yet none of them say nearly as much as this simple verse about the man Enoch.

If great men such as Caesar with his mighty empire, Michelangelo with his angelic paintings, Shakespeare with his master-piece plays, Beethoven with his splendid symphonies, failed to walk with God, their lives appear as lives well wasted when compared to the greatness of walking with God. Glorious lives appear as tragic lives when measured by this true test of greatness. Some of the men that the earth praises for their genius the Heavens frown upon for their foolishness.

If the verse said, “Enoch conquered the entire world” or “Enoch had more riches and more wisdom than any other man,” it would be saying far less and would drastically pale in comparison to the magnificent fact that “Enoch walked with God.”

In all of life there is nothing greater than the Almighty God. Therefore, can there be anything greater that man can do than to walk and live with his God? Men seek after power, privilege, pleasure, and possessions, yet the vanity of all these

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things, even combined all at once, is manifested when one comes to an understanding of the greatness of God.

When a man comes to understand the greatness and worth of God he will decide that all else is dung compared to knowing Him and walking with Him (Philippians 3:8). When a man comes to understand the greatness and worth of God he will leave all to follow after Him (Matthew 4:19-20). When a man comes to understand the greatness and worth of God he would sell all that he had if it meant gaining Him (Matthew 13:46). When a man comes to understand the greatness and worth of God he would be willing to not only deny himself every day, but would be willing even to die on a cross the most painful death of crucifixion rather than to live a life apart from Him (Mark 8:34). Since there is nothing and no one greater than God, why seek after anything or anyone more than you seek after God?

The greatest blessing *from* the Lord is the blessing *of* the Lord. The richest man in the world is not a business man with billions of dollars, but a Christian man with a relationship with God. He is poor and destitute indeed who does not have God. When a man comes to realize this reality of God, seeing Him in the truth of His wonder and worth, he will desire no richer portion or cry out for any finer inheritance than the Lord Himself. “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup” (Psalms 16:5). “The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him” (Lam. 3:24). For a man who knows this truth, there is no higher Heaven than the presence of God and no deeper hell than the absence of Him.

“Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.”⁸

⁸ From the English Methodist Version of “Be Thou My Vision” 1964

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A life lived apart from God is a life lived in desolation, death and darkness. But a life lived in the presence of God far exceeds a life anywhere else. We sing in church that marvelous Psalms 84:10, that one day in God's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. But if we lived the way that we sing how wonderfully different our lives would be!

Since it is true that sin separates men from God, it is necessarily and equally true that for men to be with God they must separate themselves from sin. The Bible says, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully". (Psalms 24:3-4). And Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). Sin will either separate you from God eternally or temporarily, depending on whether or not you become separated from sin. If your separation from sin is eternal, so will your relationship with God be. But if your separation from sin be temporal, so also will your relationship with God be. You must guard your soul from the commission of sin because nothing is surer to interrupt your communion with God – which is eternal life (John 17:3). A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands is the mark of a man who will live a life of poverty, both physically and spiritually.

Every man is either at enmity with God through sin or at enmity with sin through God. Either sin will make you the enemy of God or God will make you an enemy of sin. There can be no friendship with God while you are in friendship with sin. To be friends with the one is to be at war with the other (Romans 8:7, James 4:4). To walk with God, you must be at war with sin.

Even Charles Spurgeon said, "You must be divorced from your sin, or you cannot be married to Christ."⁹

The prophet said, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from

⁹ Essential Works of Charles Spurgeon

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you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:2). To have true fellowship with God, you must have no fellowship with sin. There is a real connection between Noah being “a just man and perfect in his generation” and the rest of the sentence which says “and Noah walked with God.” You cannot walk with God and walk with sin at the same time! God does not walk the pathway of perversion but the highway of holiness! There can be no communion with God without first cleansing from sin. “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 Jn. 2:3-4).

In the life that God has given us, we all have the same amount of hours in a day. In all that God has given us, how much of it do we give back to Him? Christian, how much of your life is spent, not necessarily on blatant sin, but on subtle self? Family entertainment has replaced the family altar. All sorts of silliness have replaced serious study. Personal pleasure has replaced personal prayer. Playtime has replaced prayer time. Careless downtime has replaced Christian devotional time. How much of your life is structured to serve yourself rather than to serve and be intimate with God?

In all that there is, there is nothing greater than God. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world yet does not possess intimacy with the Lord? Oh what a treasure he passes over! What riches he trades for dirt! What wealth he forfeits for folly! Examine your life. Examine your time. Examine your habits. Examine your desires. “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:2). If you set your affections on earthly things you will live nothing more than an earthly life. But if you set your affections on heavenly things you will live a heavenly life.

When you are old and dying reflecting back on the years you have lived, will your memories be haunted with idle play and wasted time or will your memories be blessed with deep, passionate, intimacy with God? The choice is daily yours.

“The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized during the lifetime of the opportunity.” Leonard Ravenhill

“When you kill time, remember that it has no resurrection.” A. W. Tozer

Chapter Four

Time is Passing

The clocks are ever reminding us of the fading time. Every tick of the clock is a tick off your life no matter how you spent that second. Every passing second is simply the countdown to Judgment Day. We try to hold on to time and preserve our lives but the truth remains the same, "Heaven and earth will pass away" (Matt 24:35). Summer seems to last forever when you're a child. The days seem like weeks, weeks seem like months, and months seem like years. In due time we come to the realization that there is a season for everything. And the season of summer must come to an end. In the eyes of many today life seems to be a never ending summer, at least they live as though it was. But all things must come to an end, even good things.

Time is quickly fading into eternity whether we realize it or not. Our belief or lack of belief in this truth does not alter or change reality, although it changes the way we live our lives. It is just like a thief who will try to rob your house. Whether you notice him or not, he is still there. In fact it is because you do not notice him that he is there to steal. There are blinders on the eyes of many people today. These eye blinders keep people from seeing the reality of the time passing, passing, passing away right before their very own eyes. The thought that our lives will one day end may be in the back of our minds, but the truth of it is right before our eyes. Our eyes need to be opened to this truth. People are perishing through lack of vision.

Life and death are a prevalent part of life. It is something we learn from a very early age. As much as we don't like to think

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about it, we can't help but to see it. Don't you see your life passing? Are you awake in reality or do you slumber in your fantasy? Do you see time falling between your fingers like sand falls through the hands of a man at the beach? It's passing and passing and no matter how strong and hard you close your fingers around it, it still seems to fall between your fingers just the same. "Now my days are swifter than a runner; they flee away" (Job 9:25). One second you see a runner and the next second he's gone. Our lives are here and then they are gone. Not only is time passing, but it's passing quickly – swifter than the swiftest runner.

Every day, heaven and earth is passing away. We don't hear it enough. This serious truth is seldom taught. The life that we now live will come to an end. "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14). No matter how long you live here in this world, it is only "a little time." Your time here is limited. Make it count. You have one shot at this. We may have hopes of a long life, but so did everyone who has died young.

When I preach in the open air in the inner cities, I often tell people that the large sky scrapers they see every day are nothing more than fancy sand castles. Yes they are enormous and impressive, but they will not last. The wind and waves of time are going to come and these sand castles will be no more.

The Roman Empire was one of the greatest empires in all of history, but it is no more. Their great buildings have been destroyed and their empire lay desolate. Only crumbling ruins remain.

Our lives are also coming to an end, but not only our lives but all of time. Our priorities change when we come to the realization that "at the appointed time the end shall be." (Dan. 8:19). The values of the man on his death bed quickly change from the values he had in his health. Because our lives will one day be over, how should we live now?

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Are You the Owner of Time?

Great deals of people, young and old, live entirely for themselves. I know church-goers who will adamantly testify and claim that they are saved, however they don't really have any apparent desire to do anything for the Lord. When you become a Christian, not only are you converted and cleansed, but you also taken captive. The Lord converts you from your sins, cleanses you of your selfishness, and then captivates your time and interests.

In order to be in the Kingdom of God you must submit to the King. We have been bought at a price and therefore we are no longer our own. If we were our own then we could make our own decisions and plans. We could spend our money however we wanted, we could sleep as much as we wanted, we could hang out with whoever we wanted, we could spend all of our time however our hearts desired. Let me tell you plainly, this is not a Christian practice. Christianity is not selfish but selfless. We are not servants of sin but servants of Him. A disciple that is not disciplined is not a disciple at all. A captive who is free to do as he likes is no captive at all. We are now longer our own so how can we possibly make our own decisions? God has either all of you or he has none of you. You can't give Him your sins and not give him yourself. He won't save you for eternity and not take your time here on earth. We must all "come to know that Heaven rules" and not we ourselves. (Dan. 4:26)

Certain questions must arise in our minds when we think upon the Lordship of Christ. What was the purpose for which He bought me? Since my time is really His time, how does He want me to spend it? Why has God given me my time? He is an eternal being and His desires are focused on eternity. There are countless ways you could spend your time, but just because you *spent* it doesn't mean you truly *bought* anything at all. Time is the easiest thing to squander and waste on nothing. Use your discernment. Ask yourself, "Are the things I'm doing today really going to matter outside of today?"

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Millions of things and people want to steal your time. We know that one of the things Satan does is steal. He doesn't have to cause you to sin to steal your time. With all the television programs, movies, music, video games, and countless recreational activities he can very easily steal your time. Satan would love for Christians to do nothing more than give into folly and spend their time on vanity. If our lives do not matter for eternity then our lives don't matter to the devil at all. Is it any wonder there are so much recreation and entertainment in the church? It is sinister. Some churches have no libraries but they have basket ball courts, video arcades, etc! They've become recreational parks in the community. Of course it is tried to be justified by saying it is "for the youth group." These poor kids have the world offering them the very same things! Can't the church offer them anything with any real eternal significance or is it simply trying to match the worldliness that they can find in the mall?

Charles G. Finney said, "No amusement can be innocent that involves the squandering of precious time, that might be better employed to the glory of God and the good of man. Life is short. Time is precious. We have but one life to live. Much is to be done. The world is in darkness. A world of sinners are to be enlightened, and if possible, saved. We are required to work while the day lasts. Our commission and work require dispatch. No time is to be lost. If our hearts are right, our work is pleasant. If rightly performed, it affords the highest enjoyment and is itself the highest amusement. No turning aside for amusement can be innocent that involves any unnecessary loss of time. No man who realizes the greatness of the work to be done, and loves to do it, can turn aside for any amusement involving an unnecessary waste of time."¹⁰

This much is without question - your time will be used for something. You can use your time wisely or foolishly. You

¹⁰ "Power from on High" by Charles G. Finney, p. 76

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could use your time for good or for evil. You could use your time for yourself or for God. Either way you will end up using your time. But remember that if your time is not spent for God then it is spent for the devil.

You might think, "Isn't that a little bit extreme?" You bet it is! The Holy Spirit gets excited at the talk of radical service to God. It is far better to overdo it then to under do it as far as Christianity is concerned. So all you have to do in order to serve the devil is simply to do nothing for God. "Folly is joy to him who is destitute of discernment, but a man of understanding walks uprightly." (Prov. 15:21) Fools take pleasure in folly. How can we take pleasure in that which is vain? A wise man is joyful in his labors for Christ. Our labors for His Kingdom are eternal.

It's not hard to look around and see fools doing foolish things. Folly is everywhere calling out to you in its manipulative subtly. "Folly is set in great dignity" (Ecc. 10:6). This is the manipulative subtly of folly! It is deceptive and very easily deceives the simple minded. It looks great and that's its pull on our flesh but it's not great at all. In fact it's worthless. It looks appealing to us but it is really appalling to God.

We are the field of God which He desires to reap a harvest from (1 Cor. 3:9). God calls us to bear fruit worthy of our repentance. The fruit that God desires is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22). Any and all harvests require work - hard work. We must allow God to work on us and that is why we must give Him our time. We must give ourselves entirely to Him and His will and therefore allow God to move in us, through us, and even because of us.

Make Your Time Count

If you observe the actions of a man you can learn the thoughts of that man. The way a man spends his money reveals the true desires of his heart. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21). And you know who a man

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truly is by how he spends his free time. In fact, nothing is a surer manifestation of a person's character than that.

Does your life give testimony to eternity? Do you live today as though there will be no tomorrow? The way you spend your time reveals what it is you value. If an unsaved person looked at the way you spend your time, would he see anything different than his own life besides maybe an hour on Sunday?

Look at your life. What are you doing with it? "What is your life?" Can you say that the things you are doing are eternally important and significant? If your life is not eternally significant then it is irrelevant. Anyone can say they love the Lord, but not everybody shows that they really do. A man who claims to love fishing and yet chooses not to fish on his free time obviously does not value it like he claims. Likewise, the man who claims to love Christ and yet chooses not to spend his free time with Him and serving Him obviously does not love that Lord as he claims.

As I walk through some of these old cemeteries in the world my heart is always burdened. Does anyone who is still alive have any idea who these people were? Have they been completely forgotten in time now that they are in eternity? Did they make an impact with the one life that they were given? Did they really understand that one day someone like me would be staring at their name on their grave?

We should be deeply humbled when we hear about what David Brainerd was able to accomplish in his only eight short years of his Christian life. He lived a more full life in his eight years of being a Christian than many men do in their entire lives professing to follow Christ. He served as a missionary, labored fervently in prayer and fasting, and saw great moves of the Spirit of God. This man knew how to spend his time. So what will others say about you after you have been gone? Once all the friends and family that know you are dead, will anyone know who you are or will you be just another grave in just another cemetery? What will be the legacy that you leave behind? This is something not everybody considers. Your life can really make

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a difference. You could actually use your life to change the lives of others. Cleanse your schedule from all follies and vanities. Cleanse your calendar from useless and worthless activities! Consecrate your time for the service of God in order to make an eternal impact.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne said, "Oh! Brethren, be wise. 'Why stand ye all the day idle?' In a little moment it will be all over. A little while and the day of grace will be over-preaching, praying will be done. A little while, and we shall stand before the great white throne-a little while, and the wicked shall not be; we shall see them going away into everlasting punishment. A little while, and the work of eternity shall be begun. We shall be like Him-we shall see Him day and night in His temple-we shall sing the new song, without sin and without weariness, forever and ever."¹¹

He also said, "What right have I to steal and abuse my Masters time?"¹²

In just a little while and time will have passed. Heaven and earth are passing away. God wants a people who will have the same mindset as Robert Murray M'Cheyne. Imagine the possibilities of what your life could be. What if "giving your life to Jesus" actually meant that you lived your life for Him? Open your ears and listen to the ticks of the clocks. They refuse to slow down for us. TICK, TICK, TICK! What are you doing with those precious moments that you can never get back?

You don't have to be a "great" person to do great things for God. God is great and when you yield to Him all that you have, He can do great things through you. Even if you're as normal and plain as anyone, you can still do exceptional and amazing labors for God with your life.

The most powerful weapon the Christian has is prayer. The most powerful weapon also seems to be the most neglected

¹¹ "Robert Murray M'Cheyne" by Andrew Bonar, p. 6

¹² Ibid, p. 20

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unless it is put in faithful hands. Pray changes lives. Prayer alters the course of history. Great men of God like John Wesley, George Whitfield, David Brainerd, were all men who changed history because they were all men of great prayer. Jesus was a praying man and who has had a greater impact in this world than Him? It is the private prayers of the saints and not the public ministries of the showmen that truly change lives. No hour is wasted that is spent in prayer. A life of prayer is a life well spent.

There is no such thing as too much prayer. However there is such a thing as not enough prayer. We can sometimes get into the mentality that we are not being productive when we pray. Prayer is just like farming. It's very hard work and you don't always see immediate fruit. Harvest time is not every day. Sometimes when we try to pray many other things enter into our minds to distract us as we are about to start and these things are always petty and little compared to how important and impacting it is to commune with God. The mentality that praying time is wasting time has to go. Paul exhorts us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17). It must be of supreme importance to merit such a command! Therefore, praying time is not wasting time but rather it is making the most of it. Time spent not praying is wasted time. If you want to live a life that truly matters, you must have a life of intercession.

It's personally a great relief to me to know that Jesus choose the simple men of the time to start his church. They were fishermen and tax collectors but God was able to change the world through them! Ron Luce said "anyone who is willing has the potential to change the world."¹³

The Bible tells us to "be still and know that I am God". (Ps 46:10) It is when we are still that God moves. When we stop trusting in ourselves and our own abilities and learn to trust in Christ and Christ alone that we can see the power of God. If you trust in your own power then that is all you're going to get.

¹³ "Mark of a World Changer" by Ron Luce. Pg 3

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Duncan Campbell said, "When man comes to the end of himself – to the end of all human resources – he has reached the beginning of God."¹⁴

Prayer is in and of itself a humble recognition of our insufficiency, inability and dependency. And it is only when we recognize such things that we get to the point where God can really use us. We must allow God to move through us to reach this generation of lost souls while we still have time.

The wisest man that ever lived said, "He who wins souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30). Therefore, it's the fools who do not. The fools love folly, the wise win souls. Nothing has more of an eternal impact than soul winning. Nothing could possibly determine a person's destiny more so than saving souls. And it is through prayer and outreach that we reach souls. It may seem old fashion but there are no other ways. If we really want our lives to count, if we really want to love others, if we really want to win for the lamb the reward of His sufferings, then we must labor to win souls. Living out biblical Christianity is reaching out to the lost world with the gospel of Christ.

The Apostle Paul said, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). It is only the labor that is for the Lord that is not in vain, therefore let us always be abounding in them. What will you do with the simple knowledge that time is passing? My prayer is that with this knowledge you will cleanse yourself and "not turn back to folly." (Ps 85:8)

¹⁴ The Price and Power of Revival: Lessons from the Hebrides Revival, p. 59

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Time is Passing Away

The end is closer than ever before,
But we have more amusement, entertainment galore.
It's subtly is deceitful, so it steals away.
We're spending our time neglecting to pray.

Oh God open our eyes to this trap and this snare.
The truth of all this please help us to bear.
The Church sleeps away in its pleasure and blindness,
Correct us today with your gentle kindness.

Lord straighten our hearts that we may serve you.
Baptize us with truth, so we'll know what to do.
The folly and vain are prevalent now,
To serve you we come, before you we bow.

*“Refuse to be average. Let your heart soar
as high as it will.” A. W. Tozer*

Chapter Five *God Can Use You*

If you live long enough upon the earth, it is inevitable that you will eventually and surely be lied to. Someone, somewhere, will lie to you about something. The perception that you have of truth determines how you will live your life. Lies, disguised as truth, can set up limitations and boundaries on your life which can be grossly detrimental to your service towards God. There are certain deceptions and misconceptions that are deadly to the Christians productivity for the Kingdom of God. These deceptions destroy the possibilities of your life and so we must be able to recognize them.

We have one life to live and we only have one shot at it so to allow and permit lies to alter the course of our living, which is meant for God, rather than living as we should, is tremendously tragic. The magnitude of the horribleness of allowing anything at all to interfere with our labor for Christ can be measured by how great it actually is to work and labor for Christ. There is no greater privilege and honor given to man than to know God, to be known by God, and to make God known. And as that is the greatest thing of all - the *summum bonum* of life - it is the greatest tragedy of all to fail in any of those regards.

Serving the Lord is greater than serving “self” because God is greater than self. Living for the Lord is greater than living for money and wealth because the labor for God is eternal. As Jesus said, “Lay not up for yourself treasure upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and

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steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven..." (Matt. 6:19-20).

No service can be compared to the Christian service. If you want your life to be great, live for the One who is the Greatest of all. If you want your life to matter, you must live for things which really matter, and nothing is more important than eternal matters. Therefore, to allow falsehood to hinder your fruit bearing is an absolutely awful and unnecessary tragedy.

God Can Use You, Even If You Don't Believe He Can

One reason why people are not being used by God is because they do not believe that they can be used by God. I wonder if Andrew and his brother Simon would have ever viewed themselves as qualified, being lowly fishermen, to following Jesus had it not been for Jesus saying directly to them "follow me." Would they have left all the processions they had and all the people they knew in order to walk in the way of the Lord, had Christ not selected them personally? Their humility did not hinder them, rather it qualified them. They were qualified in the eyes of the Lord to be great in the Kingdom of God, which comes only through being least here in the kingdoms of the world.

There is a difference between true, genuine humility, and believing a lie. Humility is being willing to take any task, even the lowest task, while lies limit you to only those lowly tasks or even keeps you from them. Simon and Andrew were humble enough to be fishermen, but when Jesus said "Follow me" they quickly left their nets in obedience to Him. Christ also came to the earth with the most important task of all of history, to seek and save the lost to bring glory and honor to Gods name, and yet He was still willing to wash his disciple's feet. He was humble enough for the least of tasks but was willing and obedient enough for the greatest of tasks. Should we be any different? It seems that a great hindrance to doing great things for God can be disguised in humility, when it is really far from it.

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Gideon, a man of value and of valor in the eyes of God who led a great army in triumphant victory, once hid from the enemy. While Gideon thought very lowly of himself, God thought very highly of him and sent the angel to him who said “you mighty man of valor” (Judges 6:12). God sees possibilities (and soon to be realities), not mere circumstances and present conditions. Maybe you too are hiding, believing that God can’t use you. It’s time to step out from your hiding place and join the army of God. Yes, those in the army are few and the dangers are many, but the Lord is on our side so who could dare stand against us?

Saying that God *can’t* use you is to dishonor and disgrace the ability and even the name of God. Satan comes with his deadly deceptions to deceive you, whispering in your ear hurtful and harmful lies that God won’t use you to do this and God can’t use you to do that. Brethren, if Christ lives in you then you are able! “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (Lk. 18:27). Take the words of Christ and bury them deep inside your heart so that you always have hope. To cleanse yourself from destructive and devastating deception you must bath your soul in the Word of Truth. Notice that He did not say “The things which are impossible with me are possible *for* God” (although that is a true statement) but it says “The things which are impossible with men are possible *with* God.” When you allow God to work with you and through you the possibilities are limitless. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Php. 4:13).

God Can Use You If You Are Young Or Old

Abraham and Moses were used in their old age to bring glory to the Lord. Abraham was used to be the father of a nation and Moses was used to lead that nation into freedom. The prophet Jeremiah and the pastor Timothy were both used in their young age to bring glory to the Lord. Jeremiah was used to warn people in their disobedience and Timothy was used to encourage people

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in their obedience. There are others as well. “Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child” (1 Sam. 2:18). God is not bound by space and neither is He bound by your age. I am overwhelming grateful that the Lord can use those who are young, having myself just celebrated my twentieth birthday a week ago. If I wasn’t able to minister to the godly and also to the ungodly I would be at a loss as to how to spend my time and my life. If I can’t have a life of ministry now then I don’t want to have a life at all.

If the Lord could not or chose not to use those who are young then the blaspheming of Goliath would have continued and David would have never found favor and become king. In his humility, David attended the sheep fields but in the confidence of the Lord David slew the “uncircumcised philistine” and brought reverence and godly fear back to the name of the God of Israel. Remember, it was his older brother that tried to tell him to go home. Does that still happen today?

If God was limited and did not use those who were young, the entire nation of Israel would have been destroyed by the hand of Haman because God would not have used young Esther and raised her up “for such a time as this”(Esther 4:14).

In history there are amazing accounts of those who are young but yet knew their God and did great exploits for the Kingdom. Young David Brainerd (1718-1747) brought revival to the American Indians. His life has inspired some of the greatest leaders the Christian church has ever had and yet he died at the young age of 29 of tuberculosis. Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), who is often called “The Prince of Preachers,” was converted at age 15. By age 16 he started preaching in home meetings and by age 19 he was the pastor of a large church in London. By the time he was 21 he was ministering from the pulpit to the multitudes in the Metropolitan Tabernacle which was built specifically for him. God once bypassed all the aged ministers and all the educated university students and picked a young man from the coal mines named Evan Roberts. And

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through this young man came the Welsh revival of 1904! The history of the world would look quite different if the Lord did not use those who are young in age.

God Can Use You, No Matter Your Background.

What hope would there be for a child born of slave parents? And then what future could there be for him if he fled from his home country to escape murder charges? What could God actually do with such a person? The accomplishments are so great that he made it into the Christian Hall of Fame, Hebrews 11:23-29. Moses, the great prophet of God who saw a glimpse of the glory of the Almighty, had more than humble beginnings. Moses, who led thousands of slaves into freedom, was born a slave himself. The same Moses, who fearless confronted Pharaoh of Egypt, once fled from the law of Egypt.

There was once a boy who was as violent as they come. He would drink alcohol as if it were water and consumed drugs as if he lived off them. He would get into physical fight as if it were how he made his living. It was just as common for him to go to jail as it is for some people to go to the market. His religious beliefs were twisted and perverted and he led many people down the paths of impurity. What could God do with such a fowl, unholy creature? How could there be any hope and usefulness of such a man as that! Well, that boy was me not too long ago, and by the grace and mercy of our compassionate God I've been reborn and am in the ministry today.

God is able to take any person and use them somehow. I am a living testimony and proof of that. Our God is the God who can turn water into wine. He is able to take scarlet rags and turn them into the most beautiful white silks. God can take even the worst of sinners and turn them into the best of saints. Your family situation may have been terrible, your teen years may have been tragic, and you may look totally useless in the eyes of the world, but in the eyes of the Lord it is not so. No matter what your past or your background, God can use you.

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God Can Use You, Even If You Aren't Educated.

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13) What a powerful truth this one statement declares. These men were uneducated and untrained, unlike the scribes and Pharisees, but “they realized that they had been with Jesus.” Today we see plenty of educated men and conclude that they’ve been to seminary. But where are those who have been with Jesus? Where are those who go where Jesus went, into the highway and the byways? Where are those who have a secret life of prayer and intercession as Jesus did, rising early and getting away before anyone notices them? Where are they? Are they in the pulpits where they belong?

I’d like to point out to you that none of the twelve disciples ever went to college. In fact, no one who ever wrote a book in the Bible attended any official college! But there also wasn’t a single person that God used to write the scriptures who didn’t walk with Him. If Jesus were alive today I wonder how many churches there are that wouldn’t even let Him preach there because He doesn’t have any degrees. We put such an emphasis on our ministers to have degrees, why? God doesn’t. God emphasizes and requires that they get alone with Him. I’ve never taken a college class, let alone receive any degrees, and I haven’t found any need from God to do so. Whatever those boys are learning in Bible College may be nice but it obviously isn’t doing the job. America, with all her Bible Colleges and with all her ministers with degrees is still going to hell even quicker than other nations. We are dying due to a lacking of men who “have been with Jesus” because we have been looking for men who have been to seminary instead.

God Can Use You And You Must Let Him

God uses those who are willing to be used. If you want to be used by the Lord, there is room in His army for your services.

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Not only can you be used by God but you must be used by God! It is no right of ours to deny Jesus His Lordship. When Christ is your Lord you receive all your commands, all your directions, all of your orders from Him and Him alone. When Christ is your Lord you bear fruits of righteousness and of service to Him. As a pregnant woman in painful labor, who forces life out of her body, so should we, as painful and hard it may be at times, produce fruits of life with our lives. Christians must be rivers who receive truth and life from the ocean of God, pouring the living waters onto dry deserts.

“Why have you been standing here idle all day?” (Matt. 20:3). The Lord has use of you. Don’t allow and permit anything to hold you back from laboring for God. Walls of hindrances have been established and even fortified but they cannot stand when the battering ram of truth comes. Christian, tear them down with an obedient heart of faith! The world is dying because the laborers are few. The remnant of holy Christians who produce fruit for God is indeed small within the church but you don’t have to waste your life. If you stand up in confidence, walk in faith, and look with expectation you will see what God is able to do through your life.

“The back side of the desert is lonely, poor, uninviting, and quiet. But it is the place where the bush burns, where God’s voice is heard, where the vision is given, and where marriage to his will takes place.” Leonard Ravenhill

Chapter Six

Deserted to the Desert

“Hide thyself” 1 Kings 17:3

Lonely Lane is a hard road to travel on. It’s always been hard, still is hard, and forever will be hard. Only the toughest and the greatest have gone on it. With all the group studies and the fellowship dinners it is easy to stay around people all the time and therefore harder to get alone with God. Social Street, Popularity Place, and Entertainment Avenue seem to be the roads most traveled. John Bunyan’s “Vanity Fair” is certainly still the most visited hang out. Lonely Lane itself has been getting lonely. The Bible has an even better name for this place. It’s called the wilderness and was frequented by men like Enoch, Elijah, Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ Himself.

In the wilderness there is no water, no food, no supermarkets or malls. There are no libraries filled with books. There is absolutely nothing at all, except for God. You know you could be in the tallest sky scraper in New York or the greatest castle in England with all of its splendor but if God’s presence is not there than it’s no place at all. Better the wilderness with God than a mansion without Him.

“The wilderness and the solitary place” is completely cut off from the society and all its many influences. But it completely opens you up to God and His influence. We can get so caught up in the newest big book that’s been published or the next huge Christian conference with its big named speakers that we can all together miss what God truly wants to share with us though His Word and His mouth. You can let others tell you what they’ve

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experienced going after God or you could experience going after God for yourself. You could hear everything about God, talk only about God, read all there is about God, serve God in every way, and still not know God Himself. When you enter into the desert you desert everyone and everything to be absolutely alone with God. Luke 3:2 says, “The word of God came to John son of Zacharias in the wilderness.” It didn’t come to him in Seminary. The word didn’t come to the priest in the temple. It came to the man in the wilderness. It’s in the wilderness when you’re cut off from everything else where God speaks to you. If you walk with man you will have the wisdom of man. If you walk with God you will have the wisdom of God.

Are You Strong Enough?

It takes strong faith in God to walk into the wilderness, strong faith to walk through the wilderness, and strong faith to walk out of the wilderness. As rough as the road may be you’ll be a better man when you come out than when you went in. If you’re strong enough to go in, you’re even stronger when you come out. The man who shuts himself up to be alone with God is a wise man, but wiser still he will be afterwards.

David Ravenhill said, “God draws us aside and shuts us in with Himself, away from the crowd. There, in quite isolation from distracting activities, He reveals Himself to us.”¹⁵

In the wilderness you can encounter God. Who goes into the wilderness to see “a reed shaken by the wind?” If you merely wonder into the wilderness for nothing then that’s all you’ll probably see. There are no jobs, stock markets, or money making opportunities there. Don’t even look. But if you go in to experience God, then you will. “He who seeks [after God] finds [Him].” Jesus “Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.” The best place to find God is where there is absolutely nothing else but God. Christ withdrew even from His disciples.

¹⁵ David Ravenhill. “For God’s Sake Grow Up” pg 82

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Not even Peter, James, and John would go with Him. They would wake up some days and have to search for Jesus because He had secretly left them to go pray before the sun came up. On a Friday night when everyone is going to the movies for a few hours, how many of us stay behind to instead pray for a few hours? While the rest of the world is sleeping in their beds, how many of us are praying in our prayer closets?

Praying throughout the day is one thing but actually withdrawing yourself as Christ did is completely another. It's one thing to snack on candy throughout the day and another to sit down for a meal. If Christ had to cut Himself off from everyone and everything to be with God, how much more so should we? It is good "for a disciple that he be like his teacher."

Philip E. Howard, Jr. said in his Biographical Sketch of the Life and Work of Jonathan Edwards that "It was Mr. Edwards habit when in good health to spend thirteen hours every day in his study."¹⁶

Some say "sure that's easy for a man to do when he has no family." Your right it is but it must be even harder for someone like Jonathan Edwards who had a wife and many children.

David Brainerd, the famous missionary to the American Indians, would himself often get alone with God in the woods all day long for secret prayer, fasting, and meditation. On Tuesday February 15th, 1743 Brainerd said, "I walked into a neighboring grove and felt more as a stranger on the earth, I think, than ever before; dead to any of the enjoyments of the world as if I had been dead in a natural sense."¹⁷

Brainerd sowed greatly and therefore Brainerd reaped greatly. The man which sows the most will reap the most. The man who sows the least will reap the least.

¹⁶ The Life and Diary of David Brainerd, p. 28

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 115

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Meeting God or the Devil

Like Moses you may meet God when you're all alone in the wilderness, or like Christ you could meet the devil. It is not only a time of teaching but also a time of testing. Matthew 4:1 tells us that Christ was "led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." A mother may lead her child to the playground, a commander may lead his troops into the battleground, but the Spirit of God will lead His servants into holy grounds and into the testing grounds. Israel, before entering into the Promised Land, was in the wilderness forty years. Often they were without food and drink in order for the Lord to test their trust in Him. Hebrews 3:8 says it was "the day of trial in the wilderness." And Deut. 8:2 says "And you shall remember the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."

The wilderness will definitely humble a man. "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). This is was because Moses was in the presence God more than all the men who were on the face of the earth. How can a man who walks with an awesome God be prideful? In light of His greatness we see our own littleness. Nothing can so humble a man as the presence of God. His great mightiness begets in us great meekness. His severe holiness creates in us sincere humbleness. Cleansing doesn't come through ceremony but through communion with God.

In the wilderness you will find either:

Pain or pleasure,
Burden or blessing,
Fears or faith,
Death or deliverance,
Grief or grace.

Or you may find both. In the wilderness you will be broken or built, or broken and then built. You will shatter or

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succeed or be shattered that you may succeed. When Enoch was alone God came to him. When Christ was alone the devil came to him.

Passing the Test

In the wilderness there are trials and tests for the sake of power and purging. How do you pass the period of tempting? It must be by faith. Christ throughout the entire temptation by the devil had faith. He fought the lies of the devil with the truth of God. His weapon was “it is written.” He held by faith the truth of God. When Adam and Eve were tempted they fell because Satan had them doubt God’s word by saying “you will not surely die.” To pass the testing period, “hold fast that word” which God has spoken. If you’re tempted to sin then claim the scripture “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (1 Cor. 5:17), and walk in newness of life by faith in the risen Savior.

Notice how Satan came to tempt Christ when he thought Christ would be the weakest but I believe He was the strongest at that point. It was “when He had fasted forty days and nights” and “He was hungry” that He was tempted. I don’t really know what was happening during the forty days. Maybe for the forty days He was with His Father or Moses and Elijah or angelic beings. I do know that at the end of the forty days that that fallen angel came to tempt the Lord. Satan is more intelligent than I’m sure any of us think he is. Let us never underestimate our enemy. Since the devil is smarter than we are let us fight against him with God’s wisdom that is smarter than he is. It worked for Jesus because He was “tempted in all points, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).

A Wild Man - A Wild Message

You can go into the wilderness and encounter God; you can go in to the wilderness and encounter Satan; or you could live in the wilderness all together. I heard it said, “God will take you though the wilderness but you don’t have to stay there.” That’s

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true, unless you're John the Baptist. We all know the fictitious story about the boy who was raised by wolves, well John the Baptist is probably the closest we will ever get to that in reality. John was in the temple of God as a baby, in the wilderness growing up, and put in prison as a man.

Luke 1:80 says, "And the child grew, and became strong in Spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his manifestation to Israel." What does it say John did? He grew and became strong in Spirit. Well where did that happen? Was it in Seminary? No. John wasn't taught in the Seminary of the Pharisees. Where was he taught? It was in the wilderness. So without any books, teachers, conferences, and Bible Colleges, John grew strong in the Spirit. You know he didn't even have a Bible like we have today? That should put all us Bible owners to shame! He did so much without a Bible, yet we do so little even with one. In light of this ask yourself, who taught him? The answer is God.

I'm not saying we need to all be hermits, monks or mystics but there is a lesson to be learned here. You ask those graduating from seminary this year who are about to go into the ministry if in all their studying and classes if they've had their wilderness experiences. Both John and Jesus didn't go anywhere near the ministry until they've both graduated from "The School of Silence."

Oh I could only imagine the things that could be written about John the Baptist. The wilderness made him a wild preacher. He was from a wild place which made him a wild man who did wild things. He had such an inward experience that it affected him outwardly. His eyes were focused on God for so long that he didn't care about anyone else. He obviously didn't care about human opinion even in the least bit because he was clothed with camels' hair and he ate locusts and wild honey. How do you suppose your Sunday morning congregation would feel if your pastor showed up Sunday morning dressed like this man was? What would the church think if a man showed up at the potluck dinner with a bowl of locust and honey? And yet we are told

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“Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist” (Matt. 11:11). He was a man who was “before the face of the Lord” (Lk. 1:76).

“He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness” (John 1:23). The incredible thing is that people went all the way into the wilderness to hear him, even Romans. How many of these big youth groups would have the same amount of people coming to them if it wasn't for the fancy youth room with all the games, the free pizza, and the amusement park trips? It is said, “If you get on fire for God, people will come to watch you burn.” That is most certainly true of John the Baptist. We need preachers like that today! The candy and the games are being used to make up for the lack of fire. Oh that the church might cleanse itself from worldliness, being purged by holy fire that only comes from prayer in the presence of God! Oh that we might wonder into the wilderness to be alone with God and to be filled with God that when we speak for God people will be moved by God and brought to God! But the anointing of God not only brings power but persecution.

A king came to hear John preach once. I'm sure when the presence of the king hit the scene it got every bodies attention. So what was it that John did? Did he put on a good show for the king and then ask if he could perform in the palace? Did he dazzle him with his oratory abilities and flatter him with his lips and hope for a large offering? Not in the least! God forbid! John believed in truth over honor. Rather than exalting the king, John publicly pointed out his sin. John didn't charm the king, he corrected the king! He didn't sweet-talk Herod, he made Herod sweat! He didn't coddle and comfort; He rebuked and reprov'd! That's because he was “filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb” (Luke 1:15), and the Holy Spirit has come to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jn. 16:8).

Imagine if the President of the United States came to hear some of the preachers today. The preacher would try to

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impression and develop a connection to further his ministry and influence. Well, John wanted to further the truth because truth had fallen in the streets. There had not been a prophet for a few hundred years until John appeared in the wilderness. What if a missionary in a foreign land had a king come to hear his message? Would he warn the king of his sin as John did? Maybe the missionary would think that if he warned a man of such position then he might compromise his mission by being thrown out of the country. The compromise is not in doing it but in not doing it!

John was not out to make a name for himself or to build a ministry empire. Any man who starts his sermon by saying “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” is not out to win the praises of men but rather the praises of God. The friends of God are not the friends of the world (Jas. 4:4). When Christ’s ministry became more popular than his own John said, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn. 3:30). He didn’t hang around the religious elite of his day to try to impress them. I don’t think anyone knew he even existed except for a few people until he was manifested to Israel. How many ministers who occupy our pulpits today set out from their Bible Colleges to make a name for themselves? How many preachers have gone before them to exalt their own names rather than God’s name yet are long forgotten today while the memory of John the Baptists wilderness ministry lives on?

The wilderness is the best place for you to be if it is the place where God wants you to be. Whether your there to meet God or to meet with the devil, to be taught or to be tempted, whether you will tarry there or be there only temporarily, remember “The School of Silence” has had more of Gods greatest ministers graduate from it than any other school. There are many preachers who have been to seminary but not many who have been to the desert. Seminary may be as dry as the desert but it is not the same thing. The best preachers in history didn't go to seminary. The best went to the wilderness.

DESERTED TO THE DESERT

Wilderness

To the wilderness your Spirit leads,
So not on bread but on your Word I'll feed.
Away from all I love and know,
To obey your call, I have to go.

Temptations come to test my will,
This nature of mine you'll have to kill.
Lord, send the fire, the consuming fire.
Burn away my sinful desires.

To walk with you as Enoch had.
To leave the world that has gone mad.
Please cleanse and clean this soul of mine,
For eternity, while there's still time.

“The deepest passion of the heart of Jesus was not the saving of men, but the glory of God; and then the saving of men, because that is for the glory of God.” G. Campbell Morgan

Chapter Seven

The Glory of God

“How long, O you sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you seek worthlessness and seek falsehood? But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly.” Psalms 4:2-3

Just as a worker deserves his wages, so God deserves His glory. God Himself came down from Heaven to the earth in humility to give life to a dying world. He has taken our shame, our humiliation, and our sin upon Himself. Christ, although tempted as you and I, lived entirely without sin. Never did Christ violate God’s law yet for us He endured great agony and suffering for our transgressions. It is because of who God is and what He has done that He deserves all of the glory that He can possibly receive from you and me.

One Life to Live - One Life to Give

There are many things you could seek after in your life. Some seek after popularity and fame. Some seek after ease and comfort. Some seek after wealth and riches. Only a remnant seeks after the glory of God.

Christian, let it be far from you to rob God of any of the glory that He so richly deserves. If you want to build up your own name, your taking what belongs to the name of God. If you want to build up your own kingdom, your taking what belongs to the Kingdom of God. Let it be far from you to disobey the call that God has on your life. If you go the way of Jonah you will find yourself in a sea of sin. The same Christ, who gave Himself for

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you, deserves you to give yourself to Him. Christ, who deserves you everything, should be your everything in this world. Christ, who is Life itself, deserves your life.

Take a look at this Scripture again. It reads “How long, O you sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame?” It is saying: How long?! How often?! How much?! When will it end?! Let this be certain: what you do with your life, with the precious time that the Giver of time has granted you, will either glorify God or shame Him. The things that you do in this life will do one of those two things.

Make no mistake about it, a child reflects his parents just as the moon reflects the sun. Your life is like a mirror. You ought to reflect Christ perfectly in every aspect. But mirrors can be broken. A crack in a mirror will distort an image. Likewise, sin in your life will distort the image of Christ that you are supposed to be reflecting. Tell me, does everything you do reflect everything God does? Is God so living in you that you can say like Jesus, “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (Jn. 14:9)? If we claim to have the living God living inside of us then we cannot be dead in our trespasses and sins. If the living God is in you then you will be alive in righteousness!

What do you really want?

Do you live a life of holiness or a life of hellishness?

Do you live a life of sanctification or do you live a life of sin?

Do you live a life of devilry and depravity or righteousness and rectitude?

What do you desire?

Do you desire spiritual purity or do you desire fleshly pleasure?

Do you desire correction or do you desire corruption?

Get honest with yourself.

Do you desire God or do you desire gain?

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We have more harlot churches on our street corners today than we do harlots themselves. The pews are full of sin because the pulpits are full of sin. There are many pulpit pimps trying to fatten their pockets.

This generation of professing believers needs to put off the old man and put on the new. I fear that currently much of our Christian sacrifices are merely an arm here or a leg there but God requires that we present our entire bodies as living sacrifices. The King of kings is saying “off with his head.” Putting off our dead works and giving God our lives is our reasonable service for one simple reason - God is worthy.

It truly is a shame how many sins are tolerated in the church for fear of rocking the boat or losing a tithe giver. Sinners are comforted instead of corrected and convicted because preachers don't want to offend them. They don't want any reprisals. But is it not better to be a suffering saint than to be a satisfied sinner?

The text says, “How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood?” What expensive price tags we put on such worthless things. The only one who is worthy of your life is God. Not yourself, not your money, nobody and nothing is worthy of all of your life except for God. He alone deserves your supreme devotion and affection and anything short of this is whorish unfaithfulness that provokes the Lord to jealousy. Seek not the vain follies of this life. Don't care about the follies of amusement and entertainment. Toss out all falsehood and fully receive the truth.

What Difference Will You Make?

Many of the things people work, labor and toil for are absolutely worthless. They have no eternal value. For example, watching too much television will steal you of the time God has given you to bring Him glory. Watching television may not itself be sin, depending on what you are watching, but even a clean show can be a sin for you to watch if it gets between you and your

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devotion to God. Anything is sin that you let interfere with God's will for your life.

Let's forget about eternity just for a minute. Are the things you spend your time doing going to matter a day from now? What about a week from now? Will they matter a month or a year from now? What are you spending your time to buy?

There is a Christian song that says, "Lord, teach us to count the days. Teach us to make the days count. Lead us in a better way. Somehow our souls forget. Life means so much. Life means so much."¹⁸

Christian, this is your life. It's not anybody else's. This is not a rehearsal and this is not play acting. This is your life. And it is the only one in this world that you will ever have. What will you make of it? What will it read on your grave stone? What will other say about you after you have been gone? What type of books would be able to be written about your life? Will the story of your life be a triumph or a tragedy? Is the life you are living worthy of a biography? Would the biography of your life bring glory to God or shame to you?

It says, "The Lord has set apart for *HIMSELF* him who is godly." A godly man labors for the glory of God and not the glory of himself. Our God is a jealous God and we ought to be jealous for His glory on His behalf. Are you not jealous that there are idols, let's say *American Idols*, which are stealing the glory that God deserves? A man of God smashes the worship of idols. A man of God is completely separated from the follies of this world to serve the glory of God.

William Gurnall said, "Say not, thou hast royal blood running in thy veins, and art begotten of God, except thou canst prove thy pedigree by this heroic spirit, to dare to be holy in spite of men and devils."¹⁹

¹⁸ "Life Means So Much" by Chris Rice.

¹⁹ Christian in Complete Armor, p. 6

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Let us completely cleanse ourselves from all carnality and vanity and entirely consecrate ourselves to the glory of God. Let us crucify ourselves to the world. Let's learn to be like Enoch who walked with God and not with a sinful world. Let others work and labor in vain, but let us be wise and put off foolish things. We labor in vain if we labor for gain but our labors are never in vain if we labor for Him. Christ forsook everything to gain us, let us forsake everything to glorify Him.

God is calling my generation to repent from all sins, receive full salvation, and restore lost souls to a holy relationship with Him. My generation is weak, weary, and worn through sin but through His Spirit we can be strong, strengthened, and sustained in holiness.

What is God worthy of? God is worthy of your time. God is worthy of your heart. God is worthy of your mind. God is worthy of your soul. God is worthy of your strength. God is worthy of your life. If your suffering meant the glory of God, do you still want Him to be glorified? If shedding your own blood for the Kingdom of God brought even an ounce more glory to God, would you be willing?

Exalt Christ above yourself. Exalt Christ above your friends. Exalt Christ above your life! Don't be satisfied merely surviving in your Christian walk, learn to thrive in your Christian walk. I don't care what level you're at spiritually, there is still a deeper or a higher level to be obtained. Utterly refuse to be satisfied. Go further! Go deeper!

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The Closer that I Walk

The closer that I walk with thee,
the more suffering I am sure to see.
As I follow in thy ways,
the more I'll know how much you paid.

The closer that I walk with thee,
the more of your love I feel on me.
As I follow in thy ways,
the more I long to give you praise.

The closer that I walk with thee,
the more I wonder, how can this be?
As I follow in thy ways,
the more I'll know you in my days.

The closer that I walk with thee,
the more in the world I hate to be.
As I follow in thy ways,
the more I wait to be taken away.

“If you are not a holy, strict, and self-denying Christian, you cannot be saved.” Joseph Alleine

Chapter Eight

The Battle that Rages

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3).

The Christian's life that is lived properly is a raging battle – warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil! We are told the Christian life is many things by different preachers. Usually these things make Christianity appear appealing. There are those preachers that present Christianity to make it look fun and easy and others emphasize the blessing of God as if Christianity consists in nothing more than being blessed by God. Sure the Christian is blessed by God but He is also attacked by the world and powers and principalities. The true Christian life in this world is a war that requires sacrifice, denial, suffering, etc. We remain in enemy territory while we are here and we must keep guard and watch over the state of our soul. .

If you do not recognize that you are in a battle you will most assuredly walk around in defeat. You will not fight a battle that you do not know you are in. We must not be unprepared or be caught off guard. We must expect the battle. As a result of those preachers that do not present Christianity in this world as warfare and do not stress the serious fight we are in, many can fail to be prepared for the fight and be disillusioned when it comes. The lack of focus and emphasis on repentance, sanctification, and holiness in modern preacher has caused the exact opposite result - the embracing of sin. Sin is not treated by many in the church as a deadly serious matter – fatal to the soul. It is trifled with and tolerated. The flood and reign of sin in this

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present age must be combated for it is the greatest battle of the ages. No other battle in all of history has had more at stake because this battle is for the very souls of men. The battle is against sin, the world, and the devil. God Himself has been fighting against sin ever since its entrance into this world and Jesus Christ himself came to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn. 3:8) which is sin. God never calls a retreat or surrender in any of His battles and therefore requires victory in every area of the Christian life.

The Battle with Sin

The enemy can come from within if we are not careful. The devil, like he did with our first parents and also with our Lord, tempts us to gratify our natural desires in unlawful and unnatural ways. Within us are desires that can become the occasions of our temptation and sin. We are told “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1;14-15). The carnal mind, which is enmity with God (), is the choice to be carnally purposed – to live for the gratification of self. Selfishness or the pursuit of self-gratification, is the root of all sin. That is the old man and the old life that we have been saved from but the devil will no doubt tempt us to return to it and the carnal desires of our flesh or body present the occasions through which he will surely tempt us.

The Apostle Paul exhorted, “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:22-24).

We must guard and war against the temptations for the self-life. Every day we will face temptations and must make the choice to live the Christ-life – a life of serving Him supremely and ultimately. The desires of our flesh must be subjected and

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controlled lest they slay us. As Paul said, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27). Sin promises liberty but it brings bondage. It promises pleasure but ultimately results in eternal pain.

Paul said, “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). If we are ignorant of the devil’s devices he can get an advantage over us. Therefore we must recognize that it is through our own bodily desires and appetites, or flesh, that the devil will tempt us to sin – to gratify our natural desires in unlawful ways and to live supremely for the gratification of self.

As with the battle of Troy, the danger comes from within our own gates! Dr. Tozer said, "There is within each of us an enemy which we tolerate at our peril. Jesus called it ‘life’ and ‘self’, or as we would say, the self-life...to allow this enemy to live is, in the end, to lose everything. To repudiate it and give up all for Chris's sake is to lose nothing at last, but to preserve everything unto life eternal."²⁰

Jesus said it this way: “Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it” (Luke 17:33).

In order to recognize what needs to be done, we must first recognize what it was that went wrong. The battle man has against sin in this world is as old as the world itself. Although the increase of sin is especially prevalent in our day, “There is nothing new under the sun” (Ecc. 1:9). The first account of the battle with sin is found all the way back in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve tempted by the “serpent of old” (Rev. 12:9). What was the temptation? To make their own free choice to gratify themselves in a way God had forbidden. It was one act of disobedience in one particular matter which, unknown to them at the time, would spark mankind’s rebellion against God that rages

²⁰ The Pursuit of God, Chapter Two, p. 23

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even now. The tactics of the devil were as subtle as can be, but could not have been deadlier.

We read that "the serpent was....cunning" (Gen 3:1). The means of the devil's destruction is deception. God seeks to morally govern mankind through truth. Adam and Eve knew what God had told them and they knew what Satan had said. They then made a free choice of who they would put their faith in. If your faith is in God you will overcome the temptations of the devil. But if you yield and submit to the devil, you are putting your faith and trust in Him and nothing could be deadlier than that.

The devil is cunning and history has shown can very easily deceive mankind. Therefore, man must look to a greater being than himself for wisdom, guidance and strength and that can be found in none other than God Himself.

Those fighting a war take commands from their commander and their commander only. The simple failure of troops to pay attention and remembering the orders given to them can result in the death of themselves and of others who are in the battle with them. The Christian soldier must not be swayed from God's commands in any aspect of their actions as a result of their own desires nor the desires of those around them. God's commands will never fade away; therefore it must always be obeyed (Matt 5:18). We must have absolute faith in the commander and captain of our souls (Heb. 2:10) and because of our trust and confidence in our Lord's goodness and wisdom we must do whatever He tells us to do (John 2:5). Nothing short of that is living, saving, justifying, sanctifying, true and biblical faith.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam ate only after Eve made the first choice. When we judge what is acceptable and what is not acceptable by what others do rather than by what God's commands we fall into disgusting, despicable, and devastating sin. Thus was the case for Adam. His wife first ate of the tree which was "good for food," "pleasant to the eyes, and a true to

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be desired to make one wise” (Gen. 3:6), and without hesitation he followed after her. Hyperbolically, it was at this point that Adam started making His own decisions rather than allowing God to make them for him. Our society tells us to make our own decisions. The only decision we need to make is whether or not we are going to obey God. The rest falls under that. Adam made the decision to make His own decisions. As Christians we have been "bought at a price" and therefore are no longer our own. It is not our place to make our own decisions anymore. If we do so then we are robbing Christ of His well earned and deserved position. God is in command and He commands our obedience. He sets the course that we must choose to sail. We must yield our free will to His command. Christians, being Christ-like, must be able to say with Christ, “not my will, but thine, be done” (Lk. 22:42).

Often obedience is not easy and requires sacrifice. What would have happened if Eve disobeyed God but Adam chose to stay true to His first love? Their marriage would have been over. It's possible Eve would be forced to leave the Garden while Adam stayed. Did Adam consider this possibility when he chose to partake in the sin of his wife? Adam could have his wife and lose God, or he could lose his wife and continue with God. As a Christian your obedience also will require sacrifice. Even of Christ it says, “learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

Obedience and suffering are not separated no matter how much we may wish they were. If they could not have parted ways in the case of Christ they cannot be divorced for those who follow in His steps. The two are paired together like sin and death or Christ and Heaven - you can't have one without the other. You never know just how obedient you truly are until you are put in the situation where your obedience means your sacrifice and your suffering.

Our loss can lead to our gain and our gain can lead to our loss. Paul said, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for

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the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3:8). We can lose the world and gain Christ or we can gain the world and lose Christ. The possession of the one requires the forfeiting of the other. Paul tells us that he did suffer the loss of all things for the sake of Christ. In the world he lost is position, his possessions, and his partners. He suffered the loss of all things but it was not without ultimate gain. His loss resulted in his gain. He gave but the result was that he got. It was not for the things the modern day prosperity preachers focus on, possession, position, and privilege. These were the things he lost. But he gained Christ! Never was there a richer gain! Worldly dung is traded for heavenly riches! The insufficient for the all-sufficient! The temporal for the eternal! You’d have to be a fool not to!

Paul was not the only one required to suffer the loss of all things in order to win Christ. This is the cost and gain of every believer. Jesus said, “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” (Lk. 14:33). This is not only a battle *against* sin; it is a battle *for* Christ. Consider for yourself whether you can meet the requirements put on the Christian soldier. It was in connection to this requirement that Jesus said, “Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?” (Lk. 14:31). Don’t be like a king who rushes head strong into battle without first taking the time to even see if he can prevail. Consider the cost of biblical Christianity and check the pockets of your heart to see if you have enough to pay the price of being a follower of Christ.

The narrative of Adam and Eve’s temptation continues: “And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Gen. 3:1). The choosing of the devils words were very well planned out. Rather than saying “of this one tree” he said “of every tree.” God had given His

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permission for man to eat of every tree except for one. By the devil saying “every tree” he added some truth to the lie which he was about to tell. Every lie of the devil has some truth to it but it ultimately leads to a total denial of the truth, as the devil went on to say, “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4). It was through those deceptive words that the devil won the victory and mankind has suffered ever since. But the war is not over. It continues today in the lives of every one of us.

Let it be known and believed that our battle with sin and the devil is not a helpless one. We must never have the defeatist attitude that sin, which is surrender to the devil, is inevitable and unavoidable. There is nothing the devil would have you to believe more than that surrender to him is a must. But that is not the Christian life and that is not the promise of the Scriptures. The Bible says, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Php. 4:13). If we can do all things, we can overcome the temptations of the devil. This is no empty promise nor is it mere theoretical speculation. It is the words of the Apostle Paul who lived a holy life and was not conscious of any sins in his life as a Christian: “And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1); “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense towards God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16); I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience” (2 Tim. 1:3). No wonder this man, who had no compromise or corruption in his life, could say words like: “Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me” (1 Cor. 4:16), and also, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Paul was cleansed from sin and had the victory by faith over the temptations of the devil. Paul knew experientially that this promise was true: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape,

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that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13). This blessed promise and truth of God’s Word means that you can choose to never sin again. This brings great joy to the hearts of those who truly love Jesus! You must receive and believe this reality that you can overcome the temptations of the devil or else there will be no victory in your life.

There are also “rules of engagement” or principles of victory that you must be made aware of. Victory does not happen by accident. The battle against sin will be easily lost if the Christian soldier does not know the battle plan of God’s Word. How great a tragedy it is for God to write books for man to read and yet most men do not read them as they know they should. Such negligence is willful ignorance and is not responsible nor is it reasonable. How can we combat against all the lies of the devil if we do not have the truth of God as our weapon? That is how Christ overcame (Matt. 4:4, 6, 7, 10) and we can do no better some other way. The Psalmist declared “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps. 119:105). The moment that the light of the lamp is put out we no longer are aware of the dangers that may lie ahead of us neither would we know of the dangers that we may already be standing upon! When the lighthouse it put out the ships at sea will not be aware of the deadly rocks until they are already struck. If you refuse to light the lamp and study the map then do not be surprised when you fall into a pit you were not aware of.

The lies of the devil are combated with the truth of God’s Word. When the temptation comes to sin in even the smallest matter the lie will come as “It’s not a big issue. The sin is not very bad so neither will the punishment be.” God’s Word tells us “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). It does not say “the wages of large sins is death.” All sin, large or small in our eyes, leads to death because all sin is rebellion against the King of kings. The destination of all sin is damnation so you must not follow or yield to any of them. What other punishment besides execution is fit for traitors and rebels who fight against the

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Heavenly Kingdom? God will declare “bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me” (Lk. 19:27). Oh be careful lest this one day be said of you!

If Satan can get you to put out the lamp of God’s Word, he will lead you into this deadly trap. You may think you are drinking a cup of refreshing water but there is poison mingled in the cup! Water of iniquity is the water of death and damnation. That is the only water offered by the devil. Christ offers every man the Waters of Life which are free for the drinking. If you do not know the reality of Scripture you will settle for a cheap imitation, a deadly counterfeit which will have the opposite effect. The devil has his counterfeit gospel of, “We are saved by grace so we can keep sinning. Sin cannot damn our souls. You shall not surely die.” You must know the Scriptures to know that the salvation by grace that is offered by God is salvation from sin, not salvation in sin (Matt. 1:21, Rom. 6:1-2, Tit. 2:11-12). We must know God’s grace and gospel as outlined in the Scriptures if we are going to recognize the devil’s grace and his gospel when it is offered to us!

Adam and Eve doubted Gods Word and it cost them their lives and ushered in the age of death for all of us. In order to walk victoriously through the Christians life of battle we must know Gods word. There is no substitute adequate enough to replace the Holy Scriptures. There simply is no other way. When many are asked why they fell into sin their reply was, “I simply wasn’t thinking.” Don’t play the fool, soldier! We have the entire battle plan laid out before us which can lead us into flawless victory if we open it up and study it for ourselves. As hard as it is, it couldn’t be any easier.

James 4:7 lays out the key or battle plan to overcome: "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." The war which we fight is against the invader, the devil. He has invaded and taken captive what is rightfully Gods. The

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outcome of this type of war is determined by two things: Submission to our leader and resistance against the invader.

I. Submission

This Scripture from James must always be taken in context. Submitting to God is just as vital in this war as resting the devil. “Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand” (Matt 12:25). Loyal soldiers are the only soldiers fit for Gods Kingdom. This is true in a time of peace so how much more in a time of war. War time is a time of chaos but there must not be chaos within the ranks. That is proven to lead to nothing but tragedy and defeat. God is a God of order and in His order He is number one. If ever we hope to find victory over the temptation of the world, the flesh, and the devil then we must learn submission to God otherwise we have nothing more to look forward to then the death of a traitor. If you disobey you will one day pay, I assure you of that.

Christ warned of this when he said, “But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers” (Luke 12:45-46).

Christ also warned, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Matt. 12:30). There is no middle ground. You are either of God or of the devil, a servant of righteousness or a servant of sin, a saint or a sinner, walking in the light or walking in darkness, reconciled or at enmity, repentant or carnally minded. Those who do not take orders from God must be on the side of the devil. Failure to submit to the leadership of God is the very act of treason. The more we disobey God the more we help advance the territory of

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the enemy. Submission to God is of the utmost importance because the battle itself is over that - submission to God.

What is it that keeps sinful men from turning away from their sinfulness if it is not their own love for their iniquity? Sinner, how could you love that which is the farthest thing from being lovely? Do you not know that the very thing which you treasure will be the very reason of your damnation? You embrace your killer with open arms. You are the one who is opening the door to your murderer. Will you draw close to yourself that which will have you cast away? Will you love even the source of your damnation? How can you love the sin which hates your soul? Love the Lord and hate evil. Delight only in the things which are delightful. "Hate the evil, and love the good" (Am. 5:15).

As even Charles Spurgeon said, "Christian, what hast thou to do with sin? Hath it not cost thee enough already? Burnt child, wilt thou play with the fire? What! when thou hast already been between the jaws of the lion, wilt thou step a second time into his den? Hast thou not had enough of the old serpent?"²¹

II. Resistance

It is self-evident that we must resist the fleshly desire to sin if we ever want to walk in the Spirit. "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). This command shows that the nature of holiness is ultimately volitional. We must choose between a life of serving self or a life of serving God. The flesh is at war with our spirit. "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (2 Pet. 2:11). The desires of the flesh for gratification, that the devil uses to tempt us unto a selfish life, and the desires of the spirit for purity and holiness in the service of God, could not be more contrary one to another. One seeks after light while the other seeks after darkness. One seeks after sin while the other seeks after righteousness. The world walks in

²¹ Morning and Evening

THE BATTLE THAT RAGES

the lusts of the flesh but the Christian must not be a part of the world. He is consecrated as a sojourner who looks heavenward to his Father's home that is without sin and will allow no sin to enter in (Matt 13:41; 1 Cor. 6:9-10, Rev. 22:15). A Christian is a pilgrim merely passing through the village of vileness to get to the city of Zion. This man must not partake in the way of the world lest he transfers his allegiance and consequent citizenship.

Just as an army of ants' walks closely to a wall in a straight line to protect themselves from being stepped on when visiting a house for some food left unnoticed so must the Christian, when desiring to eat of the fruit of righteousness, walk closely to the solid wall of Christ to avoid being stepped on and killed by the power of sin.

If you do not fight the battle then you have already lost. In life we have two options when it comes to sin, surrender or victory. Those who refuse to surrender cannot lose because losing is only signified by surrender in this war. If resisting is your goal, as long as you resist you will always win. The enemy can only win if you submit to him. We are commanded to submit to God and therefore resist the devil. Resisting the devil comes with the promise that "he will flee from you." This is as sure as yesterday. This is a principal, a rule, a law which cannot be broken even by the devil himself. God says it and therefore it is. Someone has to retreat from the battle field. So long as it is not us it must be the devil. There is not room for both God and Satan in our lives. If one stays the other must go. The decision is yours to make.

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The Battle that Rages

There's a war that rages inside the flesh
As serious as can be, for it is sin and death
The age old battle still rages today
"You shall not die" the enemy still tries to say

Submit to God and fight till the end
Why be Gods enemy, when you can be His friend?
Are you for Him or against Him? Make up your mind.
Purity is waiting, if you seek it you shall find.

Resist the liar and he has to flee
God has said it to be true so it has to be.
Refuse to surrender and you cannot lose
The decision is yours, so you have to choose.

"That yielding of myself in the presence of God leads me into the radical experience of what I like to term entire sanctification." Duncan Campbell

Chapter Nine

Dead unto Sin

You can call it complete repentance or Christian perfection or entire sanctification, but whatever you call it is the Christian standard – a holy life. This teaching, that we are obligated to sin no more, has been greatly disregarded in our day. I've heard people talk about being "saints that sin" and this teaching that someone can be a "sinning saint" has been spread throughout the entire world. What a contradiction in terms! A holy sinner? A holy man that sins? Can you also have a sinful man that is holy? Polar opposites can never meet. If you are sinning you are not a Christian and if you are a Christian you are not sinning. If a Christian becomes a sinner he is no longer a Christian because he is no longer a follower of Christ.

Paul told believers, "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). All men are living to die, many men are dying to live, but you can also be dead while you are living. The Bible says, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6). The Scriptures speak of "being dead in your sins" (Col. 2:13). Through sinning you become dead to God. But through God you can become dead to sin. Every man is either dead in their sins or dead to their sins. Every man is either dead indeed to sin and alive to God or they are dead to God and alive indeed unto sin.

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Leonard Ravenhill said, “There are only two types of men in the world: those who are dead in sin and those who are dead to sin.”²² Which one are you choosing to be today?

To get to the mountain of life you must pass through the valley of death. The key which unlocks the door to freedom from sin is the key of death. Death that is, to ones will, to ones flesh, and to ones ways. Do any of you want to live? Then you must die. To live and reign with Christ you must first be crucified with Christ. “This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him” (2 Tim. 2:11). You cannot live in the fullness of Christ if you are not fully dead to yourself. The old man must be put off for the new man to be put on. Both the penalty of sin and the prescription to sin is death. If you do not die to your sins in this world you will surely die for your sins in the next world.

The Apostle Paul said, “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13). Notice this was not a warning Paul gave to heathens and pagans but to believers!

Even Charles Spurgeon said, “If you will not have death unto sin, you will have sin unto death. There is no alternative. If you do not die to sin, you shall die for sin. If you do not slay sin, sin will slay you.”²³

There are those who justify their own sins by saying “A man can not truly live free from sin. That’s impossible. We’re only human.” This is not so, sinner! Just because you have not lived free from sin does not mean that others cannot live free from sin. Never portray the power of sin as greater than the power of God’s grace! Never give glory to the devil instead of to God! I would dare you sinner, get specific about these unstoppable sins. Which sin is impossible for you to live without? What sin can’t Jesus save you from? Would it be lying or stealing? Would it be

²² Sermon Video Excerpt: Dead in Sin or Dead to Sin

²³ Spurgeon Gold, p. 72

DEAD TO SIN

adultery or murder? Would it be blasphemy or jealousy? Or is it all of these sins which you are chained to? Is the lock of sin truly without a key? The commandments of the Lord are not burdensome. God is no tyrant. The Scriptures force me to say that it is not that you cannot live without sin but rather that you simply will not live without sin. You will never live without sin as long as you will to sin. It is not a question of inability but of unwillingness.

If you could not help but to sin, how could God hold you accountable for that which you were forced to do to begin with? Is a bank teller arrested if he was forced by a robber with a gun to hand over the money? Would it be justice to throw that banker in jail? Neither would it be justice to cast mans soul in hell if he ultimately was forced to sin by his own flesh, the world, or the devil and had no free will choice in the matter. But as your damnation is justified, your sin is avoidable.

There is hope spoken of in the Bible for any man. Lies will bark and scream at you, “Cursed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they cannot ever be filled.” But the truth speaks life and says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6). There is nothing but bondage in other religions but in Christ there is liberty. This Christian liberty is not what some try to twist it and make it out to be. This Christian liberty is freedom from sin, not freedom to sin. Those who love God and hate sin wouldn’t want it the other way around.

There is deliverance from both the penalty and practice of sin! There is both righteousness imparted and righteousness imputed. The blood of Jesus Christ not only covers all our sins, but “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). There is no covering of sins without the cleansing of sins.

It is this cleansing which separates the sons of God from the sons of the devil:

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“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another” (1 Jn. 3:5-11).

The real proof of your salvation is that that you adhere to a new set of beliefs but that you live a completely new life:

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn. 2:3-6).

Let the blessed and pure gospel truth be proclaimed loud and clear that entire sanctification is attainable in this life and it is absolutely required. Did Christ say “go and sin less?” Or did he say “go and sin no more” (Joh 5:14, Joh 8:11)? Does the Scripture say, “Let him who stole steal less?” Or does it say, “Let him who stole steal no longer” (Eph 4:2)? Christ, our Master, said “Be perfect just as your Father in Heaven is perfect” (Mt 5:4). He is infinitely just and good and therefore what He requires of us is not impossible or unattainable.

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“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24).

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes. 5:23).

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Holiness

They say it's hard--impossible,
But for it Lord I cry.
My soul longs for your holiness,
Please give it else I die.

The road is rough, the road is long,
But I count not the cost.
I need to wrap in thy holiness
Or else I fear I'm lost.

None of me, and all of you,
That is what I need.
To be like you I need your strength
For that is what I plead.

Holiness, holiness, holiness!
My God there must be more.
I hate my sin, I hate this world.
Oh God please make me pure.

*"Sanctification is Christ enthroned...
the secret of holiness is in the complete filling
of the soul with the life of Christ." Duncan Campbell*

*"Christianity is N. O. T. not a sinning religion.
It is a victorious religion." Leonard Ravenhill*

Chapter Ten

Freedom from Sin

“But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.” Romans 6:22

Deep in the corridors of death row sat a guilty prisoner awaiting execution. On one fateful day the jailer walked into the prisoner's cell causing the prisoner to wonder if this would be the day of his death. After months and years of waiting on death row, he knew this day would inevitably come. Just as the prisoner was dropping his head in shame and despair, the jailer said the words which echoed through his mind, “I am setting you free. The Governor has received your request for clemency, your reformation has been observed, and he has issued you a full pardon.” After fully expecting to die, the prisoner had a look of astonishment on his face. The jailer assured him that he will not be put to death and that he can freely walk out of his cell today. It would be an understatement to say the prisoner was overjoyed. Overwhelmed with gratitude, the prisoner thanked the jailer and walked out of the cell that had him bound for countless years.

Did he then return to a life of crime? No! By no means! Out of gratitude for the Governor, he obeyed all the laws of the land. He not only knew the seriousness of the law because he sat on death row and faced execution, but now he knows the grace and mercy of the Governor who pardoned his guilt and crimes.

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Is this not a picture of the wonderful freedom men receive by grace through faith in the blood of Jesus? Through Christ we are pardoned so that we avoid the damnation that we deserve for our sins. Not only are we free from the guilt and consequences of our crimes against God but we subsequently walk in holiness and loving obedience out of gratitude for the one who forgave us! In the gospel there is freedom from the penalty, power, presence, and practice of sin!

To teach and preach that we are forgiven of our sins but we cannot help but to continue in them still would be like the jailer saying to the criminal, "Here is your pardon. Now you are free to commit more crimes. The standards of our laws are so high that it is impossible for you to keep them. Yet you deserve to be executed for your transgressions but don't worry, here is your license to sin." The beauty and glory of the gospel is entirely diminished if you take away the element of freedom from sin! If loving obedience is not the result of God's grace and mercy, salvation becomes nothing more than a license to sin.

God calls the Christian to run the race but the race does not take place on a treadmill. There is no such thing as treadmill Christianity. To say that a man who desires to be holy will never be able to reach it in this life opposes the very teachings of Jesus who said "blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt 5:6). God never intended for the Christian to be as a mouse in a cage running anxiously and endlessly on a spinning wheel yet never getting anywhere. God has always intended to set men free! "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Am I proposing here that a man can be holy while remaining here on earth and that a man can obey all the commandments of the Lord? Am I suggesting that you can live without sinning? Absolutely I am because this is what reason, logic, the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures teach me to believe and accept and I wouldn't want it any other way. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His

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commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Gal 5:16). If you are lead by God will He not lead you into all righteousness? Will He led you into sin? Is it impossible to obey Him who said “follow me” (Luke 18:22)? Was it unreasonable when Christ said, “I have given you an example that you should do as I have done” (John 13:15)?

God has not charted a course for man that is impossible for us to sail. Nothing is impossible for God. So long as God is the Captain and Commander of the ship He can and will sail it wherever He so pleases. Certainly mutiny against the Captain and Commander is possible on our part, but loyalty is also a possibility.

E. M. Bounds stirs us to pursue personal holiness in this quote: “Nothing short of absolute obedience will satisfy God. The keeping of all His commandments is the demonstration of obedience that God requires. But can we keep all of God’s commandments? Can a man receive moral ability that helps him to obey every one of them? Certainly he can. By the same token, man can, through prayer, obtain ability to do this very thing...Does God give commandments that men cannot obey? Is he so arbitrary, so severe, so unloving, that He issues commandments that cannot be obeyed? The answer is that, in all of Scripture, not a single instance is recorded of God having commanded any man to do a thing that was beyond his power. Is God so unjust and so inconsiderate to require a man something that he is unable to do? Certainly not! To infer is to slander the character of God.”²⁴

I fear that the issue is not that man cannot obey God, but that many men will not obey God. Many do not walk in holiness because they have yet to forsake their sins and walk in complete repentance. But true repentance is always complete. If a man is

²⁴ The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds page 155-156.

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driving down a two way road and fails to pay attention and therefore ends up on the wrong side of the road he is in great danger. He is in even greater danger when he notices a massive truck heading straight for him. Panic grips his heart and sweat pours from his brow. What must he do? The answer is simple enough. He must suddenly, not slowly, get back on the right side of the road. If he leaves even a little bit of his vehicle on the wrong side of the road that would be enough to get him killed! He is to entirely and completely and totally get out of the way.

Likewise, when you're on the road of life and you end up on the wrong side of the road called sin, you are in grave danger because the truck of death and hell is heading straight for you. What ought you to do? As quickly as you can you must get completely and totally and entirely on the right or righteous side of the road. If you leave even the least bit of your life on the wrong side of the road is that not enough to get you killed?

And so it is that Christ has set us free, so we must walk free. The pardon has been offered and the cell gate has been opened wide. Now it is up to us to walk out of the chains of bondage to live lawfully in the marvelous freedom that is found in and through Jesus Christ.

“I am embarrassed to be part of the church of Jesus Christ today because I believe it is an embarrassment to a holy God.” Leonard Ravenhill

Chapter Eleven

Naming the Name of Christ

“Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” 2 Timothy 2:19

The theology and terminology of many preachers today is quite repulsive to the heart that hunger and thirsts after righteous. Famous, influential, and respected preachers and authors publicly talk about being, as they call, “sinning Saints.” You might as well talk about an honest liar or a loving murderer! Scornfully, they mock at the mere thought of living a life that is repented from all sins. “Perfection is impossible” they believe as if a man can not truly live a life of holiness as Jesus did. “Follow me” Christ says, while these men say “you can’t.” While the New Testament preaches moral perfection, many preachers today preach moral imperfection. If you are not preaching “go and sin no more” then you are necessarily preaching “go and sin some more.” There can be no partial consecration! No half-conversion! No progressive sanctification! It must be instantaneous and entire. Maturity is progressive but purity is instantaneous. The knowledge of your mind grows in degrees but the obedience of your heart is there or it isn’t. You are either sanctified or unsanctified. You can be sanctified one moment and then unsanctified the next moment, but you cannot be both at the same time. Polar opposites never meet. There can be no loyal rebels. If Christ does not have all of you then Christ has none of you. You only have one heart and you cannot serve two masters. If you say, “I will give up my adultery this year and then maybe a few years

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down the road I'll give up my theft and lying" you are impenitent and unsaved still. If you do not repent of all your sin then you do not repent of sin at all. True Christianity starts with total and complete surrender to the Lordship of Christ. Partial repentance is no repentance at all.

Leonard Ravenhill said, "Oh, I'm just a saved sinner.' That's like saying you're a married bachelor. That's like saying you're an honest thief, or a pure harlot. You cannot be a saved sinner. You are either saved or you're a sinner."²⁵ He also said, "Get rid of this bunkum about the 'carnal Christian'. Forget it! If you're carnal, you're not saved."²⁶

Preachers who preach the "sinning saint" doctrine are in actuality strengthening the grip sinners have on their sins. The doctrine of justification in sin teaches the impenitent to be comfortable in their iniquity. If God accepts them in their sins, why change? The pulpit ought to be a place where sin is attacked and holiness is defended, but often today it is the opposite! It is an eternal tragedy when a preacher's sermons helps and strengthens a man's sins. Sermons that attack holiness instead of attacking sin are devastating, deadly, and damning!

God said, "I have not sent these prophets, and yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings" (Jer. 23:21-22).

Holiness must be seen in the pulpits if it is going to be seen in the pews. If a preacher does not live holy, what are the other people left to do? The more acceptable and common an act is, the more likely it is to be done. What the masses do, the individual will do. Men are more likely to do what everyone is doing and are less likely to do what nobody is doing.

²⁵ A sermon

²⁶ Ibid

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We have gotten to the point that it is commonly believed a man can be both a sinner and saint at the same exact time rather than being one or the other at any given time. These ungodly men preach and teach such contradictions because their own lives contradict the Word of God. The Bible has different terms other than “sinning saint” and those terms are hypocrite and backslider. Christ preached more extensively against religious hypocrisy and religious hypocrites than any other group of people. But rather than accusing the hypocrites in our preaching as Jesus did, our hypocritical preachers are justifying themselves, comforting their own hearts and the heart of sinners, yet subtly damning the souls of men. These preachers are broken bridges. They once may have bridged the gap between God and man, but now any that travel on them will die.

The way of the world and the way of heaven lead in different directions but more than different directions they lead in opposite directions. To walk with Christ you cannot walk with the world. Half hearted commitment is no commitment at all. Leave all and follow Christ. Leave your pride, leave your lust, leave your dishonesty, leave your selfish ambitions, leave all and follow Christ. Compromised Christianity is not Christianity at all. An unholy saint is no saint at all. A follower of sin is no follower of Christ. The Christian life is not a life of sinning slavery but of habitual holiness: “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (Jn. 8:34); “He that committeth sin is of the devil” (1 Jn. 3:8); Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin” (1 Jn. 3:9). Deliberate disobedience is abandoned at true conversion and is never revived except by backsliding in heart. You must forsake your sin for the Savior or else you forsake the Savior for your sin. The Christian life is not one of daily disobedience but daily obedience out of love and faith, so if sin occurs at all it should be the rare exception and not the daily rule. The Christian life is one of resisting temptation and fighting sin, not a life of total and complete surrender to the devil.

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Let the “sinning saint” carry on in his wickedness and he will in due time discover that he is among those whom Christ will say those dreadful words - “Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity” (Lk. 13:27). No word will bring more terror and horror to the heart of man than hearing from the lips of his Creator “Depart from me!” These words will echo in their heart for all eternity while they agonize in hell. Notice the impartiality of this separation – “*all ye workers of iniquity.*” Everyone who labors in the field of sin, instead of in the field of righteousness, will hear these horrifying words. They didn’t truly want Christ in life and therefore they won’t have Him in death. They want heaven but not holiness and that will never happen (Heb. 12:14). They wanted covering but not cleansing. They wanted pardon but not purging. They wanted forgiveness but not freedom. They wanted right-standing but they didn’t want righteousness. They wanted God to fully forgive their sins but they did not want to fully forsake their sins! As sure as hell is hot and God is good, they cannot get what they want.

More harm has been done to the holiness of the Church and the conversion of the world by religious hypocrites than by any other. How terrible it will be for the “sinning saints” who give Christ a bad name in the world. By simply calling themselves Christians and yet not actually follow in Christ’s ways, they make a mockery of Christ in front of the entire world. It is heinous blasphemy to be called by the name Christian and walk as worldly men do. You must walk as Christ walked if you dare to call yourself by His name. You must live as Christ lived. If you’re not willing to go all the way then please by all means go the other way. But for the name of Christ make up your mind.

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29). Do you want the Lamb of God to forgive you of your sins? Then you must allow Him also to take away your sins. It was your sins that nailed Christ to the cross. He gave His life so that you could have life! Yet life with sin is not life at all. Sin is bondage and it desires to hold you captive until death

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will come to slay you. Yet Death was slain by Christ. Captivity was taken captive!

God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us if we sin after our initial conversion but we must confess and repent and persevere again in holiness. He does not want to merely cleanse you from some sin, but he wants to cleanse you from all sin (1 Jn. 1:9). Is not all sin appalling to Him? Does not all sin infinitely offend Him? Does not all sin eternally separate men from Him? Therefore it is all sin that must be abandoned. When God casts sin into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, all those who are attached to sin will go with it. As a ball and chain it will drown you in the ocean of flames. Sin must be abandoned now because it cannot be abandoned then.

Good news! God is hunting to kill you! But He does it in order to give you life. He wants to kill your corrupted lifestyle and replace it with a lifestyle like His. He wants to shatter your heart of stone and replace it with a heart of flesh. He wants to kill you because without being put to death you cannot be resurrected in new life with Him. Through Jesus Christ our Lord you can be delivered from the penalty and practice of sin. God is waiting for you, to take you in, feed you and clothe you. But you must go back home to him. Seek the Lord while He can be found.

Section Two
Cleansing the Church

“The admittance into the true church of Christ is based on regeneration, not merely on an affirmation of a creed or doctrine.” John Bunyan
“Going to church doesn’t make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you an automobile.”
Billy Sunday

Chapter Twelve

The Church of the Comfortable and Tolerant

Once upon a time in the land called Feel Good there was a church. This church was called "The Church of the Comfortable and Tolerant" and it sat upon the mountain called "Prosperity." Very recently this church hired a new pastor, Pastor Peace Keeper, who just graduated from the Seminary of Smooth Talking.

The congregation of "The Church of the Comfortable and Tolerant" loved the new sermons of Pastor Peace Keeper. Some of their favorites were "God is Happy with Everyone," "Everything is Fine and Dandy," and "There is Nothing but Good Times Ahead."

One day Pastor Peace Keeper made a terrible mistake. He allowed Mr. Conscience into the pulpit. He soon realized that this was a poor decision. Mr. Conscience called their human mistakes "sins" and urged the good folks of the congregation to "repent". Because Mr. Conscience had never been properly trained and instructed at The Seminary of Smooth Talking he did not know that he wasn't supposed to talk about those things. Mr. Conscience thought he spoke with sincerity and boldness but the Pastor thought he spoke with severity and brashness. The congregation of the Comfortable and Tolerant were shocked and outraged at Mr. Conscience's audacity and arrogance. They said things among themselves like, "Who does this self-righteous legalistic Pharisee think he is coming and talking to us like that!

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Why should we allow this false teacher among us any longer to condemn us? We must see to it that he and his man-centered works-based gospel is done away with. How dare he tell us to change our ways and turn from our sins! Hasn't he ever heard of grace and unconditional eternal security?"

Rather than repenting of his own sins, Pastor Peace Keeper repented of letting Mr. Conscience into the pulpit. Instead of confronting the sins of the church, Pastor Peace Keeper confronted Mr. Conscience and told him that he must apologize to the congregation for his unloving and harsh words. Mr. Conscience was an uncompromising man and would not relent so Pastor Peace Keeper told Mr. Conscience that he must leave the church. Mr. Conscience was not welcome there any longer.

Once Mr. Conscience was removed from fellowship, the congregation was very happy that he was gone, except one elder named the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit was so grieved that Mr. Conscience had gone from the church that soon Holy Spirit left too. After a little while nobody even noticed that they were gone and the church continued to grow and grow until they had to build a bigger building. Pastor Peace Keeper was sure God was with Him and on His side; after all, His bank account was blessed and bigger than ever.

Everyone was happy once again in the land called Feel Good. Pastor Peace Keeper continued to sugar coat sweet and wonderful lies that made everyone comfortable in their sins and he heavily guarded his pulpit from abrasive truths. Who could blame him? You see, the Pastor loved his big home, his big church, and of course he loved his big income. He couldn't put such precious things on the line! So he absolutely guaranteed that The Church of the Comfortable and Tolerant were as satisfied and as happy as they possibly could be while they sat impenitent in their complacency, corruption, and compromise.

They lived the rest of their days happily ever after, that is, until they were finally cast into hell for their impenitence and

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sins. It was then that they wished that they had listened to Mr. Conscience instead of Pastor Peace Keeper, but it was too late.

It is a sad truth that today many preachers are not preparing the way of the Lord by making the path straight, instead they are removing the bumps in the road to hell to make it as comfortable as possible for those traveling on it. Hirelings, with their eyes on the benefit of their pockets rather than the benefit of the souls of men, have filled our pulpits. The claims of conscience are hushed and the demands of depravity unchecked. Many preachers are not helping to cleanse the church but are themselves part of the corruption of the church.

Joseph Parks said it best: "The man whose little sermon is 'repent' sets himself against his age, and will for the time being be battered mercilessly by the age whose moral tone he challenges. There is but one end for such a man. 'Off with his head!' You had better not try to preach repentance until you have pledged your head to heaven."²⁷

²⁷ *"These Sayings of Mine: Pulpit Notes on Seven Chapters of the First Gospel and Other Sermons,"* by Joseph Parker, published by I. K. Funk & Company, 1881, p. 62

“He said ‘I am a voice.’ Most preachers are echos.”
Leonard Ravenhill

“Our pulpits today are occupied with puppets rather than with prophets, with organizers rather than with agonizers.”
Leonard Ravenhill

Chapter Thirteen

Puppets or Preachers: Modern Day Marionettes

“If I yet pleased men, I should not be a servant of Christ.”
Galatians 1:10

The ways of God and the ways of the world are forever at an antithesis, being irreconcilable because they are entirely and utterly contrary one to another. Only when a sinful man forsakes the ways of the world can he be reconciled unto the Holy God of Heaven.

As the Church, we must seek to reconcile the world unto Christ, not seek to reconcile Christ unto the world. The world must be made acceptable unto the Lord, not the Lord made acceptable unto the world. The world must change to meet the requirement of the Lord, not the Lord change to meet the requirement of the world.

God doesn't need to wear make-up. We are not to present Him in a way that will make Him look more pleasant or appealing to sinners than He really is. We are to present Him as He is, with all of His requirements, with all His demands, with all His conditions, and man must give up his rebellion and hatred towards Him.

The great call upon the entire body of Christ is to reach a dying world with the living Gospel. Despite popular belief, and despite popular preference, there is no Christian exempt from this high-calling. All of our shoulders must carry the burden and the blessing of the Gospel. We all must know both the pain and the power which goes with fulfilling the Great Commission.

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God forbid that the Churches desire for earthly comfort results in the eternal torment of the world, or that the Churches compromised desire to please the world results in the eternal agony and suffering of this world. NO! A thousand times NO! Rather than sitting back in our own comfort and compromise while the world around us perishes, we must lay down our lives with its comforts and pick up the cross with its pain to see souls saved. We must lay down our reputations and appearances, disregarding the praises and disapprovals of men, to preach the truth at any cost!

Compromise is the result of failure to pay the cost of the cross. The fearfulness of reprisal and frightfulness of rejection has crippled and paralyzed many a Christian, halting and even reversing the true preaching of the gospel, both to the world and to the Church. But when the Church is crippled and paralyzed the devils are enabled and empowered to stampede mercilessly over the souls of men, without resistance or opposition.

Only those Christians who are dead to the world, dead to its praises and acceptance, can actually be of any true benefit to the world. Only those whom the world finds useless for their purposes are those whom God can find useful for His purposes. Those who are useless *to* the world are the only ones useful *for* the world! Only those who will not be used by the world can be used for the world. Those who are used by the world cannot be used for the Lord and those who are used by the Lord cannot be used by the world.

There is nothing more pathetic than a puppet preacher and nothing more grievous than a cowardice church. If any man is to be fearless it's a preacher and if any group is to be courageous it's the Church. If any message is to be declared boldly, without apology, it's the true and pure message of the gospel!

But if we were honest today, we would have to humbly and shamefully admit, that much of today's popular preaching is nothing more than puppet preaching, when a preacher seeks to

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please men rather than God, being controlled by his financial supporters and his “fan base” rather than being controlled by the Spirit of God, preaching for the approval of the audience of One. What a pitiful thing it is when a person is controlled by the crowds rather than by conviction! When they are moved by pleasure rather than by principle!

A great threat to the Kingdom of God, a major aid to the kingdom of darkness, a dominate reason for the moral depravation of America today, can be accredited to the puppet performance of preachers. Any moral problem is the pulpits problem; it’s a preacher’s problem! When the world is in darkness, those declared to be “the light of the world” are responsible! (Matt 5:14)

It both angers and saddens me when I hear preaching that can be spiritually discerned as purposefully man pleasing because I know that preaching which is pleasing to the ears of sinful men is more often than not displeasing to the ears of a holy God. What our Holy God wants to say is not what sinful men want to hear! That which God declares as freedom, a sinner calls bondage. What God declares as bondage, that sinners call freedom!

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:3). A man of God is one who lives to please God alone. A true preacher of God is one who preaches by and for God alone.

If we were honest today, we would have to humbly and shamefully admit that much of what is preached to the world, is a water-downed, manipulated and moldy gospel, sought to avoid the disapproval of men, and thus secures the disapproval of God!

The preaching which the Lord delights in is the preaching of His unadulterated, sharp doubled edged Sword. The preaching which the world delights in is the preaching which pats them on the back and tells them all is well and that God is not angry but smiles upon them in their sins.

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What the Lord delights in is what the devil dreads and what the world dismisses. But what the world delights in is what the devil desires and what the Lord detests! That which the Lord requires is that which the world rejects, and what the world accepts is what the Lord abhors!

The demand for being “politically correct” has resulted in being prophetically incorrect! The self-centered concern for being “positive” has overridden the God-centered burden for being truthful!

This generation always wants to hear and talk about God’s love for the world but never want to hear or talk about God’s wrath for the world. Multitudes are reminded of the “goodness” of God but not the “severity of God” (Romans 11:22)! Scriptures show us that Christ preached more about God’s wrath than He did about God’s love! Would anyone dare to be Christ-like in this age? Would any Church or community be willing to accept Christ if He was still in the flesh preaching today? To reject hell-fire preaching is to reject Christ who preached “hell-fire” and even coined the phrase.

There is a problem when the Jesus of the Scriptures doesn’t fit into the Jesus stereo type presented by the church, when the Jesus of the Scriptures does not match up with the Jesus taught at certain Seminaries! Scriptural illiteracy within the Church is a dangerous thing! A Church that doesn’t know its Bible is a deadly thing!

The Lord wants to convict the consciences of sinners, making them uncomfortable in their wickedness. What is worse than being under condemnation is being comfortable in it! But “condemnation” is seldom, if ever, preached about to the world, thus they are in comfort and ease in their sins! The Holy Spirit wants to bring conviction to the sinner through the law and then comfort the penitent with the Gospel, but much of what is preached today is counterproductive to this end.

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When the Lord wants men to feel a very real condemnation, there are Christians today who talk to them in such a way as to result in sinners feeling a false and imaginary carnal security.

Telling the world, “God accepts you as you are” will never provoke change or repentance! And that is a message that is a complete and utter denial of the truth which our Lord declared, “Unless a man is born again, he will not see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3). While you “come as you are,” as that is the only way you can come, you must leave differently! It’s because God does not accept a sinner into Heaven as he is that the sinner must come to God to get cleaned up in the first place!

But repentance has been neutered from the gospel by many, being found too hard to preach and too hard to live. Few travel the narrow road, even fewer preach it.

George Whitefield said, “It is a poor sermon that gives no offense; that neither makes the hearer displeased with himself nor with the preacher.”²⁸

We must see men changed, not see men pleased! If a Christian pleases all men there is something wrong with him. Jesus said, “Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you! for so did their fathers of the false prophets” (Luke 6:26). A Christianity which pleases a Christ-rejecting world is not a Christianity that has Christ in it.

If we were to look back upon much of the ministry which has been done in America over the past hundred years, we would see the horrible sight of the promises of God being preached without the conditions of God being declared. Heaven has been promised to the hell-bound and pardon has been preached to the unrepentant! Those at enmity have been declared reconciled and those still condemned have been declared justified. The unsaved have been told that they are saved! The straight gate to Heaven

²⁸ Whitefield Gold, p. 166

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has been made broad, so that one no longer has to “strive to enter in.” The sharp Word of God being made dull, so as not to offend a sinful world which is an offense to God!

That which is conditional has been declared unconditional, the required has been declared unnecessary, and many still wonder why our country at large hasn't been changed, being left almost entirely unaffected as a whole by the power of the Gospel in our day. With such a vast array of sin-cuddling sermons in our day, it is no wonder we have not seen massive sin-cleansing in our society.

Anyone who thinks contrary about the state of America is dreaming, looking with their eyes wide shut upon the moral degeneration of our country, where homosexuals can adopt innocent children, mothers can murder their own babies, and children can play fancy games of mass murder. America is on a grease slide down to hell and few are willing to even admit it, let alone try to save America from it.

At the root of all this compromise is a love for the pleasures of the world, a desire for acceptance, a rejection of the cross, and a wondering from the foolishness of God over into the wisdom of the world. Rejection needs to be embraced and acceptance needs to be rejected. The holy church and the sinful world can never be friends. That which belongs to God and that which belongs to Satan must war against one another.

The prison cell of pleasing man is a dark cell indeed, yet first appears to be bright and promising. A deadly trap it is which can drain the body of Christ of the Spirit and Truth of God.

God calls the Church to preach to the world not to please the world. We must preach what God says, not what men want. It's not what men want to hear, but what men need to hear, which God calls us to declare.

May we live to please the Lord alone,
Knowing this world is not our home.

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May we please the Lord in all we do!
To walk the narrow with the few.

A true Christian is one who is entirely controlled by the Lord, one who is wholly detached from the course of this world and is seeking to please and bring praise to the One who alone is worthy to be praised. “Whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. 2:29). A true follower of Christ is one who can be spoken of as Christ was, when they said of him, “We know that thou art true, and teach the way of God in truth, neither cares thou for any man: for thou regards not the person of men” (Matt 22:16).

There is a need today for the fear the Lord and the fear of the Lord alone. The fear of God should exclude the possibility of fearing man. A preoccupation with pleasing God excludes the possibility of being dictated by pleasing man. We must have a single heart of devotion, a singleness of fear, and a singleness of service if we are to produce anything worthy of the name Christianity.

We must be able to say with Jesus, “I always do those things that please Him” (John 8:29).

We can either change the world or allow the world to change us. We have the choice of being the fearful puppets of the world and the lying puppets of the devil, speaking whatever pleases men, or we can be the truthful servants of God, speaking what is pleasing and acceptable unto the Lord, not allowing our light to become darkness, but overcoming the darkness with the light.

The Church today needs to cleanse itself from man-pleasing, man-fearing, pulpit puppets.

“Any religious ventriloquist with a dummy can deceive a gullible generation that will not believe the truth.”
Vance Havner

Chapter Fourteen

Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing: Recognizing a False Teacher by Specific Characteristics

“I have not sent these prophets, and yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings” (Jer. 23:21-22).

I am not one to see a legion in every pig or a snake in every garden but through studying the Word of God and observing many modern preachers I can boldly declare in the full confidence and blessing of God that there are wolves disguised as sheep amongst our flocks! Though there are many wolves in the woods and fields of secularism and false religions, I am afraid that there are many who have wandered out of those territories looking for food and have entered into our own pastures.

False teachers can be distinctly defined because their characteristics are obvious enough and are clearly outlined in Scripture. Nevertheless, it seems that so few believers recognize them in these modern times. The True Shepherd spoke much on this issue, yet it seems to be a greatly neglected subject today as though our generation is exempt and our churches are not in any danger of false teachers. Wolves pose a serious threat to the flock of Christ so Christians must be wise and on the look-out for these types. This message is not one as “the boy who cried wolf” but rather is a serious and sobering warning. Many sheep have been led astray and have been caught in a deadly trap disguised as a

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beneficial program. Many churches have let down the walls of discernment and thus become spiritually broken down cities being trampled upon by the enemy. Our hearts must become as Jeremiahs who said “My heart within me is broken because of the prophets” (Jer 23:9).

Every single minister must be measured by the Word of God and not by their degrees or popularity. No minister should be exempt from this. No other tool can adequately measure a minister than the Holy Scriptures. We should be so familiar with the truth that when false teaching and false teachers are seen and heard by us they will stick out as black sheep and be automatically recognized. If we do not know the Word of God we will not recognize the lies of Satan. Many modern ministers would certainly be in big trouble if those in the pews actually started reading their Bibles as they should. If some congregations would open their Bibles certain preachers would have to shut their mouths. They would be caught red handed as the foul, fiendish, frauds that they really are.

Ezekiel’s ministry was sure not to be a popular one when he was told to “prophecy against the prophets...who prophesy out of their own hearts” (Ez 13:2). It’s time that we also risk our reputations and “prophecy against the prophets” that appear to be helping the body of Christ, but when in the actuality of reality they are gravely hurting the body of Christ. This is not a “naming names” article - there would be too many names to name! But it clearly reveals Scriptural characteristics to equip every Christian to individually examine ministers. I can’t do your own homework for you but I can give you the principles through which you can do your own.

While working on this chapter I awoke in the middle of the night after tossing, turning, and even sweating under the fear and torment of the thought that I myself was a heretic for writing a message such as this. Then I realized that this overwhelming fear was the handiwork of the accuser. I began to rest in the fact that all the points made are backed up by the truth of the Word.

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It is my hope and prayer that this message hits the devil hard and that it becomes a thorn in his side.

Their Appearance

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

“Oh I'm not too worried about false prophets. I'm sure I'll recognize them when I see them,” someone might think to themselves. You don't know the nature of deception. Recognizing false teachers is not easily done considering that they have the appearance of being sheep. Does a spy have the appearance of being a government official for the enemy? If he did he wouldn't be able to accomplish his purpose. The mission of a deceiver is to deceive. Deceivers will not always appear deceptive, or else they would never be able to deceive anyone. Their lies will always be disguised as truth. Beware because their charm will be enticing and their glamour blinding for those who refuse to be discerning.

The neighbors of serial killers who were caught always say, “I just can't believe that he could commit such horrendous crimes. I knew him personally; he was such a nice guy.” Likewise, when a nice, friendly, commercial smile preacher with blue eyes and shiny white teeth teaches doctrines which are contrary to the Word of God, his followers defend him by saying, “Oh but he's just so sincere and genuine.” Be careful. Appearance can be quite deceiving. “Never judge a book by its cover” and never judge a man by his outward appearance (John 7:24). He may look like a fellow believer outwardly but inwardly he is a wolf who is out for himself and not for the flock. While many believe a false prophet is the town nut who has no teeth and walks around babbling spiritual nonsense, this is not always the case. Often they will look better and more successful than everyone else, portraying the image that everyone would want to

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be like. Their grass many look greener and their water clearer, but they are poisoned with lies and seasoned with deceit.

Their Reputation

“Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:26).

It would seem that the very ones that the earth respects and adores are the very ones that Heaven rejects and abhors. You must always be cautious when you hear men highly singing the praises of a certain minister and telling you how wonderful he truly is. There is a problem if all men speak well of him. It seems to be often that those whom everyone speaks nasty of are the ones that I find uncompromisingly preaching the Word of God. The top concern of a false teacher is to please man while the interest of a true and faithful witness is to please God. Those who please man often do not please God and those who please God often do not please man.

The popular minister is not like Christ who was thrown out of the synagogues and who foretold that those who follow Him, “They will put you out of the synagogues” (John 16:2) too. All of God’s greatest men have been some of the most hated men. John Wesley and George Whitefield who founded early Methodism and sparked some of the great revivals of history, Charles Finney who was the greatest revivalist and soul winner America has ever seen, William & Catherine Booth who formed and lead the Salvation Army, were all people that were rejected by churches and the world. If a "good" name or a "good" reputation automatically meant a good preacher, what does that mean for the early Church that was "spoken against everywhere" (Ac 28:22)? What about the Apostle Paul who was called a “plague” (Acts 24:5) unfit to live (Acts 25:24) and a heretic (Acts 24:14)? Many times wolves are called sheep and sheep are called wolves!

Jeremiah was called a traitor when he was the prophet that actually spoke for the good of the nation! False prophets were

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thought of as loyal Israelites when they spoke for their own benefit! Consider the perception of the people who observed both Jeremiah and the false prophets. While Jeremiah “shouted” “violence and plunder” (Jer 20:8), the false prophets gently spoke of “peace, peace” (Jer 6:14). How odd, how strange, and how abrasive Jeremiah must have appeared to the onlookers. He was thought of as being negative, condemning, and judgmental compared to the easy, tolerant, smooth talking prophets of his day. Jeremiahs spoke the words that shattered like a hammer. The false prophets spoke soft words that couldn’t prick even the strongest conscience. Their messages may drip honey and their words are smoother than oil but their feet go down to death and their doctrines lay hold of hell.

A minister will no doubt be rejected by Heaven if he is accepted by the world, “for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Cor. 6:14). “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). I cannot think of a single minister of God in the New Testament that got along with this sinful world. Most of them ended up being martyred. Those who get along with the world must not be getting along God who the world has rejected. A false teacher will be allowed to preach even on the vilest of TV channels. You can expect to find their books even in secular stores and hear their messages of “How to never be hurt again” and “Walking in the anointing of wealth” on secular channels like I have seen. A false teacher will have the stamp of approval of the devil and the stamp of approval of the world but will not have the stamp of approval of Heaven. The only thing Heaven will stamp on them will be the words “DEPART.”

The false teachers will reign high and lifted up on the mountains of acceptance while the true and faithful are forced into the desert of rejection, soon to be imprisoned and beheaded. Even the most bizarre "prophetic" words are being well received

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while the foundational and biblical message of "repent" is entirely neglected and largely ignored. Rather than being salt we have many candy-land preachers who are serving the never satisfied bellies of men. "The prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and my people love to have it so" (Jer 5:31).

Their Message

"For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, Saying, Peace, peace! When there is no peace" (Jer. 8:11, Eze 13:16).

The comparison between Jeremiah's message and the message of the other prophets stands in sharp contrast. As Jeremiah shouted his message of "violence and plunder" (Jer 20:8) for Israel if they didn't repent and turn back to God, the other prophets came with a message of peace and prosperity for the wicked and backslidden nation. They became very popular and loved with their ivory-tower message. They gave false hope and false peace because "there is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked" (Isa 48:22). They make the enemies of God feel as though they were His friends. They make those whom God is against feel as though God were for them. They flower up that which is ugly by calling that which is abominable, adorable. (*God loves us not because we are lovable but because He is loving*). They make those who are in terrible danger of hell feel as though they were in secure safety on a cruise ship to Heaven. "They continually say to those who despise me, 'The Lord has said, 'you shall have peace'; and to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'no evil shall come upon you'" (Jer 23:17). The refreshment which they give is a delusion and the comfort they give is imaginary. They will prophecy lies and deceit to sooth those who are on their way to eternal destruction.

David Kirkwood said, "Of course, no teacher in the church is going to stand up and declare that what he is teaching is contrary to the New Testament. Rather, he will neglect certain

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important scriptures and twist others to persuade his constituency that he is teaching the truth. This is being done today by many very popular and influential teachers who teaching about a grace that is foreign to the Bible. The grace they proclaim is not the true grace that leads to holiness."²⁹

The deceptive part is that false teachers will appear to be preaching grace, but it's another grace. They appear to be preaching the gospel, but it's another gospel. They appear to be preaching Christ, but it's another Christ. The subtly is so deceptive that few are able to make the distinction.

A false teacher will tell his people whatever it is that they want to hear. They will play the chameleon and will always be politically correct. God's preachers are always prophetically correct. False teachers avoid any truth, no matter how important, that could be controversial or could rock the boat. They don't want to offend any big titers! These preachers are peace-keepers, not peace-makers. Their messages keep the peace between themselves and men rather than creating peace between men and God. Their messages are always pleasant and easy to swallow, intentionally avoiding the heavy and hard scriptures in the Bible. A false teacher goes with the crowd. God's men, more often than not, always goes against it!

Sometimes it is not what a preacher says but what he fails to say that makes him a false teacher. Very often heresy is highly exalting one biblical truth over the rest, so that other biblical truths become neglected. When a man preaches about God's blessings but never God's curses, God's mercy but never His wrath, God's forgiveness but never His condemnation, you can be sure that He is not preaching the full council of God's Word. A preacher of the Bible is to preach all that the Bible preaches.

False teachers speak of prosperity through the gospel but never poverty through the gospel, as the Apostles suffered (Acts 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:8-11, 2 Co 6:10). They promise an easy life, Christ

²⁹ The Great Gospel Deception

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promises a crucified life. They serve the flesh as opposed to serving the Spirit. They appeal to the greedy heart of man as oppose the conscience of man. The days in which Paul warned about are devastatingly upon us, though few seem to recognize it. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Ti 4:3-4). These congregations have an appetite for fleshly pleasure, a craving for self satisfaction, a lust for covetous prosperity and power. Their Christianity is a façade and a front to mask their worldly and fleshly goals, ambitions, and desires. They are not servants of Christ but seek to make Christ a servant of them, rather than Lord. Their religion is just a means to their own end.

These teachers sit on thrones of greed and are crowned with covetousness. Their messages will manipulate Scriptures to mean the exact opposite of what it was originally for. “Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap” (Gal 6:7) is often used when a preacher is begging for money and tithes. However, in context this particular Scripture has nothing to do with money but everything to do with death and life. The following verse says: “For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal 6:8). Whatever happened to freely giving and expecting nothing back? Modern preachers will teach “give and expect your blessing back!” Giving to get is greedy giving.

Christ had no “Cadillac donkey” as one preacher put it, but he did come humbly on a borrowed donkey (Zech. 9:9)! They live in mansions while Christ had nowhere to lay His head (Matt. 8:20). “Christ became poor so that you can become rich” they teach. The Early Church would not have been convinced of such a doctrine. How many of these hot-shot prosperity preachers can say with the great Apostle Paul “To the present hour we both

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hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless” (1 Cor 4:11)? Considering their message of “name it and claim it” they must think they have more faith than the Apostle Paul since they are prospering while he was suffering.

Sure you can earn a lot of money and be a Christian. God blesses you to bless others. You can also be poor and be a Christian. The problem is when faith becomes a ticket to riches and Christians are taught that they are entitled to wealth or they are being ripped off by the devil or are weak in faith if they are not millionaires.

Rather than preaching eternal life many are preaching life enhancement. Rather than preaching deliverance from sin and hell they preach deliverance from earthly suffering and hurt. It is a carnal gospel for the carnally minded and nothing more than that.

Their Audience

“Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many” (Mt 24:11).

The pulpit-less street corner preachers are often viewed as being false preachers while those with large mega churches are thought of as “men of God” with “the blessing and anointing of God.” This again is judging by outward appearance and by the worldly standard of success as opposed to judging the content of their message by the Scriptures. If John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness, or Jesus Christ came preaching on the hill top, or the Apostle Paul came preaching in the market place, I wonder what modern Christianity would think of them? It says that “many” false teachers will “deceive many.” This means that they will have many followers, even enough to fill a mega-Church. Yes, false prophets will be mega church pastors. If we measure a man’s anointing or the blessing of God on a ministry by how many people believe in the message and the messenger, then the false prophets in the Old Testament would

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be from God and men like Jeremiah would be considered an unsuccessful, unanointed, unblessed man.

Jesus said, “For false christ’s and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Mr 13:22). A false teacher will deceive both the sinful and the uneducated. Their audience may be made up of both sinners and saints. They appeal to the sinner because sinners never are made to feel bad about their lifestyles but rather are given false hope and false peace. And they appeal to the saint because they appear to be the real deal; they are wearing sheep’s clothing though they are wolves. “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.” (2 Cor 11:13-14) May this ring in our ears and sting in our hearts!

Their Motive

“Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?” (Ezekiel 34:2)

The motive and reason behind a false teacher is entirely selfish, whereas a true and faithful minister is entirely selfless. A false teacher has an eye on people’s bank accounts while a true preacher has his eyes on Judgment Day when we will all give an account. False teachers may have the appearance of loving people, yet they are truly only concerned about themselves to further and enhance their own processions and careers. They feed themselves when they need to be feeding the flocks. They skin the sheep alive to cloths themselves, leaving the sheep beaten, battered, and bloody to die. Paul was “poor, yet making many rich” (2 Co 6:10), while these men are rich by making many poor! With their manipulating words and twisting of Scriptures they ransack and plunder the pockets of unsuspecting people to fill their own. Some preachers have no shame of this and openly admit in their sermons to their congregations that they are out for “prosperity.”

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Leonard Ravenhill wrote, “Preachers who have homes and cottages by the lake, a boat on that lake, and a big bank balance, still beg for more... These dear, doll-like preachers-boys no longer change their suits once a day, but two or three times a day. They preach the Jesus of the stables, but themselves live in swank hotels. For their own lusts they bleed the audience financially in the name of the One who had to borrow a penny to illustrate His sermon. They wear expensive Hollywood suits in honor of One who wore a peasant’s robe... How fearful will all this be in the judgment morning?”³⁰

David Ravenhill said, “I’m convinced that the carnal, cunning, conniving, crooked crooks that Jesus drove out of the Temple are still among us today. These modern day moneychangers are forever devising new and deceptive doctrines to defraud God’s people out of His/their money. These masters of deceit have now set up their changing tables throughout the Christian television industry... Stop pandering to these moneychangers. These men and women live like kings while spending your money to buy mansions and jets for themselves. They dine in the finest restaurants, wear the latest designer fashions and then have the audacity to tell you that you can live the same way as long as you give to their ministry.”³¹

Church goers have been supporting their pastor’s mansion when the mission field is in need of support. They pay for the fine dining of these prosperity preachers while children are starving to death in this world. Big name preachers have their own private jets, funded by their followers, while we still have unreached people group the gospel hasn’t been brought to!

The devil showed Christ all the Kingdoms of the earth and said “All these things I’ll give you if you fall down and worship me” (Matt 4:9). Many preachers basically show the church all the riches and wealth of the world and say, “All these

³⁰ Why Revival Tarries, p. 49

³¹ Article: Modern Day Money Changers

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things God will give you if you reach into your pocket and give to me.”

A true preacher speaks for God while a false preacher speaks for himself. “There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof” (Eze. 22:25). The ingredients that make up their ministries are: greed, covetousness, jealousy, lies, and selfishness. Because they are self-seeking and self-serving their followers are the same. They are greedy, ungodly men who outwardly appear righteous, but the inside of the cup is filthy and covered in slime.

A false teacher may preach a message saturated with truth but it will be seasoned with lies. They will use the Bible and speak the name of Christ. Their Christian language will be the same as ours and that is their deception. Even the devil lies with half truths! These men may encourage people to go after God but will not convict people of their sin. A preacher is “to exhort and convict those who contradict” (1 Tim 1:9). They never warn people that their sin is destructive to their life, deadly to their soul, and disgusting to a Holy God. A watchman that does not blow the trumpet when the sword is coming must either be sleeping with the rest of the city or is on the side of the enemy!

Their Results

“And He spoke a parable to them: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?” (Luke 6:39)

The sad truth is that many modern preachers are empty wells, spoiled milk, and broken bridges. They are captives who promise freedom, slaves who guarantee liberty. “Both prophet and priest are profane; yes, in my house I have found their wickedness’ says the Lord” (Jer. 23:11). They have a reputation among men for being alive but are just as dead in their sins as the worst of men in the eyes of God.

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If they were of God, they would be like God. If they walked with Jesus, they would preach like Jesus. A false teacher will give birth to false converts. “But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings” (Jer. 23:22).

They will never, or rarely, speak on the anger and wrath of God because they risk becoming unpopular, so those who sit under these men feel that God accepts them just as they are and that there is no need for repentance. Many today are being sold forgiveness but not at the cost of repentance. They are promised Heaven yet without holiness. Men need medicine but are receiving candy. “Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life” (Eze. 13:22). “They commit adultery and walk in lies; They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, And her inhabitants like Gomorrah” (Jer. 23:14). The hands of sinners were strengthened in both Ezekiel and Jeremiah's day and because of modern messages which lack repentance but are saturated in the love of God, sinners hold tightly to their sins today!

A false teacher will turn the grace of God into lasciviousness by teaching that God came to save men in their sin, not from their sin. “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:4). They make the grace of God into a license for wickedness, thus denying the Lordship of Christ. They even preach against “Lordship” in salvation. These evil men ultimately say, “Enjoy your sin and enjoy Jesus too.” This is the old destructive lie which says Jesus can be your Savior but doesn't have to be your Lord; that God is pleased with you even in disobedience and rebellion.

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This modern heresy is an ancient one:

“They say unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of this own heart, No evil shall come upon you” (Jer. 23:17).

“Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations?’” (Jer. 7:9-10)

This is the despicable message of freedom to sin rather than freedom from sin. They speak death disguised as life. They lead to bondage cloaked as freedom. They snuff out the lamp of God's Law and flaunting their lawlessness unashamedly as they walk in the darkness. “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush” (Jer. 6:15, 8:12).

A true shepherd will lead the flock to the pastures of God's Word for nourishment, yet these shepherds lead the flock to the slaughter house of false doctrine. They twist the Holy Bible to accommodate their unholiness when “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

Martin Luther said, "They should also acknowledge such preachers as right Sheppard's, that is, as servants of Christ and stewards of God, and pay no attention at all to the fact that the world proclaims and damns them as heretics and seducers. Those who preach something else than the gospel...may indeed praise themselves ten times with the name of the Apostles, adorn themselves with the name and title of the Christian Church, and even raise the dead. Actually they are horrible wolves and murderers that do not spare the flock of Christ, but scatter, torture, and slaughter it."³²

³² Faith and Freedom, p. 55

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The Answer

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears... But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim 4:3, 5).

After the Apostle Paul had warned Pastor Timothy of the coming itching ear preachers, the well experienced Apostle told the Pastor exactly what he should do: the work of an evangelist! “But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim 4:5). It was as if Paul was saying “yes, men are preaching lies and will continue to deceive the multitudes. But as for you, preach the truth”. We can constantly judge and condemn other ministries, or we can have ministries of our own. It is the truth that will prevail against lies!

David Wilkerson said “We are in a famine in this land. A famine of hearing the Word of the Lord and it’s going to get worse, it’s going to rage, and many are going to starve spiritually and fall by the wayside on the right and on the left...Name me one Jeremiah type preacher on television. Name me one man who stands unashamedly, not afraid of his income, not afraid of anything! Name one in the media now who’s standing up like Jeremiah or John the Baptist! Where are they? Where are the voices? ... The pulpit was meant to be a burning bush, where a fire was never to go out. And the man who stood in that sacred pulpit is suppose to be a man shut in with God, a man who waits on God, in God’s presence until he hears the Word of the Lord, until he hears from the throne of God. And he comes out before the people with the mind of God. He’s to speak with plainness the Scriptures said, his speech not in the wisdom of man. He’s to speak with spiritual authority. He’s to be absolutely fearless. He’s

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to name sin. He's to be the voice of the living God in these last days! This is a burning bush!"³³

If you want to be a true and faithful witness, you must seek to serve the glory of God and not the glory of yourself. You must be out to expand the Kingdom of God and not to expand your own wallet with earthly treasure that will perish anyways. You must be a salty preacher causing mouths to thirst for righteousness and cuts to burn with conviction.

Vance Havner said "God's preacher is not popular...The King sent Micaiah to prison with hard fare prescribed, bread and water of affliction. True prophets are not always rewarded with an increase in salary and a Church downtown. Many of God's Micaiahs still eat his fare."³⁴

To answer the well known question, "Can't we all just get along?" The answer is "No." The only way that the world will accept you is if you accept the world. Christ came to cause division (Matt 10:34). We must be completely for Christ. We cannot have any side loyalties to the world. If you want to follow in the way of the Master, kiss the world good-bye!

Throw reputation out the window for the sake of the truth. Endure afflictions, overcome any hardship; persevere through any tribulation to recover even one sheep that has wondered off. Count it a blessing and a joy when you are hated, rejected, spoken badly of, persecuted, and even killed. Live your life with your heart for God's glory. Even if people do not care for you or your message, care for people and their souls.

The only way to cleanse the church from the corruption of false teaching and purify it from the poison of deception is to preach and teach the uncompromising truth of God's Word.

³³ Sermon: A Famine In The Land.

³⁴ "By Still Waters," Chapter 25: There is Yet One Man, pp. 82-84.

“The cross is a sword and often separates friends and divides households. The idea that Christ always brings peace and patches up differences is found nowhere in His own teachings. Quite the contrary is true. For a man to cast in his lot with Christ often means that he will be opposed by his blood relatives and will find his true family ties only in the community of regenerated souls.” A. W. Tozer

Chapter Fifteen

Called to the Cross: Forsake Cowardly Christianity

“And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”
Luke 9:23

The cross is a modern symbol of popular fashion but it was an ancient instrument of painful death. Biblical Christianity not about wearing a cross but bearing your cross. The cross was never meant to be worn on a Christian necklace but to be worn on a Christians back. The cross was not intended to be hung on the wall but men were intended to be hung on it.

This cross, this instrument of tormenting pain and agonizing death, is the entry fee and the continual price of following Christ. The cross is not for select Christians or for mature believers only, but it is for all Christians who will follow in the way of their Master.

As fundamental as any Christian doctrine, the truth that all Christians are to carry their cross is absolutely essential and undeniably necessary for the true Christian life. That we are to carry our cross for Jesus is just as biblically true as Christ dying on the cross for us, so if you are going to reject the former you might as well reject the latter as well. The message of the cross is not only that Christ died for us but that we are to die daily for Him.

We live in a day when Christ’s cross, in its reality with its power to completely convert and cleanse, is seldom taught. But

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we also live in a day when the Christians cross is even more uncommonly taught. To fail to preach the requirement of cross-bearing is to fail to preach like Jesus Christ. Christianity without the Christians cross is Christianity without a real Christian.

Christ taught that the man who follows Him must “take up his cross daily” (Luke 9:23). A cross-less Christian is a Christ-less Christian, and is therefore no Christian at all. The promise given to followers of Christ is not a nice new set of friend or a happy community to raise children in but the promise given by Christ is a cross. Pastors promise “seekers” happiness, fulfillment, luxury, pleasure, reward and everything else if they come to Christ but the wisdom of the world is not the wisdom of God. Christ promised agony of flesh, rejection by the world, and finally death to self to those who sought to follow Him; And in the end, He promised eternal life.

But the suffering church of the New Testament will not suffice for our worldly appetites today. We must have a successful church. The persecuted church of the New Testament does not meet the requirements of our standard for living. We must have a prospering church. This deviation has caused the cross of self-denial to be abandoned and the cushion of self-gratification has risen in its place.

A true church is a crucified church. The cross affects every single aspect of the crucified man. The man who hangs on a cross is radically impacted by the cross that his family, his money, his comfort, his entire life does not go untouched. The cross covers a man from top to bottom, from his head to his feet, and there is no escaping this. There is no beautifying the cross. It is rugged wood stained with blood and reeks with the odor of death. And Christ says, “Get on it.”

This cross of the Christian includes the battle against the flesh, the battle against the world, and the battle against the devil. Opposition from authorities, opposition from false brethren, opposition from family members, were all apart of normal Christianity in the days of the disciples. These are still

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characteristics of the normal Christian life today. Just as surely as happiness in Heaven is promised to the Christian, so also is opposition in the world guaranteed, but so also is the strength to overcome and be more than a conqueror promised to the followers of Christ.

There are many unspoken attitudes in the hearts of Church-goers that I have seen and observed today. "I'll live for God so long as it doesn't damage my reputation." "I'll live for Jesus so long as it doesn't negatively affect my relationship with my family or my finances." "I'll witness for Jesus so long as I am not arrested and persecuted." Ultimately this is saying, "I'll follow Christ so long as there is no cost - so long as there is no cross."

All of these attitudes stink with the stench of the wisdom of the men. They smell with the fragrance of the spirit of the world and are entirely contrary to the wisdom and knowledge of God. This is the cowardice which has replaced Christianity. The wisdom of God and the knowledge of the Lord are not to seek to save your life but to lose your life for Christ's sake (Lk. 17:33).

Christianity begins when men and women are willing to lay down all that they have for all that Christ wants. Until a person gets to the point where they are willing to be crucified with Christ, to be willing to let go of all in order to gain Him, they have yet to reach even the entry level of Christianity. This mentality of total abandonment unto Christ is not to be the exception for the Christians life but it is the absolute rule.

Being a follower of Christ, boldly and loudly proclaiming the gospel, and living a holy life will surely cost you your entire life. The path of Christ is the path of martyrdom. The path of Christianity has always been lit by the light of burning martyrs. Though not all Christians will die the death of a martyr, all Christians are to live the life of a martyr.

The modern comfortable church must be transformed into a conquering church and that will happen only when this heroic spirit of Christianity is recaptured. We must fall so much in love

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with Christ that the anthem of the church becomes, “His Kingdom at any cost!” We must be willing to bear any burden, overcome any obstacle, and endure any persecution to spread the gospel and save souls to expand His Kingdom on earth.

As an old hymn says,

*“There is a love constraining me
To go and seek the lost;
I yield, O Lord, my all to Thee
To save at any cost”³⁵*

When our Christian encouragements consist of, “Just stay out of trouble,” “Don’t get arrested,” “Don’t make people angry,” “Be safe,” “Don’t be a nuisance,” “Don’t be a martyr,” then it’s no wonder the devil and his kingdom continues to advance and gain more and more power in our country and in the rest of the world. The salvation of souls must be viewed more valuable than the security of our own lives. A soul winning church is a church that would rather see their own lives taken than to see the souls of lost men damned.

Oh that the church would completely cleanse itself of its cowardice and compromise to stand before the enemies of God with absolute courage to proclaim the gospel of Christ. Cowardly Christianity never poses a threat to the powers and principalities of darkness. Cowardly Christianity never grabs hold of a generation and re-shapes history. Only Courageous Christianity is Kingdom Christianity. A pampered church is never a powerful church. A comfortable church is a crippled church but Christ wants a crucified church, dead to the love of praise, the practice of sin, and the pleasure of the world.

E. M. Bounds said a Christian “must throw himself, with all the abandon of a perfect, self emptying faith and a self-consuming zeal, in his work for the salvation of men. Hearty, heroic, compassionate, fearless martyrs must the men be who

³⁵ Hymn quotation found in “Why Revival Tarries” by Leonard Ravenhill, page 127. Bethany House Publishing.

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take hold of and shape a generation for God. If they be timid time-servers, place-seekers; if they be men-pleasers or men-fearers; if their faith has a weak hold on God or His Word; if their denial be broken by any phase of self or the world, they cannot take hold of the Church of the World for God.”³⁶

The Church which fears neither death nor man but only God is an unstoppable Church. Their very blood becomes drops of water for the seeds of the gospel. To silence the Apostles the devil needed to resort to execution – it was the only way he could stop them. Is that true of us today? Will the decrease of your popularity or favor silence your lips? Will the prospect of suffering and pain hinder your speech? Or will you all the more boldly proclaim the gospel and dedicate your life for God’s purposes? Only once the Church is dead entirely to self and absolutely to the world can it live wholly to the Lord.

Michael Brown said, “You know who wins the battle? You know who wins the war? Whoever is willing to die for the principles they stand for.”³⁷

Horatius Bonar said, “Are we Christians? Or are we worldlings? Where is the self-denial of the New Testament days? Where is the separation from a self-pleasing luxurious world? Where is the cross, the true badge of discipleship, to be seen — except in useless religious ornaments for the body, or worse than useless decorations for the sanctuary? "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion!" Is not this the description of multitudes who name the name of Christ? They may not be "living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry." But even where these are absent, there is 'high living' — luxury of the table or the wardrobe — in conformity to 'this present evil world.' "At ease in Zion!" Yes! there is the shrinking... from hard service; from 'spending and being spent; from toil and burden-bearing and conflict; from self-sacrifice and noble service; for the Master's

³⁶ “A Treasury of Prayer” compiled by Leonard Ravenhill page 91. Printed by Ravenhill Books in 1973.

³⁷ A Sermon

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sake. There is conformity to the world, instead of conformity to Christ! There is a laying down, instead of a taking up of the cross. Or there is a lining of the cross with velvet, lest it should gall our shoulders as we carry it! Or there is an adorning of the cross, that it may suite the taste and the manners of our refined and intellectual age. Anything but the bare, rugged and simple cross! We think that we can make the strait gate wider, and the narrow way broader, so as to be able to walk more comfortably to the heavenly kingdom. We try to prove that 'modern enlightenment' has so refined 'the world and its pleasures', that we may safely drink the poisoned cup, and give ourselves up to the inebriation of the Siren song. "At ease in Zion!" Even when the walls of our city are besieged, and the citadel is being stormed! Instead of grasping our weapons, we lie down upon our couches! Instead of the armor, we put on the silken robe! We are cowards, when we should be brave! We are faint-hearted, when we should be bold! We are lukewarm, when we should be fervent! We are cold, when we should be full of zeal! We compromise and shuffle and make excuses, when we should lift up our voice like a trumpet! We pare down truth, or palliate error, or extenuate sin — in order to placate the world, or suit the spirit of the age, or 'unify' the Church. Learn self-denying Christianity. Not the form or name, but the living thing. Let us renounce the lazy, luxurious, self-pleasing, fashionable religion of the present day! A self-indulgent religion has nothing in common with the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; or with that cross of ours which He has commanded us to take up and carry after Him — renouncing ease and denying self."³⁸

We must cleanse and rid ourselves of all thoughts of self-preservation and replace it with actions of self-sacrifice. Our attitude must be the same as Christ who said, "Not my will, but Thine, be done" (Lu 22:42). Our perspective must be that of Paul who said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,

³⁸ Self-Denial Christianity

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worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:17-18).

Lay down your life with all of your hopes, all your dreams, and all your desires for the sake of Christ and His gospel and pick up your cross, seeking not to save your own life but to give your life for the Kingdom of God. The gates of hell will shake and the hosts of hell will tremble when we cleanse ourselves of all cowardice and our heartbeat becomes: “His Kingdom at any cost!”

“Modern Christians hope to save the world by being like it, but it will never work. The Church’s power over the world springs out of her unlikeness to it, never from her integration into it.” A. W. Tozer

Chapter Sixteen

Brethren Beware

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” 2 Corinthians 6:17

In a day that is calling for unity, is there a place for separation? Is there a reason for the worldliness of the church? Why do many professing Christians live entirely different than Christ lived? When the world and the church are full of wickedness and sin, what are we to do? We tread on dangerous ground, with dangerous people, during dangerous times, so how should we guard ourselves?

Never in this life will you see a zebra walking side by side with a lion; nor will you see a lamb walking side by side with a wolf. The reason is simple enough: the two are opposed to one another. The instinct that animals have that protect them and keep them safe can very easily be ignored by us humans. Modern churches can sometimes be dumber than animals. The Bible warns us of all the dangerous trails we can tread on and all the deadly pits we can fall into. In this fallen world, being hurt is not only a possibility and a probability, it is a certainty. However God’s Word is a lamp onto our feet to protect us from falling alongside those who have fallen already. Traps, trials, and testing all await the Christian that makes his way through the City of Sin to get to the City of Zion.

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The Bible says, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor. 15:33-34).

When the scripture says “Be not deceived” it is implying the possibility of it. If it were not possible, he would not have warned them. When driving in a city that you are not well acquainted with, it is very possible that you will take a wrong turn and end up somewhere that you did not intend to go. In this life, we must make a conscious decision and effort to not be deceived due to our lack of knowledge. We must study our Bibles as a reliable map and follow the Holy Spirit as a trust worthy guide so we can walk as “more than conquerors” in the pathways of purity.

What is it that the Spirit says through the Scriptures? Well this verse says that evil company corrupts good habits. Christian, heed to God’s word of wisdom and awake to the watchmen’s warning and choose your steps accordingly. In Christianity some men rise, many men fall, but those that remain do so for a reason. More often than not, those that live long in holiness are those that walked with other holy people. Through fellowship we encourage and strengthen each other. If you walk with sinners, you will learn their sinfulness. If you walk with saints, you will learn their purity. There is a reason the Bible says, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Ps. 1:1).

It truly is no wonder some who attempt to follow Christ do not remain strong but fall away into sin. The answer is plain enough if you look at who they associate with. Could it be that they are keeping company with sinners? It is said that within 6 months you will be just like your closest friends. whoever they may be and whatever they may do.

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Brethren, beware! There are traitors in our midst. Not everyone in fellowship with Christian men is in fellowship with God. Some who walk among us appear to be the children of light but they are deceptive just like their true father the devil. Some do not have the blood of Christ in their veins but rather have the blood of Christ on their hands. This is a simple, sobering, and sublime message for the church today: Guard Your Fellowship!

Guarding your Personal Fellowship

We see the example of the early church when it comes to the importance of guarding fellowship. They didn't allow just anyone into the midst of their underground church. They had a watchful eye and cautious heart.

A great persecutor of the church was Saul, an anti-Christ, who became the builder of the church Paul, the Apostle of Christ. He became a defender of the faith that he used to blaspheme and a recruiter for the church that he used to put to death.

The disciples, however, were not quick to invite and welcome him into their fellowship. Remembering the words of Jesus, they did not believe mere confession to be absolute proof of conversion. They looked for the fruit.

The Bible says, "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26). It was not until they learned that Paul had already walked closely with death because of his witness that they accepted him into their fellowship. Paul, who once persecuted the faith, was now being persecuted for the faith! There is no stronger and surer evidence of a faithful follower of Christ than being willing to follow Christ to the cross. Although the disciples in Jerusalem were wrong in their initial judgment, they were right in their judging. The blood of their families and themselves could be spilt if they welcome a wolf in sheep's clothing into the fellowship.

In a war only loyal soldiers will do. Any wise general knows to look out for spies and traitors. But oh how we have lost

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simple logic in the day and age in which we live! Claiming to be wise pastors have become fools! Our churches are full of ungodly, unrighteous, unholy people, and pastors boast about how their churches are open to everyone. No wonder you see so much of the world in the church! These churches are made up of the world! The church is supposed to be for the edification of the saints, not for the entertaining of the world! But I fear many churches are nothing more than social clubs for worldlings.

Charles Spurgeon asked: Are we “feeding sheep or amusing goats?”³⁹ Much of what you see in the churches of America today is the latter.

Although welcoming an unholy person into our churches today may not result in the loss of our heads, as the early church was concerned about with Saul, it can result in the loss of our holiness. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9).

If a city lets down its walls, what’s to stop those who desire its harm from coming in? And that is precisely what we have done and that is precisely why we suffer. Sure you may have the largest church in America, but it may also be the largest gathering of religious sinners in America. Should we open the gates or close the gates? Should we build up the walls or let down the walls? Should we raise the standard of a Christian or should we toss out any notion that there is a standard?

The Apostle Paul said, “I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat” (1 Cor 5:9-11).

This is what the Bible says whether we like it or not. Paul is telling us that there is a standard of living for anyone “called a

³⁹ Sermon: Feeding Sheep or Amusing Goats?

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brother.” Every individual is, in a sense, a representation of their family. Anyone “called a brother” represents all of Christianity whether they want that responsibility or not. A hypocrite is the cause of God’s glory being turned to shame.

When I first became a Christian and joined a youth group, I was appalled when after service when I was hanging out with some of the youth group kids who grew up in church and appeared to be wholesome decent kids, but they started playing vile secular rap music on their stereo! That was the music I listened to before I met Christ! If I wanted to hear music like that, I could hang out with my old unsaved friends! I didn’t expect to hear that from professing Christians! That is the music for those who are under God’s wrath, not under His grace!

If we started teaching this scripture from Corinthians from the pulpit in our churches, we may lose the wallets of our congregations but we would gain the welcome of God. The Holy Spirit does not dwell in the church of the world, but in a holy sanctified body of believers. Better a small poor church with the Spirit of God than a wealthy mega church without Him! Gain or God: Who will be your master? You who call yourself a preacher of the Bible, will you teach all that the bible says? Will you skip over certain parts of the Bible or refuse to obey all that God requires of you? I just have two words: God forbid!

Worldliness in the Church

There is a reason for the worldliness in the church. We have simply put the label of “church” on what really is nothing more than the world. A friend in Bible College once told me how awesome it was that they had practicing “witches” who attended their church. In their eyes that was a good thing but in my eyes all I saw were wolves coming in to do harm to the sheep while the Sheppard slept completely oblivious.

Certainly I am not saying we are not to reach out to sinners. I would never ever say something like that. I preach on the streets and in the open air on a regular basis. But going out to

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sinners where they are and letting sinners come to where we are, are two completely different things. The fatal flaw of many churches today is this: Rather than going out to the world, they have allowed the world to come into them. The church is for the fellowship and edification of the saints. True evangelism is not inviting sinners to church or putting on social entertaining services to attract the world, but going out to where the sinners are and preaching the gospel to them. The Great Commission is not to invite sinners to church or to attract them through worldly means to our services, but to go to them and preach the gospel. Let the church be a place for the edification of the saints and the streets be a place for the salvation of souls.

If you know my testimony then you know how worldly I once was. I once was a drug dealer that was going in and out of jail. There were many people that I hurt and many people that I corrupted. I should have died in my sin and for my sin. The Lord protected me even when I had my neck slit in a fight. The scar remains today. And although I am now a devout Christian, I praise God that He did not allow me into any Christian church or youth group until I was saved! Remember the proverb, "One rotten apple can spoil the whole bunch." More often than not, when the world enters into the church, the world changes the church instead of the church changing the world.

Having no company at all would be better than having bad company, that is, if you want to be pure amongst a polluted world. You'll notice that if you want to sin you can find a multitude of others who would join in the fun with you, but if you want to live holy you better prepare your heart to walk alone. Better that a man walks alone with God and yet lives a life pleasing in God's sight, than for a man to walk with a multitude of friends and yet be an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. How small would our circle of friends be if we truly obeyed this Scripture to not keep company with anyone called a brother who is living in compromise and sin? A better question would be, how large would our love for God be if we guarded our fellowship?

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The road of holiness is a road most have to travel alone. If no one will dare to go with you, will you travel it just the same? Yes we may lose some friends but the value of what we would gain completely outweighs what would be lost. The cry of my heart is that I would one day hear the church honestly say with the psalmist “Depart from me, you evildoers, for I will keep the commandments of my God!” (Ps 119:115). If we said that today, our churches may shrink in size but we would grow in the Spirit.

David Ravenhill said, “The foundation of the temple was a threshing floor, a place of separation. *Ekklesia*, from which we get our word ‘church,’ means ‘a calling out from.’ Why is it, then, that the message of separation is so unpopular today? We hear a lot about health, wealth, and happiness, but holiness and sanctification-separation to God and setting apart from evil- are no longer in vogue.”⁴⁰

Are They Really Saved?

If the prayers of the people in our churches go unanswered by God, the problem is with the people and with their lives and not with God and His power. Could it be that much of the prayers of the church go unanswered because they are not truly from the church? God hears the prayers of the righteous but He ignores the prayers of sinners (Ps. 66:18, Prov. 15:29, Jn. 9:31, 1 Jn. 3:22). It is the prayers of the righteous man that availeth much (James 5:16). Who are we labeling a son of God when Christ Himself calls them sons of the devil?

When I first became a Christian as a young teenager, I went on a retreat with a youth group expecting spiritual growth. I expected a weekend of prayer, praise, and preaching. However I discovered that they seemed to only be offering me fun, games, and entertainment. Oh I was so disappointed! The devil offered me enough fun when I was in the world. I had had enough fun! I wanted to pray, not play! They had sledding, swimming,

⁴⁰ “For God’s Sake Grow Up,” p. 67

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soccer and all the rest of it. I didn't want more games I wanted more of God! Shame on us when our minds, our hearts, and our souls desire the same things the world desires. My generation starves to death from lack of knowledge of the truth and instead of feeding them the milk and meat of the Word, their mouths are stuffed with the candy of the world! It is an unintelligent mother who feeds her children nothing but candy and ice-cream. It's a careless parent who would send their child to a school where they had recess more than they had class. Many churches and youth groups have been that unintelligent and careless parent to its children.

It is said that the average youth pastor lasts eighteen months. Could it be because they are pouring out their strength and giving their time to large groups that don't truly want to hear it? It may not be as rewarding as they once thought. Maybe it is because they don't see the youth changed as they hoped they would. I have some simple words of advice for any youth leader who seriously wants to see their youth group grow spiritually rather than merely grow in size. This is it: cancel all pizza parties, amusement park trips, games, and all other events that you may have. Then offer only Bible studies, prayer meetings, street outreaches, and worship services. This will reveal to you who really want God and who really only want games. Then, instead of pouring your heart out to many people who are not interested, you can pour into those who truly want to grow.

Pastor, your job is not to be the ring leader of a circus but rather a minister of the Word of God. A carnival church is, by definition, carnal and not spiritual. Look at how the church operated and functioned in the Scriptures and you will see it was barren of worldly entertainment but it was vibrant with the Spirit of God. What if the church today operated as the church in the Scriptures did? If you take my advice, sure your group may shrink in size, but that should bring you to your knees to seek the power of God to move amongst the youth. Maybe then young people would be moved by the Spirit of God and not by the

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thought of free pizza. If you do this you may lose quantity but you will gain quality.

William Gurnall said, “The fire doth not only discover which is true gold, but makes the true gold more pure; what comes out may be less in bulk and weight, because severed from that solid and dross which embraced it, but more in value and worth.”⁴¹

Now I know this is a hard challenge to youth groups. What will the senior pastor and the elders say if the youth group drops in size? What will parents say about you if they think you can't get their kid to come to church? Be encouraged! Keep your eyes on Jesus and not on parents, elders, or pastors. It is not them you will have to give an account to at the Judgment Seat. If you wanted to please men then you should not have become a servant of Christ (Gal. 1:10). As a leader of the youth, lead them out of carnality and into spirituality. Lead them through the gates of righteousness and away from the way of destruction.

The Bible says, “Then the children of Israel who had returned from captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the Lord God of Israel” (Ezra 6:21). The children of God who have been set free from the captivity of sin need to come together in unity with all the others who have separated themselves from the foulness of the way of the world so that they can seek the face of God. We must be separated from filth to be unified in purity. We are not to be unified in our filthiness!

The Bible says “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Ps. 133:1). The key word in that Scripture is “Brethren.” If a holy church can live in unity with a sinful world then there is a huge problem. If practicing witches can attend our church services and not be convicted, let alone converted, then there is a problem. We must come out of the world and come together as Christians. We must

⁴¹ Christian in Complete Armor, 1865 edition, p. 107

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go against the grain and swim up the stream and against the current of corruption in order to walk in the fullness that God calls us to.

If we have fellowship with the world then we do not have fellowship with God. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14). “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth” (1 John 1:6).

The truth is not merely something you hear, it is something you practice. The faith is not something you merely have, it is something you live.

Returning to Purity

The church needs cleansing from carnality, compromise and corruption like never before. We must purify our churches and guard our fellowship.

A. W. Tozer said, “Christianity is so entangled with the world that millions never guess how radically they have missed the New Testament pattern. Compromise is everywhere.”⁴²

Modern Christianity is entangled and interwoven with the world. The church has been fellowshiping with the world. Let’s get back to the bible which says “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Cor. 6:14). If you fellowship with the world you will soon become like the world, and if you are like the world then you are the world, and if you are the world you will have punishment of the world. If we share in the world’s sin we will share in the world’s punishment. “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them” (Eph. 5:6-7).

⁴² A Sermon

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The beauty of the church is the holiness of the church. “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (Ps. 29:2). “O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth” (Ps. 96:9).

Leonard Ravenhill said, “Do you think Jesus died for this dirty, rotten system we call Christianity? Not on your life!”⁴³ And he said, “The Church is wretched and blind - what do you think Jesus feels looking at His Bride tonight? He’s not coming for a limping, lame, ragged woman! He’s coming for a pure Church, a holy Bride.”⁴⁴

Leonard no doubt had these Scriptures in mind: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27). “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (Rev. 19:7).

Is your church today without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing? Is it holy and without blemish? Has it made herself ready? Paul said, “be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pet. 3:14).

Brethren, open the eyes of your heart and look with me upon a beautiful bride for Christ. Can you envision a bride without spot or wrinkle, nor any such mark on her wedding gown? Her white dress is a symbol of her inward purity. A virgin bride is certainly the most gorgeous bride that there could be. Our God will marry no prostitute! He won’t be wed to an unfaithful harlot! A church that gives itself away to the way of the world will not be walking down the aisle for all to see on that wedding

⁴³ A Sermon

⁴⁴ Ibid

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day. A wonderful, spectacular, beautiful bride is the bride which the Lord has chosen. Will the bride make herself ready for the bridegroom? The decision is yours to make.

Brethren beware of those who would strengthen your own flesh which wars against the Spirit. Beware of those who are dead while they live lest you grow complacent and comfortable with them. Beware of losing the fear of God due to a shallow understanding of the love of God. Beware of those who ask you to go down the enticing, deceptive, and devastating road to Vanity Fair where you will spend all your time and yet buy nothing of worth. Brethren, beware who you keep company with, lest they be the subtle but sure end of your relationship with God. My message is simple and clear: Guard your fellowship! Guard it as if your soul depended upon it... because it does.

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Purify Us

Purify us, oh Lord, according to your grace.
Cleanse us of our worldliness, so we can seek your face.
You set our sins before our eyes, so we may turn or burn.
May we reject the counsel of the mockers, so that we may truly
learn.

We need you, my God, to bring us to the light.
For you alone are wise oh King, so teach us how to fight.
The Christians life is a battle, yes it is a war.
And yet this life is awesome, there's nothing I'd trade it for.
We've filled our bodies with candy, when we needed meat.
Prepare our spirits for the battle, so we won't know defeat.
Give us courage; give us strength, so that we will not die.
But still the greatest tragedy of all would be if we don't try.

“Thousands of preachers who would not dare cut Hell out of their Bibles, have cut it out of their preaching!”
Leonard Ravenhill

Chapter Seventeen

Modern Modernizing

You may notice a lot of modernization happening in the church. We modernize our music, we modernize our methods, and we modernize our message. In which way is this helping Christianity and in which way is this bring us away from Christianity? What are the pros and cons of this modern modernizing?

Music

Naturally we want to update things and make things more sufficient or efficient. In the process of doing this, is it possible that we can throw away things that are not broken? Sometimes it's easy to think that just because something is old that it isn't good anymore. That however is not always true. They say that wine gets better with age. If someone came across some old golden coins, would they throw them away because they are old and because it is not the type of currency we use today? That would be absurd and foolish! Yet I see people in our day people throwing away entire treasure chests of gold for that very reason. The treasure chests that are being thrown away are hymnals.

I did not grow up in church so I do not have an attachment to hymnals because of mere tradition or familiarity. I've discovered and learned to love these poetic writings on my own. These songs are rich with spiritual depth, especially in comparison to the shallow and repetitive contemporary worships songs we find out there. If you take the time to read the ancient hymns and pay attention to the words you realize how deep they

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can be and how accurately they can describe a situation you're going through. I find that much of the contemporary music ministers to the mere emotions but the classic hymns minister to your soul and spirit. Millions upon millions have been ministered to by these ancient gems which churches have held dear for centuries.

Christian hymns are just as old as the Christian church is itself. I would go as far as to say that singing hymns is even biblical! Why would I say such a strong statement? Because of what the Bible says. "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Matt. 26:30). This means that Jesus himself sang hymns! "But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them" (Acts 16:25). Paul and Silas sang hymns to minister to themselves and others. Hymns have ministered to more souls than any other type or form of music and worship. God forbid that we ever lose this form of praise while on earth. I fully intend to hear hymns sung when we get to heaven. "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18-19). The bible specifically tells us to use hymns to minister to one another. I have given hymns to those going through hard times and they have testified that it has greatly helped them.

While listening to one of Leonard Ravenhills messages he mentioned his love for hymns. He said that he gets more out of singing hymns before sermons than he does by hearing sermons themselves. Ravenhill's mentor, A. W. Tozer spiritually devoured the Methodist hymnal. That's how much his taste buds loved the sweet taste of hymns. It was John and Charles Wesley that compiled the Methodist hymnal in times of revival. While reading the front introduction to a hymnal at a church one day it mentioned how every single renewal of Christianity has been accompanied by new hymns.

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There have been some that have committed the abomination of abandoning and abolishing hymns all together from many churches today and have replaced them with new contemporary music. You will not hear that all contemporary music is bad from my lips. Remember the scripture “hymns and spiritual songs”. That is what I am proposing today – that we sing hymns and spiritual songs. There are some contemporary worship songs out there that I absolutely love and others that I abhor. But even given the good ones, we must not throw out hymns because “we need to get with the times and move with the culture.” The culture is not to change us, we are to change the culture. The day the church starts setting the example and standard and stops moving with the culture is the day she recovers from her backslidings. Just because the music of the world is forever changing doesn’t mean the music of the church has too. Oh that we might be dead to the world. What does it matter what they sing? We have such a rich musical heritage and inheritance that we are foolish if we neglect the spiritual wealth of it.

It is very easy to try to fix things that are not broken. I have a deep love for reading and singing hymnals because they have a way of ministering to me that contemporary music does not. I encourage every Christian to get for themselves their own personal hymnal to read along with their Bibles in their devotions. I specifically would recommend the old Methodist Hymnal.

Here is an old golden hymn:

"All our sinful words and ways,
all our wasted hours and days,
All our pride and love of praise:
Forgive, O Lord, for Jesus' sake.

Every time from truth we've erred,
Every bad or idle word
Which Thy holy ears have heard:

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Forgive, O Lord, for Jesus' sake.

All the mischief we have wrought,
All forbidden things we've sought,
All the sin to others taught:
Forgive, O Lord, for Jesus' sake.

All our sloth and vanity,
All our sinful levity,
All forgetfulness of Thee:
Forgive, O Lord, for Jesus' sake.

All the help we need each day,
That we may not fall away
Or from Jesus go astray:
O give us, Lord, for Jesus' sake.

Faith, to see Thee ever near,
Hope, to check each foolish fear,
Constant strength, to persevere:
O give us, Lord, for Jesus' sake.

Every needful gift of grace,
Till we reach the holy place
Where we shall behold Thy face:
O give us, Lord, for Jesus' sake.”

Oh that churches would sing like that again!

Methods

Along with worship music changing, ministry methods have been changing as well. There a great deal of people in our day that reject certain methods of ministry and do so out of ignorance because they have never tried them. It is one thing to say, “I don’t think that works” and another to say, “That doesn’t work.” Some of the most greatly neglected methods of ministry would be gospel tract distribution and open air preaching. I have heard people say things to the effect of, “Well God may have used tracts and street preaching back in history, but he doesn’t

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use them now. This is a new day which calls for new methods.” Or, “Maybe that used to work back in the day but it is very ineffective now.” Some of you may believe the very same thing. This is limiting God and putting the Holy Spirit in a box. Let’s ask ourselves just a few questions.

I. Is it possible that the reason it worked then and not now is because we don’t use them now? People say “God doesn’t use street preachers anymore” but maybe it is because there really aren’t many street preachers to be used anymore. I assure you that there are a few and God uses them but He can’t use those who are not willing to be used. The more street preachers there are, the more men God could use to save souls through the biblical means of street preaching.

II. Why would God suddenly abandon street preaching and tracts? Is our generation the only generation that can’t see God move using these things? God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. If God did something in history, he can do the same thing in the present. Would any Christian dare say, “God used to speak to His church through the Bible, but not in this new era. God doesn’t use the bible anymore. The Scriptures used to be useful but not anymore”? Of course no God fearing Christian would dare say such a thing. While this is not said of the Bible itself, it is said of biblical methods (methods we are commanded to employ), so it really is no different than denying the Bible itself. You might as well say, “The Bible is not true” if you are going to say, “We should not be street preaching.”

The prophets, apostles, and Jesus Christ himself were all open-air preachers. All the greatest sermons in the Bible, like the sermon on the Mount, the sermon on Pentecost, and the sermon at Mars Hill, were all preached outside of the church.

You might think, “Sure, street preaching is biblical but where do you find gospel tracts?” The written word is so powerful that God Himself wrote His own book. Nay, He didn’t just write one book – He wrote an entire library!

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Why limit God by saying He can't move through these things anymore? This is very dangerous because millions of souls that could have been won will not be won due to this one lie.

III. Could saying that God doesn't use these things anymore truly be a cop out? Maybe you are so ashamed of Christ that you can't imagine giving out tracts in public or standing up on soap box to proclaim His name and therefore you say God doesn't use these things.

We'll, if God doesn't use these things then certainly neither should we! In reality, however, He does use them and therefore so should we. I fear that many reject the methods only because they are ashamed of the message.

James Hudson Taylor, the great missionary, was saved by a gospel tract. If it wasn't for gospel tracts, who knows what would have become of this great man. Think of all the souls that were won in his own day because of the mission society that he founded. Think of the souls that are still being reached because of this one man who is considered the founder of modern missions. What would have happened if his generation accepted the lie that "God doesn't use gospel tracts"?

Great revivals in the past have come due to open-air preaching in particular. Revivalists like John Wesley, George Whitefield, William Booth, and Duncan Campbell were open-air preachers, just to name a few. How can we expect to see souls saved out of the streets if we are not willing to take the gospel to the streets?

Charles Spurgeon said, "It would be very easy to prove that revivals of religion have usually been accompanied, if not caused, by a considerable amount of preaching out of doors, or in unusual places."⁴⁵

Churches say they want to see revival, but they don't want to do the things that bring about revival. We want the end but not the means. Is it possible that those great men saw revival in their

⁴⁵ Lectures To My Students

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day and we do not see it in our day because we don't minister the same way they did? What potential is lost! We are trying to pave our own roads when the old roads lead the way perfectly. We go the wrong direction and then we wonder why we aren't there yet. Entire towns get in an uproar when a hell-fire, soap-box, street-corner preacher comes to town. He is criticized by the world, of course, but even by the churches many times! He's labeled a fanatic, a legalist, a bible thumper, and all the other names people will give to a man whose methods and message they don't like. If a man like John the Baptist or John Wesley preached in our day they would receive no greater welcome but would no doubt receive an even worse rejection. They would be opposed by the church, the world, and even hell itself but God would be for them! Oh boy we want revival so that our friends and families will be saved but we don't want any revival preachers so that our hearts can stay dead. We would kick these men out of our churches just like we kick conviction right out of our hearts even though both are sent from God!

God should tell us how to move. We shouldn't tell God how to move. His holy Word tells us how to fulfill the Great Commission. We are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus who preached the greatest sermon of all, "The Sermon on the Mount," in an open-air meeting. God knows the day and age in which we live, we don't have to tell Him. We tell God what this generation needs when He wants to tell us what it needs. The biblical method of outreach has always been *frontline evangelism*. We must go out to the frontlines of the battlefield to where the sinners are and tell them as Jesus did, "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3).

Brethren, we need to get back to the Bible. We need to dare to be biblical. The biblical church is a dangerous church – a threat to worldliness and wickedness. A biblical church does not tolerate sin in itself or in the world because God calls "all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30-31). The biblical church is not shaped by whatever new culture arises. A biblical church is solid

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and cannot be molded by any hand except the hand of God. The biblical church does not make up their own methods, but sticks to the guidelines of the battle plan. The battle plans are always prepared before the battle. Our Commander, Christ, has does not expect or want us to make it up as we go along. Although the times may change, His Word remains the same. The tactics of the enemy may change, but our defenses and our artillery are still strong in pulling down strong holds.

Message

The greatest of changes which can be seen in our time is the changing of the message that we preach. Because many of us do not know any other preaching besides what we hear today we don't recognize the difference. If you were to compare the sermons of a hundred years ago to what we see today, you would see that there is a gap between the two which is the size of the Grand Canyon.

If you were to ask the average Christian today what the gospel is, most of them would say "That God loves you." Others may throw in another line by saying "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." Well what's wrong with that? Let me show you. Notice how that gospel doesn't mention sin, or righteousness, or repentance, or judgment, or hell, or even Christ crucified and His resurrection? A message that only says "God loves you" is welcomed by the world and the church. After all, who would reject a message like that? But it is not the gospel.

We have lost the urgency in our preaching. The great preachers of church history would awaken people to their danger. They would show them that while they are in their sins they are abiding under the wrath of God. They would tell them that the Bible says every day that they refuse to repent God is angry with them because they reject Christ. They made it clear that outside of Christ there was no hope. They would show that sin always leads to death and that it is God who imparts that judgment. There was urgency to their message and they called people to flee from

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the wrath that will undoubtedly and most assuredly fall on all those that remain in their wickedness. This is not so in our day. I can't think of even one occasion leaving a sanctuary seeing people terrified because of the message. Our congregations do not leave in the fear of God. That's why there is much sin in the church. The Scripture says that it's by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil (Prov. 16:6), but our messages do not cause anyone to fear God.

K. P. Yohannan said, "How different our churches would be if we started to live by the true revelation of the Word of God about hell."⁴⁶

It is a revelation of hell that the church and the world needs today. Some say, "Well, I already believe in hell." If that be true then the problem is a cold heart. Have you enough love in our hearts to try to save souls from hell? How can we ever save souls from hell when our preachers are afraid to even say the word "hell"? Oh Church! Open up your eyes and see the souls perishing! Haven't you the strength to reach out your arms towards them?

Like William Booth, we need "A Vision of the Lost." We need our eyes opened to the perishing world around us, so much so that it crushes our heart and disturbs our souls until we reach out to them with tears! Tears like that would water the seeds of the gospel more than anything else. We don't need better organizing. We need more agonizing! There is more buffoonery in the church than brokenness! More silliness than seriousness!

Recently a friend of mine attended a church that was very fancy and had all the latest technologies. They had audience response mechanisms like they do in Game Shows so that the audience could vote and response to certain things. They had huge wide screen color televisions. Of course they had nice carpet and padded pews. It was obviously a materially rich church. The message, however, was not spiritually rich. The title

⁴⁶ "Revolution in World Missions" pg. 121

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of the message was, “God Likes You.” After the preacher preached on that phrase, “God likes you,” he asked a question: “Do you think God is pleased with you *all the time*?” We know that even when Jesus walked the earth he wasn’t pleased with men all the time. He turned over the tables in the synagogues and called people hypocrites, white washed tombs, sons of the devil! You ever hear preaching like that in our churches today? Jesus rebuked entire cities for their impenitence and upbraided men for their hard hearts and unbelief. He was not pleased with everyone all the time. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! Nevertheless, the pastor told the congregation that God is always pleased with them, no matter what! Well I don’t care how big that mans church is, he either doesn’t know his Bible or He knows it and rejects it! I’ve seen large churches with billboards that read, “God’s Not Mad At You... No Matter What.” The fact that these churches have large congregations is a reflection of the biblical illiteracy of our day. The Bible says “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Ps. 7:11). To say that God is pleased with you “no matter what” means that Christians can backslide and sin every day and never have to fear the wrath and anger of God! And what if there were unsaved people in his audience that day? He gave them false comfort and false assurance that God is pleased with them! What a tragedy! Think of the damage was done to the Kingdom of Heaven because of the lips of that man.

The message of repentance needs to be preached today more than ever and yet it is the most neglected message of all. Ministers preach on the virgin birth, the sinless life of Christ, his sacrificial death, his miraculous resurrection, but how many sermons have you ever heard called “Go and Sin No More?” Jesus preached repentance (Matt. 3:2), and His disciples went everywhere preaching that men should repent (Mk. 6:12). No wonder they suffered persecution! Repentance is a dangerous message! That’s why many preachers neglect it today.

I was never ever arrested for preaching until I started boldly preaching repentance. You will receive the greatest

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opposition when you preach the greatest truths. The world will start crying out for the death of the church when the church starts calling out for the birth of the world. When the saints call for the freedom of sinners the sinners will call for the imprisonment of the saints. When we want others to receive purity, they will want us to receive pain. Persecution and prosecution comes through the proclamation of purification! Thus, we've changed our messages so even the worst of sinners would enjoy it and not feel conviction.

It is no wonder that the seeds of the gospel have not been taken into the soil, we have not plowed the field with the law to break up all the stones. The Bible says, "Break up your fallowed ground, and sow not among thorns" (Jer. 4:3). It also says, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hos. 10:12). There must be genuine conviction before there can be genuine conversion. But those truths which are calculated in their nature to bring about conviction and break up the fallowed ground is neglected and so the church is full of false converts who remain in their sins.

Leonard Ravenhill explains how Finney broke up the fallowed ground in preparation for the seeds of the gospel. He said, "Finney never made an altar call within the first twenty eight nights of preaching. Most of our evangelists don't have twenty eight sermons. Twenty eight nights in a row and he never made an altar call. He didn't preach the love of God. He didn't say, 'You're a sinner, God loves you.' He said, 'God is angry with the wicked every day,' which the Word of God says. He didn't preach grace, he preached Law. He didn't preach love, he preached judgment. He didn't preach heaven, he preached hell. He didn't say, "You're a wonderful person." He said, "You're a rebel." But he got results. Sixty four percent of D. L. Moody's converts backslid, seventy two percent of the converts Finney got

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stood, because he knew how to attack the human will, not just the emotions.”⁴⁷

Like Jonathon Edwards, we need to preach “Sinner’s In the Hands of an Angry God.”⁴⁸ The message of sin, judgment to come, repentance, and Christ crucified and risen again is what we need to get back to. The message that God is angry with the wicked every day and therefore He calls all sinners everywhere to repent lest they receive the due punishment for their rebellion and end up in a flaming eternal hell where they will never die but live in torments forever and ever, needs to be proclaimed loud and clear like never before.

We have played the stupid child that rejects the wisdom of his fathers. There’s great wisdom to be found in our Christian forefathers. We want the old time revivals but we don’t want the old time messages. We will never have one without the other, no, never in a millions years. The simple, straightforward, sincere preaching of the Bible, anointed by the Holy Spirit, is what we need to get back to. “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16).

⁴⁷ A sermon

⁴⁸ A sermon preached July 8th, 1741 in Enfield CT.

“You let people know that you are against something - That you haven't come as a soft boy sissy to be another pulpit ornament two times on Sunday. That you're not a soft peddling, fence straddling, cream-puff-pie preacher; that you are a man of God with fire in your belly! And you are going to preach the word with power!” Ian Paisley

Chapter Eighteen

Power in Preaching: Unveiling the Fire

The strongholds of the powers and the principalities of the enemy are undoubtedly forcefully advancing its kingdom in our day. The increase of the power that the enemy has is clearly seen in the decrease in the morality that our nations and our people have. Our enemy, the devil, is primarily on the offense and rarely needs to be on the defense today because of a lack of power in our preaching. The American church in particular does not seem to be a real threat to the devil in this generation because so few preachers proclaim the truth with the unction and boldness of the Holy Spirit.

Nothing can substitute power in our preaching. Not popularity, not personality, not even passion itself can substitute power in our preaching. If a man has eloquence so what? If a man can write about the deep things of God that go over our hearts, what good is it? Does the eloquent man exhort the souls of men? Does the deep writer reach the deepest parts of the heart with conviction? Does his preaching change the lives and hearts of our people? Does his preaching effect time and eternity for the Lord? If not, why listen to him? Turn him off on your television. Meet with the board of the church and have him fired. You may think I am being too serious. No! Many are not being serious enough!

Leonard Ravenhill said “We’ve never had less power. It’s all in print on our book shelves.”⁴⁹

⁴⁹ A sermon

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The power that comes through conviction and exhortation is being held back by preachers because of the fear of man. "How will the people respond if I preach a convicting message?" "What will the people do if I say something too strongly that they don't like?" "What if they don't like what I have to say and refuse to tithe and give to my ministry?" "What if I turn people away and they never come back?" When our ministries and ministers are focused on pleasing and serving men then we can never please and serve God. In pleasing men we fail to please God, and very often in pleasing God we fail to please men. However, there will never be power in our preaching until we unveil the fire of God and let it roar freely to consume whatever it desires. Oh we need "ministers" who are "a flaming fire" today (Ps. 104:4).

Woe to this City

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. 11:21).

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great. Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned. Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed. She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire. In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee" (Eze. 24:9-13).

In New England I labored as an inner city missionary for some time. Although I was involved in different types of outreaches, my main ministry was that of open-air preaching. Even with a fruitful ministry of seeing others come under godly sorrow which led them to repentance, I still was not satisfied

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because of the knowledge that God wanted more. After pouring out my own blood, sweat and tears to see this area come to Christ, most were still just as stiff-necked and hard-hearted as ever. After a great deal of laboring in private prayer and ministering very much in the streets, the vast majority of the community was still lost on a quick grease slide down to everlasting destruction.

One day while preaching on a park bench the only response I would get from those walking by were bad looks and cold shoulders. They knew about Jesus and His resurrection, after all America has Christmas as a national holiday, and yet they were apathetic and indifferent towards the gospel. There were no mass conversions or great conviction saturating the area. Seeing men carry on in their sins after rejecting Christ caused a holy anger to rise up on the inside of me. My heart had changed and so did my message. I preached like I never had before at that time. My words became, "Woe to this city, this bloody city which hears the gospel week after week and still bathes in the waters of iniquity! Woe to this city, this bloody city, which attends the clubs to dance Friday and Saturday nights and then stands in church on Sunday to worship! Woe to this city, this bloody city, which brutally slaughters the fruit of the womb with no remorse!"

As I carried on in this fashion, no longer were people walking by as if they didn't notice me. No longer were they carrying on as if I wasn't preaching at all. I looked in front of me and there were people standing there listening. I looked behind me and to my left and my right and people had stopped and come from all over to hear what I was saying. The fire had been unveiled and it could not be ignored. As a preacher once said, "Get on fire for God and people will come to watch you burn."

When I was done, I walked away with my quiver empty. All the arrows that I had were shot with the best aim that I had and I had nothing more to say. I left without saying a word to anyone, hoping to leave their hearts wounded so they would seek God for healing.

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It was not long after that that I was arrested and thrown behind bars for the first time for doing nothing more than preaching the gospel. As I think of the charges - *breach of peace* - though legally inaccurate, I cannot help but to think how spiritually accurate it was considering the words of Jesus, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Mt 10:34).

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise, if there is going to be power in our preaching, then there is going to be persecution in our lives. When you assault the devil's territory he will retaliate hastily against you. That is to be expected if we go the way of our Lord. Many times in our society the sinners that are accepted are the ones who should be arrested, while the preachers who are arrested are the ones that should be accepted. The more our ministries become like the ministry of Jesus, the more our suffering will be like the suffering of Jesus. If Jesus was just another Mr. Rogers type character in the world and merely went around telling everyone, "I love you," He would never have been as hated, rejected, and tortured as He was. If we are to be as powerful in our preaching as Jesus was in His preaching, then we must learn to minister as He did. And what did he do? He said Himself, "The world ... me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." (John 7:7). Who does that today and still has the stamp of approve by the world? There are those who profess to love Jesus and faithfully go to church week after week that treat holiness as if it were a sin, and treat sin as if it was the normal Christian life. How can they tell the world that its works are evil when they themselves are evil? No one can minister as Jesus did until they become as Jesus was. Jesus "loved righteousness, and hated lawlessness" (Heb. 1:9) and if you hate lawlessness then the lawless will hate you.

The Bible teaches that if they persecute you in one city, go and minister in another (Matt 10:23), so the day after I was arrested in Hartford, CT, I went and preached in New Haven, CT. As long as the church stays comfortable in her complacency,

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letting the world sink by its own weight into hell, street preachers will be rare. There was a team willing to go out with me every Saturday day, but as soon as the sun went down and the devils children came out to play in the dark, it was almost impossible to find someone from church to go out with me to minister on the streets. I went out solo to New Haven Saturday night to minister anyways. If I can't find someone to minister with, it doesn't matter. I'll go with the Holy Spirit. The message is still as important as it's always been and the lost are in as much danger as they've ever been, so why should I not go out when Christ promised, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20).

Backsliders Sliding Back

“Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God” (Jer. 3:22).

That night in New Haven I found a club in the downtown area which I heard gets remarkably busy. I sat on a bench waiting and praying for it to pick up. As rain started to fall and the time got later, I started having second thoughts about ministering. There were at least three cops in the area and I was just arrested the day before. It also is dangerous to walk the city streets alone in the middle of the night and I also had to wake up for church the next day. I had every justifiable reason to leave and go home, or did I? That night I specifically felt the leading of the Holy Spirit to go out and minister, so when the crowds started picking up my voice was raised up.

Standing across the street from a line of people waiting to get into a club called “Gotham,” I preached that Friday night in the rain with all the power that I could. I started off by saying, “The light! The light has come into the world! And the darkness comprehended it not.” I then proceeded to strongly rebuke the sins that go on inside of these clubs.

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While some listened from across the road, others yelled at me to stop. Two girls and one guy crossed the street and actually listened to me preach for 30-40 minutes while standing in the rain. After I finished preaching, I spoke with them and they informed me that they are three Christian friends who got together and decided to backslide for the night and go to the club for some fun. "But after listening to you preach, we aren't going in there!" they said.

I was able to minister to them one-on-one for a couple hours, sharing my testimony and preaching repentance. To the glory of God, all three of them got their hearts right with the Lord that night. We then went back to the club area, and while I was about to preach again, the three of them broke out in praise and worship towards God. I joined in and we sang songs on the street there in front of the club. Then we went into prayer and a lady walking by even joined us. It was maybe three in the morning and there we were having church outside of the club! I was amazed that I started out alone in front of this club and then some people got out of the line, repented, and started praising God right there in front of everybody!

What would have happened if I had hindered what God wanted to do by holding back the heated fire of conviction? What would have happened if I chose not to unveil the fire?

The Five

"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29).

It was not long after that that I was invited to speak to a rather large youth group in a neighboring city. In the upcoming summer, I'd be traveling with some of the people in the group to the Dominican Republic on a mission trip. The youth group was called "The Five." When I asked the youth pastor about this name, he explained to me that he emphasizes that the youth spend "five minutes a day with God." I asked him why five minutes? Why not emphasis a half hour, an hour, or even two hours a day

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with God? He told me he believes that five minutes a day with God is reasonable for teenagers.

Being quite young myself, something rose up inside of me that gave me a holy anger. Giving only five minutes a day to the God who gave you your whole life? That is ripping Him off. How many hours of television does the average teenager watch? I debated in my heart and mind on whether or not I should mention this in the message I was going to preach to the youth group. Remembering that it was him who invited me to speak, should I just leave this alone? The thought of the mission trip to the Dominican Republic entered my thoughts as well. What should I do? Should I preach against this idea that they should only be spending five minutes a day with God?

I could not refrain myself. Even if the word of God brings a reproach and derision against me as it did Jeremiah, it was burning in my bones and I was jealous on behalf of the Lord. When I got up in the pulpit I couldn't help but to tell them that it is an insult to God to enter into His presence for only five minutes and then withdraw again. How can that person say they value and cherish His presence, if they choose to spend only five minutes in it? The youth group that is normally loud and distracted, even during the preaching, was not so this time around. All ears and eyes were on me as I preached holy living and radical dedication towards God. Even after I left the pulpit nobody said a word for a solid ten minutes. Seriousness and solemnity came over this usually boisterous group of youth. The only person you could hear was the youth pastor who was down on his hands and knees crying out to God in prayer.

What would have happened if, because of fear of rejecting and a desire to please man, the fire that God wanted to burn remained unveiled?

Conviction in the Prison

“But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I

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command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD” (Jer. 1:7-8).

The Dominican Republic was quite a place to go. There are many lessons I learned while in that country. While at first I felt sorry for them because of their poverty, I soon realized how rich they truly were. What I first saw as a curse was actually a blessing. They were more joyous than the average American despite their poverty. They were not born into materialism and the love of having many possessions. They were content and satisfied with the little that they had. While in America, materialism reigns in the hearts of many and what should be a blessing has become a curse.

The greatest lesson I learned in the Dominican was not to hold back in my preaching. I was able to minister in many places, in the open-air meetings we conducted in the market place as well as in the parks, in a church and Christian gatherings, but the most powerful experience I had was in a Dominican prison. We arrived entirely unannounced to this third world prison where there are criminals who will be in jail for the rest of their lives. Since it was not previously arranged with the prison that we would be coming, we had some difficulty with the authorities. The prisons in that country are run by military men. They attempted to contact the general to see if we could go in but failed to be able to contact him. Our young translator became intimidated by the men when we persisted in getting in and so he stopped accurately translating for us. When the situation started to look hopeless and seemed as though we would simply have to leave, we committed ourselves to prayer. It was not long after that they waved us over and allowed us to go into the prison!

We were lead through this old, moldy, filthy prison to a large room where hundreds of inmates were gathered. I was the first one in the room. We were met with uneasy stares and a haunting silence. I don't believe that it was announced to them that a group of Americans would be with them that afternoon. We were soon waved over to the other side of the room, opposite the

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one barred doorway exit. Our translator spoke to the inmates, some of which were murderers and rapists, and explained why we had come. We sang worship songs that had the whole room clapping which lightened up the atmosphere. Then our group performed a gospel skit. I was called on to share a bit of my testimony and to preach the gospel.

This was a tough situation. Do I preach as I normally preach or should I lighten and soften the message lest anyone be angered or even become violent? The one guard that would periodically come in the room left for long periods at a time. The last thing I would want to do is to endanger the group I was with. Even so, their lost souls were in far greater danger. I had been meditating on an unpopular, forgotten and a forsaken scripture during the trip. It was Psalms 7:11: "God is angry with the wicked every day." That was my text I preached on. I choose to "spare not" and preached the gospel hot and heavy. One man came and knelt in the front with tears in his eyes while I was still preaching and I didn't even give an altar call. There was an atmosphere of conviction in the air so when I invited the inmates to raise their hands at the end of my message if they wanted to be saved, about two thirds of them responded and prayed in repentance for God to forgive them!

Now what would have happened if I let fear smother the burning coals God had put in my heart? When the fear of man and the love of praise arise in our hearts, how can Gods will be done?

Fear God or Fear Man?

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28).

If we allow the fear and reverence of God to enter our hearts rather than the fear of man, we can see power in our preaching. We need more of the love of holiness and more holy hatred towards sin if we ever hope to preach with power. The sum

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of what I am saying is this; *Don't Hold Back!* Never fear rejection and persecution from the world. Not many Christians scare the devil enough for him to call the cops on them. I say, let him call the cops! Persecution is still every Christian's lot.

We must let the words of Jesus sink deep into our hearts:

“And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:21-28)

I can see a Christian downcast in his spirit. Why are you down Christian? Have you tasted the bitter taste of rejection? When rejected by the world, rejoice in the Lord! Again I say, rejoice! Even dance for joy! You are like your Master. What does it matter if you are hated by the world when you are honored by God? I can hear lies, “You shouldn't be treated like this.” “They should recognize who you are and the authority God has given you.” “If you were truly somebody in Christ, your life wouldn't be so hard.” How easy it is to drown in despair when you swim in the sea of lies. Deception gouges out all hope from your heart.

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Let the truth be known, you have no right at all to be treated better by man than Jesus was. When lies come against you, come against lies with truth. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord."

Compassion Enough to Convict

"And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 1:23).

Christian, we must cleanse our hearts of callousness and develop deep compassion and serious concern in our heart for the souls of lost men. Failure to do so is failure of the worst kind. Think of the fate of the ungodly - eternal hell. Think of the shed blood of Christ which was shed for every man. Have you a love for the lost to seek them out? Have you a respect and reverence for the blood of the Son of God? Compassion must fill our hearts. For too long a lack of compassion in the heart of the church has caused a lack of conviction in our preaching. God forbid the comfort of the church ever be the cause of the misery of the world. True Christianity is the active pursuit of knowing God and the active pursuit of making Him known.

Consider just a few of those brave men of faith who have gone before us. Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet and who saw no converts in his ministry. Have we the same love and fear of God to deliver His Word no matter how rejected it is? Then there was Paul, a man greatly persecuted and martyred who "warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts. 20:31). Have we the same compassion that can endure and persevere through all the obstacles, enduring afflictions for the sake of the elect? Are we Christ like enough to be as our Master who "behold the city, and wept over it" (Lk. 19:41)? Oh, there are unsaved men who will remain unsaved until we learn to set sail on the rivers of our own tears to save them.

The world is in rebellion against God and it is storing up for itself waters of wrath which will soon come upon them

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through the flood gates to destroy them. We say the world is lost, we know the world is lost, but do we live as though they are lost?

A friend of mine said, “Let us not merely curse the darkness, but let us light a candle. Let us light a torch!”

While grace is flowing like a river, blind sinners are dying of thirst. Who is leading them to the river bank to drink? Will they be able to accuse you of this when their eyes are opened in eternity?

We must, if we ever want to have power in our preaching, “to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9). Without exhortation and conviction in our sermons, they become wood axe handles without an actual axe, useless for cutting down anything. Clear the land preacher! Prepare the way of the Lord! Make His paths straight! Level every mountain and fill up every valley by faith. He, who will judge the world in righteousness, is quickly coming and will soon be upon us. Will He find you faithfully delivering His Word without fearing anything but Him? I don’t know much, but I know enough to realize that power in our preaching only comes when we obey the Holy Spirit and allow Him to move through us as He pleases.

Finally, have compassion to pray. Our preaching will only be as strong and as powerful as our praying. Those who minister must consider preaching without first praying to be a sin. Does a farmer plant the seeds before he first plows the field? We can never preach with divine power if we preach without the Holy Spirit. He is God’s messenger and He must minister through us.

E. M. Bounds said, “What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use – men of prayer, mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men – men of prayer.”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Preacher and Prayer

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Many wonderful and nice sermons have been preached that lacked divine power because the preacher lacked in deep prayer. The potential of our preaching from the pulpit will never be reached until we reach the potential of praying in our secret closets. Power in our preaching and witnessing is available, but it must first be diligently sought after. Oh that we may we seek after it.

*"When a man has come to an end of himself - to the end of all human resources - he has reached the beginning of God."
Duncan Campbell*

Chapter Nineteen

The Help of the Holy Spirit

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.” Acts 4:31

Life, with all its many vanities can be so overwhelmingly and desperately empty. “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity” (Ecc. 1:2). There are vanities on the left of us and there are vanities on the right of us. They can be found in front of us and in back of us, but is there a greater vanity this side of eternity than to preach the Word of God without the Spirit of God? To sing out of tune or without a melody is quite an awful noise and can hardly be tolerated by sensible ears, and yet churches all over the world are full of those who tolerate listening to sermons week after week that have absolutely no anointing or touch from God in them at all. Preachers spout out their own words and their own thoughts and wonder why we go without the power of God. If God is not in the end, it may be because He wasn't in the means.

The first foundational truth any preacher must learn is that to preach without the anointing of the Holy Spirit is not preaching at all. It is vain utterances and useless ramblings. If God is not in a message, a preacher must not deliver the message. The words of men do not produce the effect and the fruit which the Lord desires. It is the words of God that speaks into the darkness and produces the light, which calms the storms, that raises Lazarus

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from the dead, and pierces and slays the hearts of men with godly sorrow leading to repentance.

I believe that one of the greatest sermons John Knox ever preached was when he didn't preach at all. He told his congregation on one occasion to go home because he didn't have a word for them from the Lord. If more preachers were as honest and sincere in their labors as John Knox was, our churches would be quite empty every Sunday. Preachers are so caught up in the presence of men, how could they be caught up in the presence of God to get a message?

A man may be a great communicator or a great orator without the Holy Spirit, but he can never be a great preacher. You're leaning on a broken cane with a pointed edge if you lean on your own understanding. Only God's design or ministerial purposes can bring about God's glory as adequately as He deserves. If we dare to perform ministry simply the way we desire or see fit in our own eyes, which ends up being outside of the will of the Lord, then God will never and can never be glorified in it or through it. A ministry without the Holy Spirit is a pathetic, putrid, and poisonous thing.

I heard of a preacher who had a dream one night. He was walking down the street and there he saw the devil standing on a soap-box on a street corner preaching the gospel. Confused and baffled he confronted the devil and said, "What are you doing preaching the gospel? Aren't you the devil?" "Yes," he said, "Don't you know my greatest weapon is preaching the Word of God without the Spirit of God?"

There are thousands of preachers all over the world standing up on Sunday and are preaching messages that do not have the anointing of the Spirit. Are they not also like "whitewashed tombs?" With their polished words and eloquent vocabulary, and yet are barren in the Spirit. Genesis sets the pattern: everything gives birth to its own kind. Today we see dead preachers giving birth to dead converts. They haven't the life of holiness in them but the rotten death of lawlessness and

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disobedience. To give birth to death is such a horrifying concept. This clearly is not of God and must be hated by all who love life. One has to wonder how many sermons a man can preach without the help of the Holy Spirit in it at all. Although I cannot think of any preacher who would set out to make sure that he preaches without the help of the Holy Spirit; I know that there are those who do not set out to make sure that they have His help. That is where the problem is.

The Absolute Necessity of Having the Holy Spirit

I can see in my mind's eye the average preacher, consumed with preparing his message as well as his many other responsibilities, that he pushes prayer aside or at least cuts short God's time with him. Only then to deliver the average sermon which lacks the anointing of God that comes only through the Spirit. Jesus fasted for forty days before he preached his first sermon which had him nearly thrown off a cliff. There was power in His preaching! Jonathon Edwards fasted for days before he preached his sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," which shook the very depths of his congregation, the end result of which was revival.

There is no substitute for the Holy Spirit in our preaching. The Lord Himself did not preach without the Holy Spirit being upon Him. Christ declared "the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel" (Lk. 4:18). I have to wonder how many preachers would be speaking the truth if they said that today. Sure God may have called them to preach but have they allowed the Holy Spirit to minister to them the truth which they must minister to others? It is all too possible to write and preach a sermon without the help of the Holy Spirit and have nobody in the audience even notice or slightly suggest it. In the hustle and bustle of the preacher he must never neglect searching, waiting, and longing for a message that is straight from the throne room of God. We can get caught up in books and tapes when we need to be caught up in God. It's said of the old Puritan preachers

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that they would spend six days a week in eternity and then would come down from eternity into time one day a week to tell the people about it. Men who walk with God will know God and those who know their God will do great and powerful exploits for Him. But those preachers who do not walk closely with God will do great damage to the Kingdom. Even their gain will be considered loss when the fire comes to their works. Unless the Lord builds the house, the house cannot stand. How terrible it will be for those standing inside that house! Preachers have a great responsibility to God who entrusted them with the ministry, and preachers have great obligation to the men who trust them enough to be fed by them.

John the Baptist had the Holy Spirit in his preaching. In fact, John was full of the Holy Spirit from the womb! He “was a man sent from God” (Jn. 1:6). If that is not what we need today, then I don’t know what we need. The church and the world are in a desperate drought of preachers who enter into the pulpit after being in the presence of God. John was “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: make straight the way of the Lord” (Jn. 1:26). If ever we lived in a wild time, we live in a wild time now. And if ever we need voices, not echoes, who will declare the straight and narrow way, we need them today!

It was Moses who dared not move without the presence of the Lord. And because of this desperate dependency which Moses had upon God, “the skin of his face shone while he talked” (Ex. 34:29). The early Methodist churches had no heating devices so they used to say that the fire from the preacher would have to suffice to keep everyone warm. We need preachers today who refuse to do anything without the Lord going with them, who shine with the glory of God after being lavished in His presence, and will burn and be consumed by the fires of the Holy Spirit.

The Power That Comes In Having The Holy Spirit

The surest sign that we as preachers are preaching without the help and favor of the Holy Spirit is the lack of power that

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there is in our meetings to convict, convert, and cleanse the hearts of men from “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16). Sinners in our congregation should either come to Christ converted or leave the church angry! That is, if we are preaching right! Even anger is a better response than apathy.

Many who fill our churches sit in the pews year after year and do not grow spiritually. It is in the very nature of a plant to grow and it is in the very nature of those who are genuinely born-again to grow in grace. If God’s hand and help were in these meetings, His power would be in them too. More often than not, sinners are not being led safely and soundly in the pathways of purity. The hearts of men are not being gripped with fear at the reality of the anger of God and the existence of hell. So why would they ever follow the command to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Php. 2:12)? Our people aren’t afraid and trembling at our altar calls. Some may be weeping because they feel they are victims and have been mistreated but how many weep because they have been made aware that they are criminals in the eyes of God and have been mistreating Christ and His blood? Our preachers do not “save with fear, pulling them out of the fire” (Jude 1:23), and so many go to the fire without any fear!

These are indeed hard truths and that is exactly why our hearts must be soft and broken. I take no pleasure at all saying that many of our preachers and pew-dwellers are “feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 1:12-13). What a serious offense and crime it is to stand in the pulpit, where there should be nothing but what is from God, and to speak anything which the Lord has not spoken!

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Much of what is preached on television, in big conferences, and in most churches is soft and smooth and easy for anyone to take and believe. Not even impenitent sinners object to the messages the average preacher preaches today. Yet the way Paul preached when he was full of the Holy Spirit was nothing of that sort. Who would be daring enough to be biblical and follow in Paul footsteps? The record says, “But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:8-10).

Paul, who was once blinded by the power of God, also blinded another man with the power of God. Now let’s think about this. Would the current church be fond of Paul if he was alive today and did something like that? When were you last in a church service where you heard the pastor calling people sons of the devil or enemies of all righteousness? Or when did you hear a preacher preach as James did when he said “cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:8). This type of preaching wouldn’t be liked in our time. The elders and committee board would not allow it. Preachers like that would be kicked out of churches in our day just as these men were kicked out of the temples in their own.

The partnership and relationship that the preacher has with the Holy Spirit is so intricately and intimately woven together that they must never be divorced. Christ said that when the Holy Spirit comes, “he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jn. 16:8). Then we see how Paul, full of the Holy Spirit, ministered “concerning the faith of Jesus Christ” when “he reasoned about righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come” (Acts 24:25). We see how the Holy Spirit confirms the preacher and the preacher confirms the Holy Spirit. They work hand in hand, running perfectly

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parallel to each other. A preacher must get his words from the Holy Spirit or he must not preach at all. When a preacher seeks to comfort sinners in their sins with his false doctrines, instead of convict the sinner for his sins with the truth, to put the fear of God in him and turn him from his wickedness to Christ, he is hindering instead of helping the Holy Spirit. He is working against instead of working for the Spirit of God! And the Lord knows how there are many sin-friendly doctrines in the church today! Instead of attacking sin, preachers attack holiness. Instead of defending holiness, preachers defend sin! No wonder the Holy Spirit isn't in many churches – He has been grieved away!

With the help of the Holy Spirit there is power and without His help ministry is futile all together! God has the power to make people blind and the power to make people see! There is no need to fear if you find that you have no power within yourself. If you felt adequate enough to look to yourself, you would see no need to look up to God. If you can't imagine God using you, take comfort because our God is a God of miracles! If it wasn't for that truth, not much would get done for the Kingdom of God here on Earth. The power of the Holy Spirit obviously does not come from us, but it comes only through the Holy Spirit Himself. Anything else is a passing shadow, a dim reflection, or an ungodly counterfeit. We have had enough shadows, mere reflections, and counterfeits in Christendom! It's time for the real deal. Many, although it hurts to say, cannot declare that they "have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Pet. 1:12). It may be an unpleasant thought, but it is far greater than that. It is a deadly reality!

The Importance of Having the Holy Spirit

The importance of having God's help in our preaching cannot be adequately expressed or overly emphasized. It is not only greatly important but it is incredibly vital, that is, if we truly want our ministering to matter. The church needs the Spirits conviction, correction, and comfort. We need His empowerment

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and enlightenment. Our world is drowning in heresies and falsehood today because many preachers are not being led by the Spirit of God. We have more churches today that are full of heresies than churches full of the Holy Ghost.

Some time ago while I was attempting to find something wholesome on the television, I stopped clicking around to listen to a television preacher on a secular channel. I soon found out why he was allowed on secular television as his sermon was called, "How To Never Be Hurt Again." Then he gave six or so steps that you can take in order to "never be hurt again". A painless life! How wonderful! How amazing! How awesome! And yet, how false and unrealistic for Christians or any man for that matter. Making money off lies is big business today. All you have to do is become an itching ear preacher, telling everyone what they want to hear, and you can be driving around in a fancy car, own expensive watches, wear the most expensive suits, and live in wealthy neighborhoods. However, the Jesus of the Bible who had to borrow a donkey to make his grand appearance into Jerusalem, who had no wear to lay his head, knew absolutely nothing of this painless life. Christ was "a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3). Dying an agonizing and torturous death on a cross after a ministry of rejection is far from the picture that this TV preacher was painting. Maybe Jesus should have known these "six easy steps." Then he could have taught his disciples and the majority of them wouldn't have gone to jail and died the gruesome death of martyrs. Many thoughts occurred to me while watching this false teacher. Did he know the Bible? Did he know God? Does he really follow in the footsteps of the "man of sorrows?" How could he preach like this? Why don't we ever hear a message on TV on "How to Avoid Going to Hell?" Or maybe "How to Never Sin Again." If these preachers become led of the Holy Spirit, they will start preaching repentance. "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my

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words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.” (Jer. 23:21-22).

On another occasion I was attending a large youth event where there was a well known “prophet,” or so he called himself. This man even trained and studied under the ministry of another well known pastor and author who has thousands flocking to him every weekend here in America. This “prophet” did a great performance on stage. He was a great entertainer, running around and yelling and doing what they do. Everyone was stirred up as he preached a message on “Being Blessed in the Presence of God. He said, “If you are in the presence of God then you will be blessed, your family will be blessed, your friends will be blessed, even your little dog at home will be blessed.” Then after preaching an entire message on blessing which never mentioned hell, judgment, sin, repentance, or even the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, this self proclaimed prophet gave an altar call. His altar call went like this: “If you want to be blessed, if you want your family to be blessed, if you want your friends to be blessed, if you simply want your dog to be blessed, come to this altar so I can pray for you.” Who could turn down an altar call like that? Not many because thousands rushed to the altar.

This is when the worst manipulation came into play. What did he have the people do when they came to get a blessing? He led them in “The Sinner’s Prayer.” But these people didn’t come to repent! These people didn’t come to be born-again! These people didn’t come to “flee from the wrath that’s to come!” They came so God would bless them and bless everyone they know. The first time that this man mentioned sin or the name of Jesus was in “The Sinner’s Prayer.” If you don’t preach a message on the gospel and if you are not calling sinners to repentance, you have no right to give an altar call! You have no right to led sinners in a prayer for forgiveness if you don’t first tell them that that is what the prayer is for! It was the worse “bait and switch” tactic I have ever seen in the ministry, the inevitable tendency of which is to create false converts.

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He might as well have said, “If you want to live in a mansion, come to this altar.” Then when they got to the altar, he leads them in a sinner’s prayer and tells them that they now have a mansion in heaven.

I watched all this happen and it seemed as though I was the only one disturbed by it in the entire conference! Those who put on the conference must have thought to themselves, “Wow look at how successful and anointed this man is! Look at how God is blessing this man’s ministry! Look at all those people at the altar getting saved! We better book him for our next event.” But I watched as thousands left the altar believing God is now going to let them into heaven, when in reality, God is going to bind them hand and foot and cast them into everlasting flames because there was no repentance and they were not planning on sinning no more. How bitter those people will be when they enter back into a fallen world of hardships, pains, sufferings, and death. How eternally angry they will be with that man when they one day awake in the other world to face their punishment for the sins they’ve never turned from. I wouldn’t want to be that “prophet” even for a second on Judgment Day. All he did was give them a “vaccination” against the true gospel message, as it is very hard to get someone truly saved when they already think that they are.

It was in the days of Jeremiah the prophet when he declared repentance towards God, lest Israel be taken captive into Babylon, while the other prophets declared, “peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer. 8:11). Many preachers today are telling the masses that they have peace with God when in reality they have no peace at all. They are still enemies of all righteousness and enemies of God. Jeremiahs message was “amend your ways and your doings” (Jer. 7:3). Our message must be that of our Lords, “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Lk. 13:3). Jeremiahs message was so strong and yet perceived as so strange because of the messages of the other prophets. Salt preachers look unpleasant and undesirable when

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compared to sugar preachers. But just as in Jeremiahs day, the Lord has not sent these prophets who declare “peace, peace; when there is no peace.” Preachers would preach truth if they were in tune with the “spirit of truth” instead of “the spirit of error” (1 Jn. 4:6).

Many preachers do not know God and that is why they do not preach the truth of God. Many aren't even talking about the biblical Jesus when they preach about Jesus. Art Katz said, “The many Jesus today are soppy, sentimental, and self-serving.”⁵¹ The church is so far removed from the truth that the Spirit of Truth is so far removed from the church! Here is a revelation for some of you preachers: when the Bible says what a man sows he shall surely reap, it is not talking about money! In context that scripture is referring to the wrath of God! Although God may bless your giving, I have never heard that scripture used in context. We have twisted, corrupted, and manipulated the Bible to make it as “seeker sensitive” and as sinner friendly as possible.

The Bible says, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Timothy 4:2-5).

Many today are not led by the Spirit but let that never be said of us. Many are lead by other spirits preaching lies, but as for us, we must be lead of the Holy Spirit and preach the truth.

The solution is to know the Scriptures and to know the Spirit. If we know the Scriptures, then we must preach the scriptures. If we know the Spirit, then we must be lead of the Spirit. Preaching is far too great of a responsibility to be treated lightly. Before a man enters a pulpit or ministers to another he

⁵¹ “The Cross” sermon compilation.

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must be well rooted in the Scriptures and well rooted in God. Until a man is like that, he must never preach. I fear that preaching without the Holy Spirit is so common and unrecognized while the dangers of such a scenario are so immeasurable, unthinkable, and unconceivable, we will never see this catastrophe for what it truly is until we reach the Judgment Seat and all things are made known. God forbid that we wait until it is too late and can do nothing about it when we can do something about it now.

*“They say ‘Roll your burdens on the Lord.’
Who does He roll His burdens on?” Leonard Ravenhill*

Chapter Twenty *The Burden of the Lord*

In the day and age in which we live we have a great deal of material things. Many of us have nice jobs which provide for our nice homes and our nice cars. We have lovely little churches on every corner that work tirelessly to accommodate our weekly social needs. Yet in a day of such physical prosperity, there is much spiritual bankruptcy. How many of those who go to church on Sunday are also at the club on Fridays? From my street preaching expeditions, I can tell you that the answer is many! In reality many American church goers have hearts of sin and eyes of lust but what the church needs to have is hearts of love and eyes with tears!

The Sorrow of God's Son

Jesus wept over that which He loved and I believe that He weeps for the world and the church today because of the hard hearts of men. “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,” (Lk. 19:41). It was when Jesus saw the city that His eyes flowed with tears. How could the Son of God be rejected by the very city that He longed to accept and not weep? When Christ looks down upon the world and the church today what does He do? Did He love Jerusalem then more than He loves His church now? Christ weeps for the church because of her barrenness. The fruit of righteousness has long vanished from our lives. Everyone does what they want to do. Men mark out their own paths and serve many other things before serving Christ. The church is polluted with unfaithfulness and idolatry. All this causes Christ to weep. “He is despised and rejected by men, a

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man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isa 53:3). This gives us insight into the heart of Jesus. He was a man of sorrows before He went to the cross. He was acquainted with grief before He was crucified. He lived in the very same sinful world that we now live in and His heart was burdened because of it.

If we are to be like Jesus than how can it be that our hearts are not in torments living in this mad world? Don’t we see the sins of our people? With all of the abortions, adulteries, and abominations which are abundantly and aggressively committed how can we be anything but afflicted and affected by it? How do our hearts not ache over the millions of souls who have yet to come even an understanding of the gospel, let alone a saving knowledge of it? May our hearts fill with the love of God and may our eyes flow with the tears of God! May we be the open channel in which God can transform the world! I have soaked myself in many tears in public and private. Even while preaching open air I have cried in front of those perishing souls who are heading for the wrath of a Holy God. But it is going to take more! Whatever we have been doing overall hasn’t been working. Our culture is just as lost as ever. One of the major problems and cause of this is that the church today primarily seeks the blessings of God and refuses to accept the burdens of God.

Tears of Time

The church has not always been hard hearted. The revivals of the past have been marked by weeping. It starts with Christians weeping over sinners and then sinners weeping over their sins. Although what some call “revival” in our day is marked with laughter, true revivals have always been marked by tears.

The Apostle Paul was a man like his Master. Paul tells us of his tears, “Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31). Paul would “warn every man” (Col. 1:28) of the wrath of God with tears in his eyes! We must preach hard truths with

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soft hearts! Paul also wrote, “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you” (2 Cor. 2:4). The love and brokenness of God flowed like a river from the eyes of Paul. Oh that the church today would know what that is like! Paul also writes of the anguish of Timothy when he said “being mindful of your tears” (2 Tim. 1:4).

When George Whitfield, who a burning open air preacher God used to spark a great awakening in America, would preach to sinners he would often weep in front of them. It was said that he couldn’t get through his messages without tearing up. There were times when sinners would mock him for his tears so he would tell them, “You blame me for weeping, but how can I help it when you will not weep for yourselves, though your immortal souls are on the verge of destruction, and, for aught I know, you may be hearing your last sermon, and may never more have an opportunity to have Christ offered you!”⁵² The man who has the heart of God will shed the tears of God.

In the early days of the Salvation Army certain soldiers had tried everything they could and labored every way they knew how to in order to be a successful mission and save souls in the ghettos of Los Angeles until they finally were on the verge of quitting their work all together because they weren’t seeing any results. They wrote a telegram to William Booth in England saying, “It just won’t work. We have tried everything. The gospel is just not being received here.” A couple days later William Booth wrote back just two words, “Try tears.” They did and they saw God move.

Church, it is time that we try tears. Let’s finally do the one thing we’ve been avoiding. If ever there was an occasion to anguishing over our culture it is now. Wake up! Is it possible that

⁵² The Primitive Methodist Magazine by William Lister, Published in 1867, p. 462-463

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the only reason your own neighborhood is going to hell is because you've been sleeping when you should have been weeping? Answer the question honestly.

Knees are Needed

The knees of the Saints are needed. Make sure you hear me correctly: If anyone should have secrets it is Christians. Let the hypocritical showmen do as they please parading themselves all around. They have their reward. But let us live secret lives of prayer which is known only to God. The sweetness and sorrow of secret prayer is indescribable and unmatched. For the lost world to be found the lost secrets of prayer must be found first. We need soft hearts that will drive us to harden our knees. May we trade our calloused hearts for calloused knees!

If the Lord gives you His burdens, do not return it back to Him. The burden of the Lord could be the greatest blessing you ever get. The Lord was able to share His burdens with His prophets. It says "The burden of the Lord came to.... (Nahum 1:1, Habakkuk 1:1, Malachi 1:1, Zechariah 9:1) Has the burden of the Lord come to you? Have you tossed and turned and sweated at night because the multitudes are going to hell? Do you cry and get angry at the fact that Satan plays games with the souls of men? May the Lords priorities be our priorities and His burdens be ours.

If the church ever receives the full burden of the Lord it will change the world. Thousands, maybe even millions of souls could be changed if we were simply burdened enough to labor and labor until God moved. The burden of the Lord causes persistent prayer and forces our lips to declare the gospel. The burden of the Lord would cause us to wrestle all night long until we prevailed with God. The burden of the Lord would cause us to cry out in our barrenness "give me souls or I die." If we seek the salvation of the world, we must seek the heart of God.

To receive the burden of the Lord we have to open up our hearts and allow the Holy Spirit to give it to us. When we have

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the heart of God and we look at this world of ours with the eyes of God then we can't help but to shed the tears of God. If you're heart has been callused and hardened cry out to God and soften it. The Lord wants to share His burdens with us. We simply have to be willing to take it. He shares His burdens with those who draw close to Him. I don't believe in making promises that I can not keep and neither does God. You have God's promise that if you sow in tears, you will reap in joy (Ps. 126:5). Let's take God at His Word and water the seeds of the gospel with our own drops of tears.

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Lord, soften our hearts and wet our eyes
That like your Son our souls may cry.
To have a heart like Jesus had.
To be often sorrowful, grieved, and sad.

Please help your church that only desires
What it wants, and not Your fire.
But cleanse You must or the world will perish.
When will we long for what you cherish?

Young and old can receive your pain,
For a world in bondage in sinful chains.
Make us desire to be more like your Son,
Burdened by the Spirit, until the works done.

*“None so cruelly persecute the righteous
as those who think themselves righteous and are not.”*
Charles Spurgeon

Chapter Twenty One *The Religious vs. the Righteous*

The history of the world, specifically it's spiritually battles, are packed full of magnificent victories as well as awful defeats. The triumphs of life can usher in a sense of ecstasy, even heaven on earth. While life's tragedies bring a state of devastation, which some have expressed as hell on earth. Outside of the battle against sin, I would suppose that no other battle has caused more pain, grief, and internal agony within the hearts and minds of the saints than that of the battle between the religious and the righteous. This epic battle sparked in the very beginning, burned in Judaism, and rages still wildly in Christendom today. Many of God's true saints have felt the heat and burn of this battle.

The first murder in all of history was also in fact the first martyrdom. This tragic story is none other than the two brothers - Cain and Abel. While Cain is commonly thought of as being like the uneducated heathen of today, the contrary is true. Cain grew up in a family of believers. He and his brother both made sacrifices to God, and may have even prayed together. Yet the religious Cain martyred his own righteous brother. "And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brothers righteous" (1 John 3:12).

The mystery within this event is why did God accept Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's? There is no clear answer, however scripture says that "Abel also brought of the first born of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering" (Gen 4:4), yet there is no mention of the quality of Cain's sacrifice at all.

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The righteous, as Abel, will not merely give God what he wants to give or what he feels that he could afford to go without. The righteous will give to God everything that God wants. The righteous gives God all that He is worthy of. In our day the religious, who follow in the footsteps of Cain; will give God only what they want to give. They will give God a few measly hours once a week on Sunday. They will go through the actions which make them feel pure and holy. They are willing to cleanse the outside of the cup for image and reputations sake, but the inside of the cup is kept comfortably sinful. God hates Sunday service Christianity that never penetrates and permeates into the rest of the week. "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination" (Pr 21:27). I fear that we have a generation of Cain's today, people that believe God should accept their one hour of singing worship on Sundays, who get jealous and mad when others give the Lord more than they are willing to give.

The righteous are a reflection on the corruption of the religious. The righteous will rock the boat of the lukewarm religious. The religious will despise those who desire to rise higher than themselves. "He that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked" (Pr 29:27). A storm may start with a few drops but before long it's a down pour. The storm of hatred inside the heart of the religious always starts with a drop of jealousy here and a drop of hurt ego there, but before long it escalates into a raging, murderous storm. Within modern Christendom today there are only two types of believers: There are the Cain's and there are the Abel's. Where do you stand?

The first biblical story of imprisonment within the scriptures is that of Joseph. Because of the visions which God had given him, he was betrayed by his own Jewish brothers. These were princes of Israel! Their hatred was founded upon jealousy. They started hating him when they saw the favor that their Father had on him and then hated him even more when they heard the dreams God had given him. "And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him" (Acts

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7:9). The tragedies in Joseph's life are hard for anyone to bear. But the optimist within me says that within every tragedy there is a triumph. The vision God had given him would only be attained and reached if Joseph walked on the road of suffering. In order to be exalted to the place of power next to Pharaoh to save the nation in a time of drought, he had to be brought down low to the place of a slave, and then even lower to the place of a criminal. To save his brothers he must first be rejected by his brothers.

God the Father highly favors His righteous saints. The visions of your heart which God has given you may bring even those within your own household to laugh and even hate you. Hold fast to God though the world rejects you and the Church despise you. Learn to expect God's triumph in every tragedy, a victory in every defeat. To come out as gold you have to pass through the fire. The religious seek to burn you for your hurt but God uses it for your good.

“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8). Nobody opposed the ministry of Jesus Christ and His apostles more than the religious people of His day. And what was the motivating factor? Jealousy. “For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy” (Mk. 15:10). “But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming” (Acts 13:45). “But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people” (Acts 17:5). The persecution of the righteous by the religious is a fire fueled by jealousy.

Are you able to drink the same cup the Lord drank from (Matt. 20:22)? The cup of the righteous is a cup of rejection and persecution. That is the cup we must drink – the cross we must bear. Some may think I mention this too much. But I would say

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that some mention it too little, considering how common it is. The righteous will be opposed on every side by the unsaved in the world, the unsaved in the church, and the unsaved in his family. As with Abel, rejection often comes from those closest to us (Mic. 7:6, Lk. 12:53).

A. W. Tozer wrote about this cross which utterly slays the righteous. "The cross is a sword and often separates friends and divides households. The idea that Christ always brings peace and patches up differences is found nowhere in his own teachings. Quite the contrary is true. For a man to cast in his lot with Christ often means that he will be opposed by his blood relatives and will find his true family ties only in the community of regenerated souls. The philosophy of mid-twentieth century Christianity is a philosophy of appeasement. Peace and unity have become the Castor and Pollux of the majority of religious leaders, and truth is regularly sacrificed on their altars. The notion that "peace on earth" as the New Testament uses the words, means concord between light and darkness is foreign to the whole traditional Christian position. Our Lord cared nothing for the good will of bad men, nor would He alter one word of His message to stay in favor with anyone, be he Jew or pagan or even a member of his own earthly family. 'For even his own brothers did not believe in him.' (John 7:5)".⁵³

Even our Lord was rejected by his own family, the same family that once went with him to the Temple and weekly to the synagogues. King David, a man after God's own heart, knew quite well the pain of this battle. "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company (Ps. 55:12-14). The Christian can tolerate the world rejecting him. The world has

⁵³ The Size of the Soul, Chapter 39 "Not Peace, but a Sword."

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rejected God as well, so we are in good company. But it's almost unbearable to be rejected by those who call themselves brothers and sisters, children of God who have walked side by side you to the house of the Lord. There is always someone, somewhere, who doesn't like you, for some reason. But it's a terrible tragedy when that person is called a Christian and he is found in Church, and the reason he has an inner vexation and irritation towards you is because you walk with God more than he does and are willingly to give and sacrifice more than he himself is willing. The wounds of a friend cut the deepest. Those who bear the scars of this battle can testify that they still sometime hurt and ach long after they've been healed.

As long as there are religious and righteous people in the world, Cain will persecute Abel. King Herod once went to be entertained by John the Baptist but instead of entertaining him John berated him! Though the king was generally accustomed to being respected, this time he was rebuked! John had previously liked listening to John preach and even considered him a holy man (Mk. 6:20), but when John publicly rebuked his sin of adultery Herod wanted to kill him (Matt. 14:4-5). Despite the king's belief in John, he would not let go of his own adulterous sin with his brother's wife. The rebuke of John echoed embarrassment all throughout Jerusalem and Judea for the adulterous couple. The lustful eye of this king caused him to swear an oath to the daughter of Herodias, that he would give her whatever she desired because her dance pleased him. When she asked for the head of John the Baptist, though Herod was sad because he believed John a holy man, he complied and made a martyr out of John (Matt. 14:5-9; Mk. 6:21-27). The reflection that this righteous man had on the wicked was too much to bear, until it finally cost him his freedom and his blood.

Kay Arthur said, "Stephen cried out to the religious leaders of Israel "Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?..." (Acts 7:52). The prophets were always persecuted (Matthew 5:11-12).

THE RELIGIOUS VS. THE RIGHTEOUS

Sometimes the obstacles in our Christian walk come from the outside. It seems the world does everything possible to silence our witness. However, it is the opposition from within that seems to cause the most damage. In reading the gospels you don't see much external opposition to Jesus. Herod tried to kill Him in Bethlehem, but after that it looks like most of the opposition came from the religious establishment. The people who claimed to worship God, the priests, the lawyers, the scribes, and the Pharisees were the ones who challenged Jesus at every turn. They watched His every step and listened to His every word, not to learn but to judge. In the end it was the Romans who crucified Jesus, but during His ministry it was a centurion whose faith made Jesus marvel."⁵⁴

Jesus Christ has been the most rejected man in all of history. "He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3). Millions today still continue to curse His holy name. I was once complaining to the Lord and said, "Lord, I feel so rejected." I felt His response was, "So do I." During His time on earth He faced rejection from His family (John 7:5), rejection from His friends (Ps 41:9), and rejection from the synagogues and the temple (Matt 26:59). And he has generally been rejected by the entire nation of Israel even to this day. It was the hypocritical religious leaders that opposed him the most viciously because He preached repentance and stood for righteousness, rebuking their showmanship, selfishness and wickedness. And they envied his following and the praises he received from the people.

The murderous, religious Saul of the New Testament was a spiritual descendant of the murderous, religious Cain of the Old Testament. Blinded by zeal, this religious man passionately attacked and killed early Christians. Once he was converted, he switched sides in the battle of the religious vs. the righteous. The acceptance of man is a wavering thing, never to be trusted.

⁵⁴ The Religious Persecute the Righteous

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Acceptance by the religious is unstable and always uncertain. While they may start by saying "Hosanna" they will end by saying "crucify Him." Paul experienced this when he arrived to the synagogue in Antioch. The rulers eagerly sent for him to give an exhorting word (Acts 13:15). Afterwards "the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath." (Acts 13:42) Man's acceptance of Paul was not to last long. Only two verses down we read, "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming" (Acts 13:45).

The righteous can become bewildered and baffled when those whom they expect to accept them turn around and reject them. Those who should most willingly receive them put them out most vehemently and even violently. Those whom they had thought would love them the most end up loving them the least. Rather than helping the saints, they seek their hurt.

The hatred that the righteous receives from the religious far surpasses even the hatred they receive from the secular world. The religious will lash out in retaliation to protect their own self-righteous image. They will seek to destroy the flame which reflects badly on their coldness, the energy which reflects badly on their laziness, the love that reflects badly on their hatred. And if they can not put these out, they will seek to put you out. Will you dare to tread in the way of the saints?

While on a witnessing trip to the place that vexes me the most, New Orleans, a group of us stopped to eat in a restaurant. From the very first we walked in the door I was remarkably impressed by the service of one of the bus boys. As I observed him more I noticed how hard working he was, going out of his way to serve every customer. All of us in the group noticed this one worker, but also noticed the tension between him and the other workers. They would mock him behind his back and have the worst of attitudes with him. There was enough coldness

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coming from his co-workers to chill the dinners of everyone in the restaurant!

We discovered something interesting when we spoke with him. "We really wanted you to know that we appreciate all the hard work you've done. You've really gone out of your way to serve. We noticed that some of your co-workers seem to give you a hard time. Don't let them get you down, keep up the great work!" With a smile on his face he said "Don't tell anyone, but I'm actually not a bus boy. I've been hired to be the new manager, but have been working as a bus boy for the first few weeks to see who really works and who slacks off. Once these few weeks are over, a lot of these people are getting fired!"

Though the saints will go through these hard times now while they are serving next to those who are merely sitting, remember that one day the saints will judge the nations! "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2). Abel's blood cried out for justice (Gen 4:10). And once the days of grace are over in which the blood of Christ cries out for the justification of the world, the martyrs will cry out for justice for their blood. "When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'" (Revelation 6:9-10)

God has given the religious time to repent. Just as Cain had a free will and could rule over sin and do what is right (Gen. 4:6-7), so could the Cain's today. The Cain's of this generation are not reprobates who are beyond hope and reach. Any Cain can become an Abel. Any Saul can become a Paul. God spoke to Cain, "And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wrath? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him" (Gen 4:6-7). And so if you find yourself jealous at those who serve and

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sacrifice more than you, or feel an ever growing irritation towards those who serve to set up the Kingdom of God, God is longing for you to do well and be accepted yourself. Rather than murdering the Abel's, repent and give God all that He is worthy of.

*“You don’t have to advertise a fire.”
Leonard Ravenhill*

Chapter Twenty Two *The Gathering*

We live in a time when crusades and large events reach hundreds of thousands of people a year. With a tool as powerful as this, what would the ideal event look like? The world’s greatest event would not look like what many people think it would look like. The greatest event would not have a huge stage. It would not have fancy lights. Neither would it have any big name entertainers. These events are characterized by excitement, hype, and glamour but leave people empty, hardened, and godless. Often these large events have everyone come to them, except for God. They are loud guns that shoot blanks. In the Lords parable of the great supper, those who the Master invited would not come. Nowadays everyone goes to the events, but it’s the Master that does not come.

So what would the greatest evangelistic event in history look like? The greatest event in the history of the world would be when God Himself comes down from His throne and dwells in the midst of men once again. There have been few occasions of this taking place in the past. In order to see how the greatest event would look like, let’s take a look and see what some of the great events in the past looked like.

John the Baptist

When I think about the ministry of John the Baptist, as short lived as it was, I can’t help but to be deeply challenged. It was so far different from what we see today and yet it was far more effective. John the Baptist didn’t go to Bible College. John never took classes on how to write a sermon or took a course on

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church growth plans. There was nothing attractive about the man himself at all. The man must have smelled like something awful living in the desert and eating bugs. He didn't drive around in big fancy cars, wear business suits, and wear expensive watches. He wore camel's hair and wore a leather girdle around his waste. And yet the Bible says that all of Judea and all of Jerusalem came out to hear him and were baptized by him. People young and old, educated and uneducated, all people came out and were converted by this mans ministry. John was in fact a youth leader in that sense and yet was nothing like the youth leaders we see today. Youth leaders today seem to have everything, except the power of God while John had nothing at all except for the Lord and His power.

Phillip the Evangelist

Then there was Philip the Evangelist. But Phillip was not always an Evangelist. He was at one point Phillip the bus boy. The lowly table waiter, the dish washer, and He became the amazing soul winner! Without an education, without financial help, without the use of marketing and promotion, but with the Lord, He saw youth come to Christ by the multitude. Phillip had gone to a city and the entire city was converted. Before he left, everyone knew who he was and who the Savior was. How many youth pastors today live in cities and even small towns and have labored for years and years and yet the community still has no idea who they are? When you labor without the Lord, you can produce a lot of things, except for genuine fruit to the Lord.

The Wesley Brothers

There was also John and Charles Wesley who forever changed the history of England along with the history of the world. Without the use of dramas and skits, without the use of entertainers and stages, without even amplification these brothers so pierced and penetrated the people of England that it would be almost impossible to study the history of England without

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studying the lives of these men. Masses flocked to the fields to hear them like sheep flock to a Shepherd for food. When there is a fire in the neighborhood, everyone comes out to watch it. Wherever these men went everyone came out to watch them burn for God. Although not formally “youth leaders”, these men genuinely reached more youth for Christ than, I would dare to say, any of the large youth conferences that there are today.

Duncan Campbell

We must never forget Duncan Campbell who, in the Hebrides revivals, saw multitudes of young people flee to Christ to be saved from the wrath that’s certain to come. While the church was in prayer one evening, the fear of God struck a dance where young people were gathered for carnal pleasure. All of them, over a hundred of them, ran from the dance, Duncan said, “as though fleeing from a plague.”⁵⁵ They were so tremendously terrified and awfully awakened at the sudden revelation and realization that they were deserving of damnation, that the only place they thought of where they might find any deliverance from this new found horror was at the church. This true phenomenon of real revival is not like the tragedies of mass false conversions we see so abundantly today.

Duncan said “God stepped down...what was that, revival? Revival! Not an evangelist, not a special effort, not anything at all organized from the basis of human endeavor. But an awareness of God that gripped the whole community, so much so that work stopped. I can remember once within twenty four hours addressing eight meetings.”⁵⁶

And again he said “The power of God swept through the village. Not a preacher, nothing organized, and there wasn’t a

⁵⁵ “Revival on the Island of Lewis” by Duncan Campbell

⁵⁶ Ibid.

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single house that hadn't a person saved. Now my dear people I can't explain this, except to say that God is sovereign."⁵⁷

Leonard Ravenhill

In the early years of Leonard Ravenhill, he and five other college students walked the length and breadth of England ministering in the streets for three years. Sleeping in fields unless a church welcomed them in, with no money often going months without any wages, they would minister in the open-air to the lost. They would wait outside the movie houses and give their testimonies as people came out. As the crowds of people walked by they were like fish in a river bound to get caught in the fishermen's net that waited for them. The amazing feature of these events was that there were no attractive entertainers or nice buildings to attract the people and yet the people would stand an hour or two hours in the cold to hear them! These meetings would be so large at times that the traffic would be blocked. The police would drag Leonard into the court house to see the Judge. He would go from the movie house to the court house but he ministered the truth of God in both places! In court he would use the opportunity for the Lord and would tell the judge that one day he too will be in a court room, but it will be the court room of God to face the Judge of judges.

The genuine ministry of men like this has been replaced with counterfeits today. Rather than men being convicted they are being comforted. The big name ministers have large numbers of people gather when they come but they leave nothing behind when they've gone! While Leonard said "at night we would kneel in the streets and people would get saved. The churches we started and still standing today."⁵⁸

All these stories are about men who didn't have what the big conferences have today. They didn't have modern promotional methods. They didn't have a lot of money. They

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ An Interview with Leonard Ravenhill

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didn't have what many conferences require for putting them on. But all these stories are about men who had what many large conferences do not have today. They had the Spirit and power of God that they sought after in prayer. I am not in any ways trying to mock or criticize what Christians are trying to do today. I am simply being honest. The church today lacks in power because the church today lacks in prayer. The power of God is found inside the presence of God which can only be accessed through prayer with God. God will not come down like rain on a dry desert as He has in the past until the church gets down on her knees in sweet intercession as she has in the past.

E. M. Bounds wrote, "All the true revivals have been born in prayer. When God's people become so concerned about the state of religion that they lay on their faces day and night in earnest supplication, the blessing will be sure to fall. It is the same all down the ages. Every revival of which we have any record has been bathed in prayer."⁵⁹

It would be far easier to show me a man who has lived life without breathing than it would be to show me a Christian who has changed history without praying. John Livingston spent the entire night in prayer before he preached a sermon on Ezekiel 36:25- 26 which resulted in the conversion of five hundred people.

It's said that Richard Baxter "stained his study walls with praying breath; and after becoming thus anointed with the unction of the Holy Spirit he sent a river of living water over Kidderminster."⁶⁰

George Whitfield once prayed "Give me souls or I'll die."⁶¹ It's also said that Whitfield, after praying, "Once went to

⁵⁹ "The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds on Prayer" pg. 363.

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ The Young Christian: A Guide for Seekers and New Converts By Henry B. Roller, published in 1905, p. 68

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the Devil's fair and took more than a thousand souls out of the paw of the lion in a single day."⁶²

Twenty thousand souls came to the Lord during James Caughey first visit to England. His secret, he said, was "knee-work, knee-work, knee-work."⁶³

Charles Finney said, "I once knew a minister who had a revival fourteen winters in succession. I did not know how to account for it till I saw one of his members get up in a prayer meeting and make a confession. 'Brethren' He said, 'I have been long in the habit of praying every Saturday night till after midnight for the descent of the Holy Spirit among us. And now, brethren (and he began to weep), I confess that I have neglected it for two or three weeks.' The secret was out. That minister had a praying church."⁶⁴

We are commanded to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17). Well what is it that we ought to be praying for? We must pray for laborers to be sent out and to pray that Gods Kingdom comes down from Heaven and be established on earth. If revival is not Gods Kingdom coming and being established on earth, as it is in Heaven, then I don't know what revival is. We sing songs like "As the dear pants for the water, so my soul longs after you" but if we truly longed after God as a starving man longs for food, we would soon have Him. The Lord does not prostitute His presence around, revealing Himself to everyone who wants a cheap thrill. But that's what we want Him to do today. Rather than making ourselves ready for the Bridegroom, we want the Lord to come so we can enjoy His presence along with our sins, but it will never happen. The only way revival will happen is if we turn from our sins in humility and seek after the Lord with all our hearts. Hype is no substitute for the Holy Ghost and holiness.

⁶² "The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds on Prayer" pg. 363.

⁶³ The Young Christian: A Guide for Seekers and New Converts By Henry B. Roller, published in 1905, p. 68

⁶⁴ "The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds on Prayer" pg. 363.

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Helping or Hurting?

I'm convinced that the church as a whole has lost focus and is pouring into methods and techniques deceiving ourselves that we are helping when we are truly hurting this generation. There are youth groups that have basket ball courts and video games and yet they won't have anyone in their group that is really living holy and seeking after the Lord. How far we have fallen and we don't even realize it! The justification for all this is "Just ask them, they know the Scriptures," but do they know the God of the Scriptures? Do they live by the Word? If not, their condemnation will be greater than the kids in the world who don't even know the Bible. It would have been better for some of these youth groups not to even know the Scriptures at all then to know them and still walk in disobedience towards God.

Our twisted logic convinced us that the kids won't come to youth group if there aren't any video games or sports. Without the explosions and rock bands why would this generation even come to our events? Let me tell a true story. While I was a new Christian in a youth group I noticed that I was not the only one that was unsatisfied with our youth group. There was plenty of pizza but no power. There was an abundance of snacks but there was a bankruptcy of spirituality. So I started a Bible Study in my basement. In my basement I had couches, a TV and VCR, darts and a dart board, turn tables, a stereo, a ping pong table, air hockey table, and all these types of things I thought everyone could enjoy after the Bible Study. I set up blue, green, yellow, and all different color lights to add to the atmosphere. We started with 4 people but grew rapidly to roughly 30 in less than a month. This is the amazing part. The study would start at around 7 o'clock and sometimes they wouldn't leave until midnight and after. They stayed to talk about God and didn't stay for the games. Not even once did we finish the Bible Study and hang around playing with all the little toys. Not even once! We would sit there for hours and hours and talk about the Word! The same youth group that was apparently dead at church suddenly became alive

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and interested in the things of God. And now these same people that used to meet in my basement have their own ministry and are trying to change the world.

We have had enough excuses given to us in order to cover up the lacking there is of the power of God in our outreaches. We have become masters of manipulating the multitudes. We can get large crowds of people at an altar to repeat a prayer, yet what happens when they leave? They keep living the same way they've always lived. Our excuse is "bad follow-up." No! It wasn't bad follow-up. Changing a persons label does not change their character. Tell someone, "You are a Christian now" does not make it so. We can put the Christian label on the multitudes that come to our altars, but if you merely look closely at their lives and see how they live you will soon realize our mistake. We wrongfully assume that these people are actually alive in Christ when they are indeed dead in their trespassing and sins.

*They've come for fun
They've come for food
They've come for everything
Except to meet You*

This generation can only eat what they are given, and what are they being given? Pizza, bands, games, fancy lights, and all of these things! Wouldn't it be nice if it were that easy? Well it's not! We have sold out to the way of the world so now my generation is not going the way of the Lord. If ever we want to see the world reached, it's going to cost us. When I was leading the Bible Study in my basement I took it very seriously. God had entrusted it to me and I refused to be unfaithful with it. The truth was, I hadn't been a Christian long and those who were coming were Christians much longer then I had been. But this was the ministry that the Lord gave me. I had graduated High School about two and a half years early and so I was working in a factory at the time. I didn't have a car or a license but I rode a bike every morning across town to work. After working all day long in the

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factory, I would come home and study, write, and pray for the group all night long and then when the sun came up I'd ride to work again. It took me a long time to put together a lesson, since I did not know much about the Bible. But I did it all with joy.

This generation will only be reached if we sacrifice and pour ourselves out. Even if that means pouring ourselves out until there is nothing left to give. It isn't until we get to the point that we cannot pour out ourselves any longer that God is able to pour Himself out through us. The calling that God has on Christians today must be taken seriously. God will not say on Judgment Day "Why did you work so hard? It wasn't really that important." I fear we will only realize how important and valuable the ministry is that God has entrusted to us when it is too late and we see souls being bound hand and foot and cast into hell.

In summary, the greatest youth event ever would be when people come from near and far to meet with God, and not with any other type of motive. Not to hear a preacher or to listen to a band. Not to get away for the weekend or to hang out with their friends. Not for healing or even to hear about God. The greatest event would be when people come from all over to meet with God. Will we see the day when God comes down in answer to the prayers of His Saints? I believe it depends on the prayers of the church.

Cure to this Crazyiness

Take comfort and be of good cheer Christian! There is a cure to this crazyiness! If we cleanse ourselves and cry out to God, it is promised that the God who answers by fire will hear from Heaven.

C. H. Spurgeon said "Never think that a praying heart pleads to a deaf God."⁶⁵

The conversion of the masses is not a fruit of organizing but of agonizing. The hearts of sinners are so hard because the

⁶⁵ "Besides Still Waters, Words of Comfort for the Soul"

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knees of Christians are so soft! Away with the methods of man that are damning lost souls. Away with poor excuses for being powerless. Away with complacency that watches our children blindly dance with delight in the midst of the deadly hurricane of sin that is tearing through and utterly destroying our land. Away with it all! And to our neglected prayer closets to enter into the throne room of God in order to plead with the Lord to let loose the power which is so abundantly stored up for those who seek it.

Section Three
Cleansing the World

“Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you're not saved yourself, be sure of that!” Charles Spurgeon

"Every Christian a missionary; every non-Christian a mission-field." Winkie Pratney

Chapter Twenty Three

Every Christian's Duty

“Him we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Colossians 1:28

This text cuts through all the branches of distractions and mows down the overgrown grass of aberration in one fowl swoop. It does not take too long for a trail to overgrow through lack of use and neglect. But when our deviations cause such to occur, a text like this is fitting to come in and clear the path once again.

How easy it is to become withdrawn and unmindful of our true purpose and high calling while we are in this world which the devil himself has jammed packed full of entertainment and amusement. How long must one drive in the wrong direction before he realizes he's heading the wrong way and that he will never reach his destination, but will continue to move farther and farther from it, until he pulls over to ask for directions. So in this day, when the roads to travel on are many, but the destination is definite, we must stop and ask for guidance from the Scriptures.

This text reveals to us the very core of Christian ministry. It is the summary of Christian service. It is the detailed job description of a true Christian. Here Paul wrote the mission statement of the New Testament Church. Oh that we may see how far we as the modern Church have drifted from it because of our treasure hunting for acceptance and friendly relations with

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the world, which in the end will come to naught as most treasure hunting does.

This text must be the forceful wind to our sails on the seas of Christian living and service. This text serves a true and faithful compass; it is as a bright and sparkling star reliably enlightening us of both our location and direction. It is indeed a map for our travels here in this fallen world.

I. Him We Preach

True Christianity is Christ centered, Christ magnifying, and Christ serving. A sinful man is self centered, self magnifying, and self serving. All sin spouts up from the soil of selfishness while holiness stand's firm on the bedrock of Christ's love. The essence of sin is selfishness while the essence of true Christianity is the love of Jesus Christ. Christianity revolves around the Son of God as the planets revolve around the shining sun. Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). The gospel is not merely about Christ; the gospel is Christ. When we are commanded to preach the gospel we are commanded to preach Christ. It is "Him we preach" (Col 1:28). Conversion is an experience but salvation is a person. Salvation is more than a message, it is a man. Salvation is the God-man. Christ is our substitute, He is our pass-over, He is our "righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor 1:30).

When a poor man needs a coat who would dare hand him a coat hanger? That does this man no good. Offer him the white robe of Christ! When a child is hungry and on the very verge of starvation who would dare extend to him a plate of bones to eat? God forbid! Bring the child bread and drink. Yes, bring this spiritually starving soul the very bread of Christ's flesh and the wine of His blood that will bring life to his members by releasing the chilling, grasping, bloodthirsty hands of spiritual death. As Christ has said, "what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?" (Mt 7:9). If we offer men

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anything but Christ are we not offering men dung? For all is dung compared to the wonderful and glorious Christ (Php 3:8)!

I pity the man who only has religion and I have sorrow for the man who only has rituals. But I rejoice with the man who has a relationship with the risen Christ! Salvation is not some one-time past experience. It is a continual walk with the Lord. Eternal life is to know Him (Jn. 17:3). There are those who preach religion, others who preach rituals, but we preach right-relationship with God through the One who was dead yet now forever lives! Others preach the commandments and doctrines of men, "But we preach Christ crucified" (1Co 1:23). Eternal life can only come from the One who lives eternally. For spiritual sight we point men to the One who made the eyes (Gen 1:26). For eternal life we point men to the One who conquered death (Acts 2:27). For deliverance from bondage we point men to the One who took captivity captive (Eph 4:8). "Salvation is of the Lord" (2 Chron. 20:17) and "the Lord is my light and my salvation" (Ps 27:1).

Salvation is not found in anyone or anything except for Christ alone (John 14:6). It is Christ alone that we must preach. A sinner cannot save himself from the penalty of his sin and that is why Christ would not save Himself from making atonement for man's sin. Man cannot save himself by the merit of his own work and self effort. Salvation therefore takes the work of Christ. As a drowning man who does not know how to swim needs another to save him, all of humanity was, and mostly still is, drowning in sin and death. Christ alone can rescue. Salvation came through Christ because it could not have come through any of us (Eph. 2:8-9). So then it is Christ that must be preached to all of mankind!

But how must we preach Christ? The popular thought today is that preaching in actions alone, without the use of words, is adequate enough to express the truth of God. Though this concept is held dearly by masses and is viciously defended by multitudes, when Christ said "preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15),

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He meant actual preaching with actual words as He had already shown them by example.

The supposition of preaching through actions alone begins to take on water and to quickly sink when we view the scriptures which state the contrary. “And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14). And so we see the gospel is meant to be heard and that through a preacher men are to hear it. Another deadly blow to this unbiblical thinking of “men need a friend not a preacher” is “Faith comes by hearing” (Rom. 10:17). A preacher of the gospel is a friend of the soul!

Of course a man is disqualified from preaching if his actions are contradictory and inconsistent to the Word of God. Preaching must be confirmed by actions and deeds. We must be both “mighty in deed and word before God and all people” (Luke 24:19) if we are to be what God intends for us to be. Christianity must be seen by the world in the actions of Christians and not only heard about in the talk of the Church. But our actions and works alone are not adequate and sufficient enough to fully communicate the gospel message “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15).

What would the preaching of John the Baptist have been if he never used words? How many would have comprehended the Sermon on the Mount if Jesus never spoke? How many would have been converted on the Day of Pentecost if Peter remained silent? How impacting would the preaching of Stephen or Paul or any of the early disciples and Apostles had been if they never used words to communicate the gospel but only let their lifestyles speak for themselves? These questions may sound absurd and even ridiculous, and that’s because they are. The whole theory of merely preaching in actions and not in words is illogical, preposterous, and has been taken too far.

“Lifestyle Evangelism,” as it is called, is the barracks which many of our troops are cowering behind for fear of injury and casualty. But our mission is of such importance that it is

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worth our lives as well as our deaths. Therefore, we must preach Christ!

II. Warning

There is no duty within Christianity that has been neglected, deserted, and cast off more than the duty of warning the wicked of the wrath to come. Sadly, many have ignored this duty because of the stigmatizing of their preachers. Even now the very word “warning” has a bad connotation attached to it. Contrary to popular belief, warning men that the “wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) and that the fruit of sin is fatal to the soul, is actually a wonderful and very loving work. That is because warning was a major part of Christ’s mission and purpose (Luke 13:3, John 7:7) and we know that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). Love warns.

If we love lost souls, we must warn them of the peril and threat of sin. And we must do this in a faith-filled hope that they might repent and live in Christ. We are to declare that they are skating on thin ice and that at any moment the ice will crack and shatter, plunging them down to their deaths. Oh Christian see them skating in their happy ignorance, unaware of their true danger! Don’t you desire, no, don’t you long and yearn for them to wake up? If so, you must ask next how it is that God intends to wake them up. We’ll it is by the preaching of the Law, the Ten Commandments, which were designed, calculated, and purposed to warn them. (Ps. 19:7, Rom 3:20, Rom 7:7, Rom 7:13, Gal 3:24).

“What about the gospel” I hear someone asking. Yes we must preach the gospel, but that includes warning and preaching the law. The law paves the way for the gospel. Paul said that he “warned” men in his preaching and Paul was a gospel preacher. Paul said, “God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16). “And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and dead” (Acts

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10:44). A biblical message includes a warning of coming judgment and if any preacher fails to preach this then he fails to be a biblical preacher.

It's by the sword of the Law that hard hearts are pierced with the pain of conviction. The Law is God's fire alarm warning men of the fires of hell. Men are in a deep sleep and the Law is the alarm clock telling them it's time to wake up, to get out of their beds of sin, and to go shower in the cold showers of repentance. Only then can they wear the white robes of righteousness. Yes, it takes the thundering of the Mountain of Sinai to awaken them. It takes the severe threatening and warning of the Ten Commandments to put urgency, seriousness, and even terror into their hearts for their souls!

Charles Finney was the greatest revivalist America has ever seen. Before preaching grace he would preach the Law to bring the peoples sins up to the forefront of their attention. When going to a community he would spend up to 28 days preaching nothing but the Law of God until finally the people would break. They would cry out saying "Don't you have any grace?" to which he would respond "Don't ask me, ask God." And the people would and there was wonderful revival!

The lost must understand that they are dead (Eph 2:1) but that God sets before them life and that they must choose it (De 30:19). They must understand that they actually are darkness (Eph 5:8), living in darkness (Matt 4:16), but Christ will make them light (Eph 5:8), abiding in light (John 12:46). It is by the Law that men see themselves as transgressors (Jas. 2:9). It is by the Law that men see themselves as exceeding sinful (Rom 7:13). The Law is a lamp unto our feet to illuminate our paths (Ps 119:105) so that sinners can become aware of the traps set by the devil, no longer being able to hide in the darkness of ignorance.

Some want it to be more complicated and deeper than that. Though a stop sign may not be deep or profound in instruction because of its simplicity, it is still very effective instruction. Likewise, when we preach the Law and call men to

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repent, it may seem as though it is not very deep and is too simple but the truth is that the Law is effective in fulfilling its God given purpose.

Christian, you must give the wicked warning. Yes, warn the drunkard that his alcohol will drown his soul and that in his drunken stupor he will wonder into hell, where he will sober up when he awakes in horror (1 Cor. 6:10). Declare to the liar the honest truth that his own words will testify of his guilt (Rom 14:12) and that they will condemn him (Mt 12:37). Announce to the harlot that the money she collects for her whoredom is the very money for which she sold not only her body, but also her soul (Isaiah 5:1). Inform the adulterer that the pleasure of his lust is the mere bait to Satan's malignant trap. Warn the damned that the pleasure of sin is for a season (Heb. 11:25) but that the pain and punishment of sin is for eternity (Mark 9:43).

How strange and foreign all this sounds in our day of therapeutic ministry with our psychology preaching. We make men feel as though they were victims to be pitied rather than criminals to be blamed. Yet until a man can see himself as desperately beyond any chance of saving himself he will never look to God for saving. Until he sees that he is guilty of transgression he cannot be justified in Christ. Before he sees that he is damned to hell for all eternity he cannot be saved to everlasting Heaven. Christ came to "save sinners" (1Ti 1:15), and as long as men see themselves as victims rather than sinners Christ cannot save them.

We need men today like that of the fearless Savonarola of Florence; men who will denounce and despise sin high and low, who will challenge the low and non-existing morals of our society. If we fail to do so, the blood of our world will be on our hands and the weight of their guilt will come down on our heads. "So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked

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from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand” (Eze. 33:7-8).

When Christ gave the Church the Great Commission before He ascended, He set every Christian as watchmen over the world. We are to be the light-house in the sea of darkness telling those sailing that there are rocks in the water which will sink and kill them. It is our moral obligation to tell men of their responsibility towards God in this life as well as to warn them of their accountability to God in the next life.

Does all of this appear to be hard and heavy? That is because it is. But it’s all scriptural and a true. The Law is unwavering, unchanging, uncompromising, in it’s condemning of sin and sinners and yet it is God’s chosen tool to compliment the gospel and to point men in the direction of the cross.

III. Teaching

We see from the text that our preaching is to have both warning as well as teaching. Warning is motivating and teaching is explaining. We are both to alarm as well as instruct. A doctor who alarms a patient with a diagnosis but then does not instruct and comfort with the remedy has not done his full duty. And so the Great Physician went, “to teach and to preach” (Matt. 11:1).

Through preaching men are motivated and encouraged but through teaching men receive practical application. Warning in our preaching is as vital as a man’s heart; teaching in our preaching is as essential as a man’s blood. One does no good without the other. They both are absolutely required for life. And in the message of eternal life, neither can be neglected.

But what is it that we are to teach?

- i. “repentance towards God” (Acts 20:21)
- ii. “and faith in Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21)

Repentance towards God is the missing ingredient in the gospel today. Out of all the aspects of the gospel message that

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men are ignorant of, the essential aspect men are most ignorant of is biblical repentance.

The fact that the first word Christ preached in public was “repent” is more than note worthy. (Matt 3:2). The first stone laid in the foundation of the gospel is repentance. Without it we cannot be the temple of God. The last thing a sinner wants to do is repent and yet the first thing he must do to be right with God. The carnal mind is enmity with God so a sinner must repent (change His mind) in order to be reconciled to God. You cannot be God’s friend while you are His enemy. You cannot have peace while at war with Him. A sinner must change his mind about sinning and make-up his mind to sin no more or else he can never have a loving relationship with God. This must be plainly instructed to men.

Because of the lack of biblical teaching on repentance, men believe that repentance is the mere feeling of guilt or sorrow for sin. For a drunkard, is reforming his life having a hang over? No! Reforming his life is giving up the drink. For a sinner, is repenting of his sins the feeling of sorrow? No! Repenting of his sins is giving up the sins. Sorrow is just as much repentance to a sinner as a hang-over is reformation to a drunkard.

As a hang-over is the body’s natural reaction to drunkenness, so sorrow is the soul’s spiritual reaction to sin. Godly sorrow is not repentance. Rather, “godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation” (2 Cor. 7:10). Sorrow is not the bridge to Heaven, neither is repentance, but they both play a roll. Sorrow is the cement of the pillar of repentance which is the parallel pillar of faith for the bridge of the grace of the cross.

True repentance, which is turning from all sin in your heart, must be clearly taught so that a sinner clearly understands that to come to the Savior he must leave his sin behind. Failure in this area sabotages all other areas. Without repentance faith is dead (Jas. 2:26), works are sinful (Tit. 1:15), prayers are unheard (Ps. 66:18), and worship is abominable (Prov. 15:8).

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Let it be spoken loudly and clearly that it is sin which separates man from God and therefore as long as a man has sin in his life he is separated from God. But let it also be declared loud and clear that Christ, who is the Lamb of God, came to take away the sin of the world! Sin separates man from God but Christ will separate a man from sin!

Which brings us to the next point - “and faith in Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21). While faith is not intellectual but spiritual, one must know what it is in order to have it. “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17) We must teach what faith in Jesus Christ is.

Salvation does not merely require faith in God but it requires “faith in Jesus Christ.” It is not the mere belief that there is a God, but it is the trusting of the heart in the work of the cross of Christ. All religions have faith in some “Creator” but not all have faith in Christ. “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Act 4:12).

The fog of false religions and false beliefs have so clouded this issue that many in our society believe that so long as a person is basically good and has a general faith that he will be accepted by God. But the Bible slices and shatters such fallacies by saying “faith in Jesus Christ.” The target is more specific. The road is not so broad, as many have believed it to be.

It was Christ who did for us what no other man could do – died for our sins. Christ brought mercy when He died on the cross. We were all as helpless men fallen into a pit in which the walls were higher than any of us could climb. Even Mohammad, Buddha, Joseph Smith, the Pope and others, being in the same pit of sin, could not save themselves or anyone else. But Christ and Christ alone lived without sin and suffered and died on behalf of our sins, that God could pardon us of our crimes.

This basic explanation of the gospel must be clearly taught to sinners. “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Ac 5:42). May

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it be said of us that we did not bend or compromise or break when the weight of false teachings come crashing down upon us, but that we stood tall to teach and proclaimed “faith in Jesus Christ!”

IV. In All Wisdom

It is a great comfort to many of us to know that when Paul said “all wisdom” he was not professing to be a science, history, mathematics, and literary teacher; requesting of us to be likewise. He was not claiming to be an Archimedes or Einstein. Paul did not mean to say “teaching men all wisdom” but rather meant teaching in all wisdom, that is, in the wisdom of God. We are not responsible to teach men all wisdom but rather are responsible to teach men in wisdom. We are to be wise in our teaching. All that we do should be guided by His wisdom. And “he that winneth souls is wise” (Prov. 11:30). Jesus spoke with great wisdom when He said, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Matt. 6:19-20).

Paul did not come with “human wisdom” (1 Cor. 2:4) Instead he said, “But we speak the wisdom of God” (1 Cor 2: 7). What the world calls wise God calls foolish. And what the world calls foolish, God calls wise. “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:23). “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21).

If you want God to think you wise, accept that the world will call you foolish. But it is better for God to think you wise and the world think you foolish than for the world to think you wise and God think you are foolish. It may look foolish to the world to proclaim the gospel on the housetops (Matt. 10:27), but that is the means God has chosen to save them that believe. Oh my our ministries be rooted and grounded in the wisdom of God!

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The wisdom of the believer is in fact Christ Himself. “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30). “In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). To walk in the spirit of wisdom is to walk in the Spirit of Christ. Therefore, “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it” (John 2:5), even if it is as foolish as filling washing pots with water and drawing out of them to serve the governor of a feast!

The fool is the one who is not willing to be a fool for Christ (1 Cor. 4:10). May we be filled with wisdom and witnessing in wisdom.

V. Every Man

The gospel is the only hope for man. All men have sinned (Rom. 3:23). All men are heading for the grave (Heb. 9:27). All men will be judged on judgment day (Rev. 20:12). The gospel is the solution to all of man’s greatest problems. He is our righteousness to deliverer from sin, our resurrection to rescue us from the grave, our redemption to spare us from condemnation. Christ is all that men need and all men need Christ. It is our job to offer Him to them.

Mark Cahill said, “If their breathing then they need Jesus.”⁶⁶ But there is a paralysis instilled by false theology as the devil whispers, “Maybe Jesus didn’t die for that person?” There are those who cannot tell everyone they meet, “Jesus died for you,” because in their theology that they learned from Seminary He might not have. Given their false doctrine, the Great Commission is halted as there is no “gospel” or good news to tell “every creature” (Mark 16:15). This Calvinistic perverted gospel is an assault on the Biblical gospel itself. But let us bury this heresy with the shovel of the Scriptures:

⁶⁶ One Thing You Can’t Do In Heaven, Chapter Six.

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First we read, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). The same “all” that sinned is the same “all” that Jesus died for. Thus, Jesus died for every sinner. If you are going to deny that Jesus died for “all” men, you might as well go all the way and deny that “all” have sinned too.

Second, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9). His death was for “every man” and that is why we must warn “every man.” Salvation has been made available to all men so we are to proclaim this good news to every creature!

Third, “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn. 2:2). The unlimited atonement of Jesus Christ could not have been emphatically declared in plainer language than this. We are to go into “all the world” to preach the gospel because Christ died “for the sins of the whole world.” We have good news to share with every man.

“For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye” (Eze. 18:32). “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

If God is calling all men everywhere to repent and is not willing that any should perish but willing that all should come to repentance, we must be like Him. We should call everywhere to repent! We should not be willing that anyone perish! Oh that we might tell every man about the coming Judgment Day and the blessed hope that is available to them in Jesus Christ!

When you see them in the parks, when you see them in the malls, when you see them in the streets, when you see them

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in the office, whenever and wherever you see them, warn them and teach them!

“And they went out, and preached that men should repent” (Mark 6:12).

VI. Present Every Man

It is true that “tomorrow is not promised,” but Judgment Day certainly is! Every tick off the clock is a tick off your life. The clock is a countdown to Judgment Day. Every man has a sword to his throat with the words “mortality” engraved upon it. And every day that sword cuts deeper and deeper. More men have been slain upon the fields of time than any other battlefield in history.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one man receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. 20:12).

The reason that Paul warned and taught every man was so that He could prepare them for this great and terrible day. Every word, every deed, and every motive for every deed will be exposed and examined on that day. “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Matt. 12:36). “For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops” (Lk. 12:2-3).

The politician will give an account for every law he passed and bill that he signed. The preacher will give an account for every sermon he preached and counsel he gave. There will be

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no action unknown, no secret unrevealed. Men will either have the blood covering on that day or they will have no covering. The covering of good works will blow over; the covering of hidden secrecy will be ripped away, and the truth of all will be displayed for all of Heaven to see. Men must be covered and cleansed by the blood of Christ which was spilt two thousand years ago or their own blood will be spilt that day.

Christians have been given watch over the souls of men. Our obligation is to warn them all and teach them all that we might prepare them all. Man has a responsibility towards God in this life and an accountability to God in the next life. What condition will the souls be in that you present before the throne?

VII. Perfect in Christ

Paul was no compromised preacher accommodating carnality and tolerating sin and wickedness in people's lives. Paul was an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ preached "be ye therefore perfect" (Matt. 5:48) and "sin no more (Jn. 5:14; 8:11). Paul said was a follower of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1), so Paul also preached "be perfect" (2 Cor. 13:11) "sin not" (1 Cor. 15:34; Eph. 4:26) and to sin "no more" (Eph. 4:28). Paul did not lower the standard of Christ but aimed at presenting all men perfect in Christ. "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight" (Col. 1:22). "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 1:24).

Paul said "perfect in Christ" so Paul taught a perfection that is found in Christ. After all, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Jesus doesn't merely save men from the penalty of sin but from the practice of sin. He doesn't merely save men from the consequences of sin but also from the

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commission of sin! A Savior that doesn't save men from sin is not a Savior at all. A man who doesn't heal is not a doctor, a woman who doesn't sing is not a singer, and a Savior that does save is not a Savior.

Paul used the word "perfected" unashamedly and unapologetically, but this is a word that sinners scoff at and the backslidden church rages against. We have more preachers today who defend sin and attack holiness than attack sin and defend holiness. Many pastors preach against "legalism" and "works" when the real problem with the American church is lawlessness and dead faith. "Be ye perfect" were words found on the lips of Christ yet these words are seldom, if ever, preached from the pulpit of ministers today.

We have a high calling in Christ, to perfectly reflect the image of God as His ambassadors. Sin puts cracks in that mirror and distorts the image. An "almost perfect" mirror is not good enough. There must be no cracks to have an adequate reflection. And if we are going to be God's representatives in this world, we must not distort that image through any sin.

Christians are to be "saints" in this world. The word "saint" means holy. At true conversion, a sinner turns from his sins to righteousness. Consequent to conversion, he is a saint with a habit of holiness. No longer is his lifestyle characterized by perpetual sin. He has waved the white flag of surrender and now takes orders from a new commander. He has emptied himself from all his selfishness and replaced it with the love of Christ. Yes, it is possible for a true convert to sin, as it is possible to backslide back into your old life and forfeit the salvation that is in Christ. But while it is possible for you to sin, it is equally possible for you not to sin (1 Cor. 10:13). It is a daily choice and as long as you are walking in faith, you will remain faithful.

Our objective in warning and teaching all men is that all men might be saved. We want to see them all delivered from the devil's tyranny! Sin is a hard taskmaster. "The way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. 13:15), but Jesus said, "My yoke is

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easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:30). “His commandments are not grievous” (1 Jn. 5:3). Sin brings depression, death, and damnation. But holiness in Christ brings happiness, health, and heaven! A man who does not aim at living without sin is impenitent still. And if we do not want others to live without sin then we do not truly love them.

“One sinner destroyeth much good” (Ecc. 9:18). This world is full of misery because this world is full of sin. Heaven will be a place of perfect happiness and peace because there is no sin there. And the reason there is no sin there is because there are no sinners there. “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:41-42). “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27). As we have been given charge over the souls of men, we must prepare them for Judgment and Heaven. We must declare loud and clear “Repent!” as Jesus and his apostles did. We must tell them that without holiness no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14), you must be pure in heart to see God (Matt. 5:8).

The *summum bonum*⁶⁷ of all ministry is the perfection of the saints. The perfection of men ought to be the aim of every ministry. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-12). If you shoot at nothing, you will hit nothing. We’ll never hit the target of the perfection of the saints if that is not where we are shooting. The aim of ministry is not to entertain but to edify. It is to execute the old man and see men walk in newness of life.

⁶⁷ A Latin expression meaning “Highest Good.”

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God's will for mankind is complete and total holiness and that is precisely what our will should be as well. The prayer "Thy kingdom come. They will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10), is a prayer for the absolute perfection of all men. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (1 Thes. 4:3-4). All theological camps should be able to agree on this: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). The destiny God has wanted for mankind, before He even created us, was that we would all be reflective of the character of His Son.

Biblical salvation includes both justification and sanctification. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). We "were" drunkards and fornicators and the like but through Christ we were washed, sanctified, and justified. It is said, "Justification is not the same as sanctification." Fine, granting that, they are like separate shoes but they make up one pair. And you cannot walk right with God if you don't wear them both. Whom He justifies, He sanctifies. He that is not sanctified is not justified. God commands no partial repentance and He offers no partial salvation.

Impenitent sin is unforgiven sin. There is no forgiveness without forsaking. We do not want to present murderers, adulterers, fornicators, blasphemers, homosexuals, and the like to the Lord. We want to present former murders, former adulterers, former fornicators, former blasphemers, former homosexuals, etc. That is the promise of the gospel – a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

The Bible says that without holiness no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14), and it can also be said that without the Lord no man shall see holiness. Paul preached perfection "in Christ." It is through the power of the gospel of Christ that a man is

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changed from the inside out. Men without Christ may have good manners, speak politely, live decent lives in society, but without the Lord dwelling on the throne of their hearts, they are rebellious sinners and wicked in their hearts. Without Christ, men are sinners. But in Christ, men are saints.

God can sober the drunkard, purify the harlot, straighten the thief, and make an honest man out of a liar, if they will but submit and cooperate with His Spirit. God abides in the man who abides in Him. Christ wraps his arms around the one who wraps his arms around Him. Christ holds on to the man who holds on to Him. And while in the protective hold of Christ sin cannot harm you. Sin will tempt you but if you do not forsake Christ to go after sin then sin will have no power over you. How can sin control the man who is controlled by God? How can sin harm the one who is protected by Christ? “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:2).

Paul said, “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). A.B. Simpson wrote in his wonderful book, “Wholly Sanctified,” “Sanctification then means our voluntary separation from evil. It is not the extinction of evil. It is the putting off, the laying aside of evil by the detaching of ourselves from it and placing an impassable gulf between us and it. We are to separate ourselves not only from our past sins but from sin as a principle of life. We are not to try to improve and gradually ameliorate our unholy condition. We are to put off the old life, acting as if it were no longer ourselves, and separating it from our sinful self as a wife is divorced from her husband, and as the soul is separated from the body by death. We are reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin just as much as though we were no longer the same person, and the old heart was no longer that true self.”⁶⁸

⁶⁸ “Wholly Sanctified” by A.B. Simpson; Christian Publications, Inc. 1991.

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Every man is either saved from their sin or they are slaves to their sin. You either “surrender all” or you surrender nothing. If a man does not repent of all his sins he does not repent of sin at all. When an army surrenders in a time of war, all the troops must stop fighting. The man who has not surrendered all is still fighting God. He will either die in his battle, or will live through complete surrender. Which one would you be? Have you stopped fighting God and are now reconciled back to the One who was formerly your enemy? There is no reconciliation while you remain in enmity. You are either fighting God or you are fighting sin. The choice is yours. A fight against God will cost you your soul and gain you nothing. Surrender today. Yield completely to the sanctifying Holy Spirit and allow Him to do as He pleases inside and outside of you.

The ministry of John the Baptist was “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk. 1:17). And if that is what his ministry was to do to prepare for the first coming of Christ, how much more should ministries today do the same to prepare for the second coming of Christ?

Christ came that men “might serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our lives” (Lk. 2:74-75).

*“Thou dying Lamb! Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed Church of God
be saved, to sin no more.”⁶⁹*

That is the blood that we must preach – the powerful blood that washes and cleanses until men sin no more. Holiness is a yielding to the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit who so impresses the atonement of Christ upon our hearts and minds that we love and obey Him. If we are going to prepare men for the

⁶⁹ There is a Fountain Filled with Blood by William Cowper

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great and terrible day of the Lord, to present every man perfect in Christ, we must preach the power of the blood of Christ.

“If God doesn't come soon and bring judgment upon the United States, He's going to have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah!” Ruth Graham

Chapter Twenty Four

As in the Days of Noah

One day I had gone down to the green right next to Yale University in New Haven to preach. After preaching a few times I started to get a little discouraged because of the people's reactions or should I say lack thereof. Right when I finished preaching, everyone went right back to talking about the idle things they spoke about before. Eternity was not gripping their hearts as it had gripped mine! They weren't distressed and disturbed like they should have been. They did not tremble at the truth!

I thought about how David Brainerd attended Yale when it was only a college. Brainerd walked in the same green I was currently preaching in. When he would speak to the native Indians, they would tremble, cry, groan, and moan. Obviously the Holy Spirit was with him helping him. “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jn. 16:8). I started thinking maybe God wasn't with me. Like Gideon I was saying “if the Lord is with us” where is His power? So I asked the Lord for a word and opened up my Bible. The scripture I opened up to was Matthew 24:37-39 which reads “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

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The Town Lunatic

What a scene that must have been in Noah's time. It had never rained before then. God watered the earth with dew. Noah, the town lunatic, must have had some pretty tough conversations. "Hey Noah, what in the world are you doing?" Noah would say, "I'm building a boat." They would say, "Well what for?" Noah says, "Well, um... The sky is going to fall. God said He's had enough of all your sins and wickedness so He's going to send water down from the heavens in order to kill you, your family, your friends, and everyone else in the entire world... except for my family." They probably would have said something like, "Whatever Noah" as they mumbled under their breath "Who does he think he is?" They'd walk away thinking Noah had lost his mind but Noah was a sign to the sinful people of his day for over a hundred years because that's how long he built the ark for. While he was making they were marrying.

This was what was happening to me as I was out preaching. I told them how God promises to send a flood of fire that will consume the whole earth and they said, "Yea, whatever." I'm sure they thought "Who does he think he is?" Our world is going to continue in their vanities, marrying, drinking, and eating, right up until the doors of the ark is closed. We are living in a day and age when we can "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace" (Heb. 4:16), but soon grace will be gone forever and the world will tremble at the "great white throne" of judgment (Rev. 20:11). They won't obtain mercy and find grace but will obtain wrath and find eternal condemnation. Oh what an awful day it will be when receiving forgiveness will be a mere fantasy. No one will be able to access the grace of God. Will they all not say in that day "woe is me, for I am undone"? (Isaiah 6:5) When that time comes, think of all the people that will be dancing in the clubs, getting married, or playing the game called Church in front of all their Christian friends. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) Well if men will say "to the mountains and

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rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who siteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb’ (Rev. 6:16) then I don’t think that He will.

Shortly after I read about the days of Noah while I was on the street and thought about what it meant, a random street cleaner came up to me to encourage me. He said something along the lines of, “You keep preaching because these people need to hear it. Remember as in the days of Noah...” That’s how I feel the Lord speaks sometimes. I believe God sent that man over to encourage me at a time I was getting discouraged. Later when I got home again I put the TV on and there was a preacher. The very first thing I heard come out of his mouth was “As in the days of Noah.” Then that night while reading a book I read about our “Noah-like society.” Now, we can debate on whether or not the Lord was trying to speak to me and that’s fine, but either way I learned a lesson that day.

Every preacher could either tell some ear-tickling tale or he could tell the soul terrifying truth. He could tell the normal false teaching or he could stick to rare biblical preaching. Some of you, without a doubt, will not want to see how our days are like the days of Noah. But is not even a "negative" truth better than a positive lie? An uncomfortable heavy truth is more valuable than a worthless light falsehood.

The Convicting Comparison

In which way is our society like that of Noah’s society? What in our day is “as in the days of Noah?”

I. In the days of Noah “the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5).

In our day the wickedness of man can be clearly seen through the television and the radio. Our society applauds abortion and glamorizes gay marriage. If anything is seen in our day, it is sin. Media has become a perpetual portrayer of sin.

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II. In the days of Noah “it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Gen. 6:6).

In our day the Lord is still grieved in His heart over the sins of His fallen creation. God is “being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.” (Mark 3:5) Our society is drifting further and further away from God every day and is thereby grieving him more and more every day.

III. In the days of Noah “the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them” (Gen. 6:7).

A drunk driver on the wrong side of the highway is safer than our society is. Such a driver has a chance in his course of surviving but a sinful, wicked, rebellious society has no chance of avoiding judgment so long as it stays the course. God gives life and He takes it away. He created the world and He destroyed it. And judgment is coming to America, indeed it is already here, because of His holiness and our wickedness.

IV. In the days of Noah, Noah himself was a sign to the people. He was “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5).

In our day we have more Bible Colleges, Bible Churches, and Bible preachers than one could count. Noah’s generation had only one preacher but we have multitudes of them and yet we are not better off than they were. In fact, we are worse off because our culture has been sinning against greater light.

V. In the days of Noah a huge ark was being built for all to see which testified of the soon coming rain.

In our day huge churches have been being built to testify of “the wrath to come” (Luke 3:7)

VI. In the days of Noah “God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. (Gen 6:12)

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In our day everyone from the politicians to the preachers are corrupt. There are scandals in the government and scandals in the church. Money is the god of the masses. As time goes on, our culture finds more and more ways to corrupt itself.

VII. In the days of Noah the earth was “filled with violence” (Gen. 6:13).

In our day if you pick up the newspaper or turn on the news you will read and hear about every form of violence in our world. There is never a day that goes by that some horrible act of violence isn't being reported. Violence has also become the entertainment of our society. And this violence is worldwide. There are beatings and bombings, weapons and wars in every country. Where aren't there abuses, assaults, and attacks? Violence is the trademark of the earth today.

VIII. In the days of Noah “they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark”.

In our day masses of men are eating, drinking, and marrying with no concern for judgment or thought of eternity. It isn't until the flood of God's wrath comes upon the earth and these men will finally give thought to the Lord, but it will be too late as they are outside of the ark of Christ.

IX. In the days of Noah the people did not believe they were in danger. They blindly walked in their sin without the slightest thought of the destruction that was at their door.

In our day our own people believe that the farthest thing from them is the judgment of God. They believe God's wrath is as far away from them “as the east is from the west.”

X. In the days of Noah, Noah must have been seen as a fool for building a massive ark.

In our day “we are fools for Christ's sake” (1 Cor. 4:10) because “for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:18).

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The consequences of sin are severe and sudden. A flood is never expected but comes on quick and hard. Our society has a flood coming just like the days of Noah. Our culture has worked for its wages, it's earned its elimination, and it deserves its death. You may see me as criticizing but the Lord knows that I am agonizing.

Lessons to Learn

Let's ask some simple questions. What did God tell Noah to do? God told him to build the ark. Why did Noah build the ark? It was going to rain, flood, and kill all of life. How did he build the ark? The way God wanted him to make it. What would have happened if he refused to build the ark because he didn't want to look foolish? What if Noah, like many preachers today, cared about the opinion of a sinful world? The world would have perished. The salvation of the world required that Noah disregard public opinion.

Now let's ask ourselves some questions. What has God told us to do? Jesus said "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Why must we go and preach to everyone? It is simply because "he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). It is not that we should go but that we must go. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:14) In order to save the world, we must not care about their opinions. We must speak the truth and preach the Gospel, knowing that we will be thought of as fools, because it is only by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ can we save souls. If we truly love our neighbor as ourselves, we won't keep the gospel to ourselves.

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Oswald J. Smith said “The one who keeps everything for himself and refuses to share it with others, becomes a stagnant pool—a Dead Sea, a blessing to no one.”⁷⁰

God forbid that we withhold the blessing of everlasting life from the world which God wants to so freely give to them.

How are we supposed to build the church? The way God wants us to. The way Jesus did. No other way will work. What will happen if we refuse to be “fools for Christ’s sake” and not build up God’s church by preaching the gospel? Then all those whom God wants to save will perish in an eternal hell. In order for our world to be delivered it has to die. It must be “crucified with Christ.” For the world to be righteous it needs to repent. Their eternal life can come through our evangelistic labor. If we want to see them praise God, we must be bold to preach Him! The Lord wants men who are burdened, broken, and burning for His glory. Who will rise up to this high calling?

The Bible tells us, “Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God” (Gen. 6:9). This is what God wants His Church to be. Like “Noah was a just man,” God wants His Church to be a just church. “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17). If by faith the just will live then the corrupt will die by doubt. Noah was “perfect in his generation.” Make no mistake about it, God wants a perfect church. God wants His people to be perfect. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). We need to be “perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). Paul said “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col. 1:28). In Hebrews 6:1 we are urged to “go on unto perfection.” And lastly Noah walked with God. Christian, your highest calling and most blessed privilege is “to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

⁷⁰ The Challenge of Missions, p. 66

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What holds back God's total wrath from coming upon us today? We have sinned like Sodom but are we a goner like Gomorrah? What is it that God is waiting for? God has destroyed others for less. If our nation does not provoke the Lord to anger than nation ever will. If our nation is not destroyed by God, then I'm surprised God has ever destroyed any nation. It should terrify us to think that God gets angrier with America every day. But what is it that holds back the outpouring of God's wrath from the world today? Why hasn't God destroyed this world yet? I am convinced that it is because the Lord knows what He will do in the future. Before the Lord will pour out His righteous fury upon the earth He will pour out His Holy Spirit upon all flesh. The greatest revival in history has yet to happen. The scriptures say, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28). Check history and see if this has happened yet. It hasn't but the Lord has promised it. The day of Pentecost was the initiation of this fulfillment (Acts 2:17). Pentecost was the commencement of this promise, not the consummation of it. It has to happen. The world is indeed very deluded and deceived but our God is able to deliver.

We are told that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2:5). If the coming of the Son of Man will be as in the days of Noah, then we need at least one preacher of righteousness who will stand strong against the tide of wickedness and preach against it. America can never have too many Noah's crying in the streets. Indeed, I fear it doesn't have enough.

God will either deliver this world or destroy it. I see no other options. God will either save the day or slay the day. Let us labor and toil while it is still day before night cometh when no man can work (Jn. 9:4). Let us race against the clock because "as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:37).

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As in the Days of Noah

As in the days of Noah all my people sin.
I stand to preach, they just mockingly grin.
They laugh and scorn at all my words.
I long for one to heed my urge.

While they sing and dance and play their songs,
I utterly refuse to go along.
I pray and hope one day their sinful gladness,
Will be turned to repentant sadness.

God longs for them to turn and flee.
But in their darkness they cannot see.
The wrath is coming so quick and fast.
These days of theirs may be their last.

As in the days of Noah my people all sin.
Oh, how they all must turn to Him.
My Lord, My God please grant repentance,
And thus dismiss their earned death sentence.

“The street meetings are gone. Dear God, we’ve all kinds of ministries around here but Tyler goes to hell. How many churches do you have – mega churches – in Dallas? I guess you can’t find one street meeting.” Leonard Ravenhill

Chapter Twenty Five

Truth is Fallen in the Streets

In our own streets today you certainly don’t have to look very long to see an empty drug bag on the ground. These tiny bags pave our streets. If you open your ears you don’t have to listen very long until you hear some fowl music coming out of a car full blast to pollute our minds and our air. Look around to the bill boards and into the store windows and notice it’s not hard to find an indecent picture of a girl designed to stir up lust. Have you noticed how it is far too easy today for your soul to taste the pleasures of sin?

Now tell me, when was the last time you heard with your ears the truth of God like a trumpet echoing through our streets? The world has ears to hear, but they don’t hear the truth. They have eyes to see, but they don’t see it. “Truth is fallen in the streets.” I can easily point out hundreds of ungodly men selling drugs on our street corners but my Spirit still is longing to see many godly men handing out free Bibles on the corner. The truth belongs in the streets. Our churches are full of the gospel but who takes the gospel to where it belongs? Is it not true that those who need it the most receive it the least? Like Pilate, men are saying “What is truth?”

The Times In Which We Live

Evil men are doing evil deeds in these evil times. I’ve heard it said that the church is stuck in the past and it needs to “get with the times.” Well the church better not do anything of

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the kind because the days in which we live are dark and sinful. The scripture says in Eph. 5:16 that we need to be “redeeming the times, because the days are evil.” We need to redeem the evil times, not “get with the times.”

These are dangerous times. 2 Tim. 3:1-5 says “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” If any scripture describes the day in which we live it’s that one. You can find any sin you want in our streets but the truth is rarer the diamonds and far more precious and valuable.

Our society is living in open rebellion against God. The pimps know what they do is wrong. The prostitutes all know it’s an evil thing to prostitute themselves. The law is written on the conscience of every man. Who in their own eyes thinks it’s o.k. to steal, lie, or blaspheme? Which child who has murdered his own parents ever told the judge, “I thought it was the right thing to do?” If only we lived the way that we know we ought to. Our society doesn’t need a mere education, it needs a confrontation!

Sin abounds while truth is trampled down. The church needs to awaken to its complacency and the world awakened to its corruption. The truth needs to be proclaimed in the streets. “Thy law is the truth” (Ps. 119:142). It is no wonder that there is such lawlessness in our streets. Lawlessness reigns in the streets because the law is not being preached in the streets! Sin is not being publicly confronted and condemned like it ought to. If we are going to stop the spreading of sin in our society, we must go and call sinners to repentance.

The Bible is not only a great book but it’s the best book! If only every church-goer believe it enough to obey it. How differently many would spend their lives if they believed God’s

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Word! Who will take the Lord seriously enough to obey Him? He said “What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops” (Matt. 10:27).

Usually we take what we hear at church to our own houses and not to our housetops and the streets suffer for it. We need some Spirit filled men to rise up who can say with the Psalmist “I will declare the decree” (Ps. 2:7). This needs to be our prayer: “*let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.*” (Judges 5:3)

Slaves of Sin

Slavery is still abundant in America today. Slaves to sin roam our streets. “What is truth?” Jesus Christ is the Truth. If they will only know the Truth then the Truth would set them free. Satan is buying up the opportunities to tell lies while we are counting up the cost to preach the truth. The devil has his sinful men everywhere proclaiming sin but God’s men have been hiding in the churches. They only proclaim Christ if they are in a church setting and only call men to accept Christ when “every head is bowed and eye closed.” Count in your own mind all the people who’ve tried to witness to you on the streets. Have there honestly been many? If so then send them over to New England where all we have is the “frozen chosen.” I’ve been witnessed to by Mormons, Catholics, Jehovah Witnesses, and another man whom later got high with my friends and I, but never ever was I witnessed to on the streets by a biblical Christian.

We need men today like the apostle Paul. When Paul came to town the truth was heard loud and clear in the streets. Paul could be in a city for a weekend and the entire city would be in an uproar before he left. Sadly, there are many preachers today who have lived in their community for years and yet most of the community doesn’t have any idea who they are. That’s because Christians like to hide in the modern day catacombs of the church to avoid opposition and persecution. And that is why the Apostle

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Paul changed the world while the church of America today sees our nation crumbling all around us. Christian, will you be as John the Baptist who “was a burning and a shining light?” God is calling the Christians of this generation to “Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet; tell my people their transgression” (Isa. 58:1).

The desire of my soul is that one day I’ll go out to preach the gospel and I’ll find someone already doing it. How simple that is but yet how scarce it is. I want to see the day when the most common thing on the street is the gospel. The more street preachers we have the better. You can never have too many but you certainly can not have enough. Oh how the truth has fallen in our streets and deceptions have risen up in its place. I can’t truthfully say “wisdom cries out from the streets” because it’s not true anymore.

Lift your Voice like a Trumpet

In John Wesley’s day the truth was a blasted as through a trumpet and was heard all throughout the streets of England. Six times a day he would boldly offer Christ to the people in the open-air. In fact, out of the last six hundred sermons that he preached, only a handful were inside a church. We need preachers like that today!

Paris Reidhead said, “Wesley was a preacher of righteousness that exalted the holiness of God. And when he would stand there with the two to three hour sermons which he was accustomed to deliver in the open-air, and he would exalt the holiness of God, and the Law of God, and the righteousness of God, and the justice of God, and the wisdom of His requirements, and the justice of His wrath and His anger. And then he would turn to sinners and tell them of the enormity of their crimes and their open rebellion and their treason and their anarchy, the power of God would so descend upon the company that on one occasion it is reliably reported that when the people dispersed there were 18 hundred people laying on the ground utterly unconscious

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because they've had a revelation of the holiness of God. And in the light of that they've seen the enormity of their sin. God had so penetrated their minds and hearts that they had fallen to the ground. It wasn't trying to convince good man that he was in trouble with a bad God, but it was to convince bad men that they deserve the wrath and anger of a good God."⁷¹

Is it any wonder he saw a revival in which the multitudes came to Christ in true repentance? Our society hears many soft messages from the church today but what we need is shattering messages! Sinners are comforted and coddled by messages of God's love when they need to be convicted and converted by messages of His wrath!

Wesley preached the same terrifying truths the Apostle Paul preached. "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). Most men would tremble before Felix but Felix trembled before Paul! Preaching like Paul used to make the pews tremble but now in our day it would make the pulpits tremble. There is sin in the pews today because there is sin in the pulpits! Many sermons do not attack sin but attack holiness. The pulpit needs to defend holiness and attack sin, not defend sin and attack holiness! Sinners need to be made to tremble at the preaching of a righteous man.

We need preachers who are not really all here, but who's heart and minds are in eternity. Let the dead bury the dead. Let those who are earthly tend to that which is earthly but let us who are born of Heaven tend to that which is Heavenly.

Jonathon Edwards said "Let everything have the value now which it will have on a sick bed."⁷²

⁷¹ Sermon: Ten Shekels and a Shirt

⁷² The life and Diary of David Brainerd edited by Jonathan Edwards with a biographical sketch of the life and work of Jonathan Edwards, Page 25

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Everything of eternal value is lost when the church loses sight of eternity. We are not here in this world to entertain or amuse. We are not here to get along with the world and live in friendship with it. We are here to wage war on sin, call sinners to repentance, and win souls for the glory of God. The lost will not be won by preaching to the choir. Men can only receive what is given to them. We must go into the highways and the byways and compel them to come in.

Leonard Ravenhill said of John Wesley, “John died in 1791. Converted at 35, turn that round it makes 53, add them together it makes 88. Because he was saved at 35, preached for 53 years, and you know what he left when he died? He left a hand full of books, a sacred Geneva gown that he preached in all over England, six silver spoons somebody gave him, six pound notes to ‘give to each of the poor men that carry me to my grave’ and that’s all that he left. Six pound notes, six silver spoons, a hand full of books, a Geneva gown and ah, there’s something else. What was it, the other thing? Oh, I know something else he left - the Methodist Church.”

Ravenhill went on to say that John Wesley made lots of money throughout his life. But he printed Bibles, he printed hymnals, he started churches, he started orphanages, he commissioned missionaries. He gave it all away! He died a poor man in the earth but a rich man in heaven!

We all ought to be encouraged and convicted by the life of Wesley. He was a disciplined man. He fasted twice a week and wouldn’t waste a minute of his time. He saw how the truth had fallen in England and he spent his life rising it up again as a banner for all to see.

Wesley counted the cost and he paid it. As a young man the established churches wouldn’t let him preach in the churches anymore so he took it to the streets and fields instead. He was kicked out of churches but he started his own! Those churches are still standing today two hundred years later. Wesley not only stood and preached to masses who were converted, he stood and

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preached to masses who became angry and rioted. He stood before angry mobs. He paid a price for the souls that he won.

There have been other great men of God that we can learn from. Chuck Colson said, "John Bunyan, who was imprisoned for his beliefs said: 'I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience.'" ⁷³

This is the type of man God is looking for today! A man who would be willing to suffering whatever he must in order to walk according to the convictions of his conscience. No matter how much the world and the devil come against you, you must take the gospel to where it belongs.

Maybe you are afraid of the ridicule, mockery, contradiction, beatings, false arrests, and martyrdom that is associated with street preaching. But it is the Lord we need to fear, not man. It is God's favor and approval we must seek and His disapproval that we must fear.

John Wesley said, "Give me one hundred men who fear nothing but God, hate nothing but sin, are determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified, and I would set the world on fire."⁷⁴

Roland H. Bainton wrote, "The most intrepid Revolutionary is the one who has a fear greater than anything his opponents can inflict upon him. Luther, who had so trembled before the face of God, had no fear before the face of men."⁷⁵

If we fear God, then we have no reason to fear man. It doesn't matter how much men may hate us, if we are accepted by God that is more than enough.

Pressed but not Crushed

The truth is hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. The

⁷³ "How Now Shall We Live" pg. 399

⁷⁴ The National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States, Congregational Publishing Society, 1887, p. 85

⁷⁵ "Here I Stand. A life of Martin Luther. Pg. 104

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truth has indeed “fallen in the streets” but it can rise again. Christian, the most awesome truth of all time is in our hands so who will you give it to. You don’t need to be a gifted man but rather a groaning man. To preach the gospel it doesn’t take degrees, it takes devotion. We don’t need more doctorates but more dedication. Don’t care about praise and start caring about people. Preach the gospel as if Judgment Day were today or “as a dying man unto dying people.” Are you burdened that the truth goes unheard by our own multitudes? To change that all you have to do is “lift up your voice like a trumpet.”

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Truth is fallen in the streets.
We need men with gospel shoes on their feet.
Like a banner, the truth raise up,
but who of us will bear the humiliation cup?

The truth is not heard within our ears.
Oh, these cowardly Christians controlled by fears.
Let us break free and go against the tide.
The gospel truths let us never hide.

The truth is lost amongst the lies.
They perish, they perish, and they perish,
but who cares enough to try?
Our hearts are hard and eyes so blind.
Amongst evil men, let's be a different kind.

The truth is never seen with our own eyes.
Why, oh why does it still hide?
We sit so nicely within our church,
but who cares enough to bear the hurt?

The truth must rise where it belongs.
Lord knows one day we'll too be gone.
While it's still light, while it's still day,
let's show the world He is The Way

“A minister, without boldness, is like a smooth file, a knife without an edge, a sentinel that is afraid to let off his gun. If men will be bold in sin, ministers must be bold to reprove.”

William Gurnall

Chapter Twenty Six

Today's Need of Public Rebuke

The attempts today of many modern churches to win the world to Christ go to such great length to assure that there be no reprisals and no rejection. It seems quite honest to me that the Church would much rather be accepted by the world than to see the world be accepted by God.

When the sinking ship of the world's acceptance starts to go asunder, the rebuking against sin is the first to go overboard to assure that the world's acceptance stays afloat. The hell-fire preaching is far too heavy, weighs far too much, and will certainly bring about the sinking of the ship. So it must, not in part but in whole, go overboard to secure the acceptance of the world.

If we are to win the world to God we are not to do it just any way that works, we are to do it God's way as revealed in the scripture. God's way has always been by going into all the world to preaching the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). God's way has always been to verbally preach and not merely witness in action as we know that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17). God's way has always been to preach "that people should repent" (Mark 6:12). God's way has always been by preaching in the streets, in the market places, in the squares outside of the synagogues, and at the entry gates of the cities. Wherever the sinners are that is where the gospel needs to be. But God's militancy has been replaced with selfish complacency, so that the only outreach most churches have is when they merely invite the world to come to them rather than themselves going out to the world.

TODAY'S NEED OF PUBLIC REBUKE

"Is this effective? Is this effective" is the constant cry of the Church that has been infected and polluted with the worldliness of business. "Is this biblical? Is this biblical?" is the constant cry of the man who will be despised and ridiculed by both the world and the Church.

As I preach open-air rebuking sin and exhorting sinners to flee from the wrath to come I continually hear "Is this effective" coming from professing Christians who would much rather cuddle sinners into the Kingdom. "Is this effective?" My response is, "it doesn't matter." We are not to concern ourselves with being effective at all, we are to concern ourselves with being biblical. We are to preach whether the lost hear or whether they refuse (Eze. 2:7). It doesn't matter if it's plowing season or if it's harvest season. We are to preach the Word in season and out of season, to convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2). God commands us to be faithful not effective.

Often I hear, "Your turning people off, your turning people off"? "No! They were already off. The world hated God before I had preached. The world was living in sin before I showed up! They are already off." The fallacy of the neutrality of the sinner was a concept the Lord Himself shattered when He said, "He who is not with Me is against Me" (Matt. 12:30). A person is either for God or is against God. There is no neutral ground. The whole concept of "turning a sinner off" because of preaching the Word is entirely unbiblical and it just further evidence of the drifting away from scripture of the modern Church.

When King Herod arrived to the open air meeting of John the Baptist, did John stop his preaching to give Herod a hug? No! John rebuked the king's adultery and said, "it is not lawful for you to have her" (Matt. 14:4). Shortly thereafter John was beheaded. If many of the modern Christians were there I wonder if they would have confronted John and said, "Is this effective? John, don't you see how you turned Herod off?"

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When Jesus spoke with the proud rich young ruler, who said that he had kept all of God's commands from his youth, Jesus pointed out his sin of love of money which resulted in the man walking away sorrowfully without hearing a word about grace (Matt. 19:22). I wonder what the modern Church would have said had they been there. "Jesus, why did you only tell the man about the Law? Don't you know we are under a new covenant and the Law doesn't matter? Jesus, don't you see how the man went away sorrowfully because you turned him off?"

When Paul was before Felix, did he elaborate on the wonderful plan and the deep of love that God had for him? No! Paul knew that the fear of God was the beginning of knowledge, not the love of God (Prov. 1:7). So Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). Would the modern Church have said to Paul had they been there, "Paul, you should have talked about God's love instead of talking about sin and God's judgment. Don't you see how you have turned Felix off? You made him tremble. Fear is not of God."

Church, we must get away from the concern of "being effective" and must get back to the concern of being biblical and faithful. We must get back to calling sinners to repent and flee from the wrath that's to come (Matt. 3:7). Men and women of God, it's time to rise up and boldly proclaim the uncompromising truth of God by life or by death. It's time for the Church to forsake the world with all of it's ways and methods and seek to go God's way at any cost. It's time that we prefer the foolishness of God over the wisdom of the world and take back our societies for the glory of the Lord.

As the Church has sat comfortably in padded pews, having fellowship dinners and getting fat on itching ear preaching, the world around us has been crumbling to powder being hammered by sin and the devil. As the Church has been asleep in the light the world has remained dead in it's sins. As the

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Church has sought to be friends with the world, the world has ever increasingly become the enemy of God. Our country is on a grease slide down to hell and it's time for men and women of God to hit the streets with the solid truth of God, exalting His righteousness, His holiness, His justice, His mercy, and His grace exalting His Son.

Will you go?

*“I preach as never sure to preach again,
and as a dying man to dying men.” Richard Baxter*

Chapter Twenty Seven *Compelled by Love*

With all of the forces and all the powers that exists within reality, none are so unshakable or so unmovable or so eternity impacting as the never failing love of God. It was love that brought the Divine down to the finite, the Eternal to the time-stricken, made the indestructible destructible, and the destructed eternally risen. God, from His essence to His actions is saturated and overflowing with divine, sacred love, as a fountain never ceasing or an eruption ever bursting.

Of all that ought to be sought after to understand, to comprehend, to put into action, the love of God has no competitors. Yet it would seem, and with great grief and sadness I must proclaim, that true love and its meaning are a stranger and foreigner to many today who travel the grounds of Christendom, especially to many that profess to have obtained it.

The very word love has been prostituted, abused, and passed around by many. Sinful hands have twisted and molded the meaning of sacred love. We are then left with a mutilated and deformed definition which is entirely opposite of the true. The wounds of compromise within the body of Christ has been covered over and excused all under the name of love. And the result is that what many professing believers call love is nothing more then what Heaven would call compromise.

Love is not passive but is powerful. Love is not emotion but is effort. Love is not tolerant but is tenacious. When there is love there is action. When there's no love right living will be lacking.

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And since love is the essence of God, since God is love, love must be the very essence of Christians. Love must be the very blood which runs through our veins, ever pumping steadily, keeping us going, giving us life.

This love that gives life, paradoxically, also leads us to death. The life giving love of the cross was founded upon the life giving sacrifice of the Savior. The love that compelled the All Loving must also compel the beloved to their own crosses for the sake of the unlovely.

Muted mouths and silent witnesses are the rotten fruit of a tree void of the love of God. The unloving are the non-witnessing, the non-caring, the passive, the idle, the pew dwellers. But voices booming with witness and testimony of Christ are the blossomed fruit of the branch connected to the Divine flow of Love.

“For the love of Christ compels us” (2 Cor.5:14).

When the devil reigns unchallenged and iniquity flourishes un-confronted, may the love of Christ compel us!

When the blood of the innocent is shed through abortion because of the sins of the wicked, may the love of Christ compel us!

When the perversions of homosexuals and sodomites are corrupting and twisting the children that survive the on slaughter of abortion, may the love of Christ compel us!

When the streets are flooded with sin and ungodliness, with drunkenness and reveling, may our hearts flood with the love of God that we may all boldly march together as the united body of Christ, into the public arena, under the banner of the gospel of Jesus, to declare God’s command to a wicked world, “Repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mk 1:15).

A church without a voice for God and a Christian without a flaming tongue for the Lord makes for a puppet of the devil! The devil is at rest when God’s people have hearts as cold as ice, as the hearts of the wicked are as filthy as a sewer. But when the

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love of Christ is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5:5), it would compel the saints of God to recapture a fallen generation, taken captive by the enemy.

Love is never stopping, never surrendering, and never tolerating the moral destruction of God's universe. It ever marches forcefully forward, conquering and claiming for the soon coming Christ. It does not sleep, it does not slumber, but it startles and stirs up! It corrects and confronts the compromise and wickedness of the age.

Love is not only for the soft but also for the strong! "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverb 13:24). And those who spare confrontation hate the wicked. Those who spare the light hate those in darkness. But as many as love the wicked rebukes and chastens them (Rev. 3:19).

The same love the burned in the heart of Christ as He hung bleeding on the Roman cross at Calvary was the same love that consumed His heart as He made a whip and turned over the money changers tables in the temple. The same love that He had which comforted the poor, healed the sick, forgave the repentant, and raised the dead was the same love that caused Him to confront the internally abominable, declare the righteous judgments of God, and warning of an eternal hell. "For I the Lord love judgment" (Isa. 61:8).

God's great men have always publicly reprovved and rebuked sin. A Christian full of Christ's love will have a life full of Christ's actions and a mouth full of Christ's words. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3:19). The rebuking man must love and the loving man must rebuke! Whether we exhort or rebuke, teach or preach, love must be our motivation, our essence, and our core! Anything else is sin and ungodly.

Holy love is not void or absent of holy hatred. While sacred love has been misused and misunderstood, holy hatred has been degraded and stigmatized. Divine love and holy hatred are not archenemies but are colleagues, striving and laboring

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together for the same cause. That is because to love all righteousness one must hate all unrighteousness. To love the truth one must hate falsehood. “Ye that love the Lord, hate evil” (Ps 97:10). “Hate the evil, and love the good” (Amos 5:15). Jesus Christ was full of both divine love and holy hatred, for the scripture says, “You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity” (Heb. 1:9). It’s impossible to love without hating or to hate without loving. A heart that loves sin hates a Holy God. And a heart that loves a Holy God hates wickedness and sin.

To be compelled by the love of Christ, one must also be compelled by His hatred for sin! To see a Holy God glorified and sin entirely defeated and the lost completely saved is the inescapable mission and undeniable purpose of all those who have the love of Christ in their hearts!

As the works of Christ’s charity are in our hands and the words of Christ’s’ gospel are in our mouths, may the heart of Christ’s love beat within our breasts that God be glorified and sinners saved.

In essence, the stench of the dead corpse of religion and the rotting carcass of the world reeks greatly today throughout all of our land. But when the life and love of God comes rushing and bursting through, as a breeze of fresh air, the dead and decaying corpse and carcass will be resurrected unto newness of life, to forever praise and honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ!! Amen and amen!

*“Will you remind them of the goodness
and the severity of God?”*

Leonard Ravenhill

*“The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made
ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart,
and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of
God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or
obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being
made drunk with your blood.”*

Jonathon Edwards

Chapter Twenty Eight

The Anger of the Lord

The greatest privilege that I have been giving by the Lord is the opportunity to preach the gospel of forgiveness every week. Although I may not speak inside a church building every week to those who are saved, I am able to go out into the open-air and proclaim the truth of God to the condemned. Usually I only hear the true gospel preached from street preachers nowadays but there are a few exceptions. We are living in a time of a backslidden church that has her eyes on the very same ends that the eyes of the world are on: processions, pleasure, and prosperity. Many in the pews are just as selfish as those in the brothels, seeking to abuse Christ for their own self-gratification. There are many itching ear pew dwellers that sit in the churches and so there are those in the pulpits that itch those ears for their own personal gain rather than to convict the hearts of their hearers with the truth of God. Due to all this, the truth that the Bible teaches is usually very different from what many churches are teaching. Candy may be sweet to your taste but it is unhealthy to your body. The meat of God may be hard to chew on at times but it's what we need.

Messages that are nice, lovely, and pleasant to our feelings and ears is what is plaguing the church today! Appearing

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to be helpful it is truly harmful. Its appearance of being non-threatening is what makes it such a threat. As inoffensive it is to man, it is an offense to God because preaching like that is the most comfortable way to kill the church! It makes the church feel good while it dies. You commit spiritual suicide when you decided to attend a church that makes you feel comfortable in sin as opposed to convicted. Rather than curing the blind eyes of the church by showing it reality, we put a bandage over the eyes of the church to hide their infirmity and bring comfort to their flesh. What will wake up the church from its deep slumber which it has fallen into? The cure we need is to hear confronting, convicting, and correcting messages or else sin won't be confronted, sinners won't be convicted, and lives won't be corrected! Sure some people won't like it. Some people will hate it. In fact, most people will hate it. But I have learned that no matter what you say, how you say it, or where you say it, there will always be somebody, somewhere, who doesn't like it for some reason. If only we started preaching the truth and didn't worry how people would respond to it. If only we were like Stephen in the book of Acts when he preached and put ours eyes on Jesus at the throne rather than putting our eyes on the people in front of us, maybe then we would see a great moving of God. You will never please the audience of One until you perform for the audience of One.

Ian Paisley said "I want to tell you friend that if we ever needed to speak out strongly we need to speak out today. If we ever needed to battle against sin and ungodliness in the age, we need to battle against it now. This is not a day to go conforming to the world. This is a day to go to the Jordon to bathe. And when you die to what the world thinks about you. And when you die to what your brethren think about you. And when you die to what your neighbors think about you, and you rise to walk in newness of life then God will bless you as a Christian."

Weak messages produce weak converts but strong messages produce strong converts. "God is love" is a message we have all heard countless times. "God is love" and "God loves

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you” is preached so often that I think maybe some churches don’t have any other messages. Everybody from saints to sinners absolutely love to hear this message. Politicians, prostitutes, and every type of pleasure pursuer delights in the message that “God is love.” However, there is another message that the Bible has which is not so well received among sinful men. That message is that “God is angry.” These two messages are not opposed one to another as some people assume. They are two sides to the same coin. The biblical truth that “God is love” and “God is angry” are so tightly connected that I do not believe you can remove them from each other. It is not the one or the other. Rather, because God loves godliness, He is angry when ungodliness is committed. Because God loves righteousness, He is angry when unrighteousness is committed. Because God loves the truth, He is angered when lies are taught. His love is the source of His holiness, His justice, and His anger.

One of the last teachings that sinners and a backslidden church wants to hear is a message that “God is angry” but I’ll preach it anyways. “And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead” (Acts 10:42). If we do not preach that, then we do not preach right at all. No bible believing Christian can not deny the truth that “God is angry with the wicked every day.” (Ps 7:11).

Keith Green made a great point when he said, “We often hear people say ‘I’m tired of hell-fire and brimstone preaching.’ Well I often reply to them ‘when was the last time you ever heard any?’”⁷⁶

The deadly waves of false teaching have flooded the church today and many are downing in false comfort as a result. The message of the anger and the wrath of our offended God certainly are very rarely, if ever preached on today, and yet the

⁷⁶ What’s Wrong with the Gospel?

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greatest threat to sinners is God Himself! That is exactly why this message is on the anger of the Lord.

There are five questions I am seeking to answer: Is the anger of God biblical? Towards who is His anger directed? How often is the Lord provoked to anger? How will God's anger affect wicked men? Will the anger of God burn forever?

I. Is the Anger of God Biblical?

The scriptures make it abundantly clear that our God is at times an angry God (Deut. 4:21, 2Sa 22:8, 1Ki 11:9, 2Ki 17:18, 2Ch 28:9, Ps 7:11, Ps 18:7, Zec 1:2, Lu 14:21, Heb 3:10). Time and time again throughout the scriptures we are told about the anger of God. Any Christian, who knows his Bible as he ought to, cannot deny this fact even if he wanted to. All truths that the scriptures declare must be accepted by the church or the church fails to be the church. If we do not accept all the truth of God then we fall into idolatry, picking and choosing what to believe and inevitably making up a false god in the realm of imagination.

Genesis 1:27 says "So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." God is not void of emotion. We were created in the image of God and feel the same emotions that God feels and God feels *all* emotions. He doesn't have the emotion of joy and gladness only but He also gets angry. The reason we ourselves are angered when we see an obvious injustice is because we were created in Gods image. To believe that God does not feel emotion, even the emotion of anger, is not to believe in the scriptures. Although anger usually seems to have a negative connotation to it, it is not always negative. Even Christians are told "Be angry, and sin not" (Eph 4:26). What you do with you anger may be negative, more than being negative it may be sin, but righteous anger is of God.

There are those today that teach that God was different in the Old Testament than He is today. Many entertained the thought that maybe the God of the Old Testament was angry while the God of the New Testament was made happy by the

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atonement. Although some preachers may teach that in congregations all over America and other countries right now, let's ask ourselves "what does the Bible say?" Malachi 3:6 says "For I am the Lord, I change not." The Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever! God doesn't change. "From age to age He's still the same." The Lord is a rock. He is solid. He does not change like soft clay. His character is the same now after the atonement of Christ as it was before the atonement of Christ. As much as the Lord rejoices at times, for example when sinners repent, He is still the same yesterday today and forever. If He had changed His attributes once, then He may change them again! But He doesn't change! The only thing that seemed to have changed is people's view of Him.⁷⁷ The Lord of the Old Testament is still the God of the New Testament. The same God that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and flooded the earth with water is the same God that reigns from Heaven today.

There are also New Testament examples of the anger of God. Luke 14:21 is one of them. In this parable, the Lord sent His servant to go and invited certain people to come to a great supper, but those whom were invited all made excuses. "So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." God rejoices when sinners heed His call and repent but the Master of the House is angered when His invitation is rejected!

The anger and wrath of God was preached by New Testament preachers: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). "But after thy

⁷⁷ There are many passages that speak of God changing His mind, in correspondence to changing circumstances. But these are not examples of God changing His character. Rather, they are examples of God keeping to His good character. It is because of His character, which never changes, that He changes His mind in those instances.

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hardness and impenitent heart treasureth up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds” (Rom. 2:5-6). “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6). “For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience” (Col. 3:6). And since the wrath and anger of God was preached by New Testament preachers, if a man does not preach the wrath and anger of God, they are not following the New Testament example! They are not New Testament type preachers!

II. Towards Who is His Anger Directed?

Towards who is Gods anger directed? It is a common misconception that God is angry with sin but He is not angry sinners. However, God is angry with sin and also with sinners themselves. A man does not merely get angry with deadly poison; he gets angry with the snake from which it comes. God is angry with sinners for their sins. The sinner is the cause of sin. It would make no sense to be angry with sin but not angry with sinners, as sin is the effect but the sinner is the cause. Romans 1:18 tells us that God is against sin. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” Then Romans 2:2 tells us that God is against the sinners themselves also. “But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things..” So the Lord is against sin and sinners.

God said in Zeph. 1:4-6 says that He would stretch out His hand against “those who have turned back from following the Lord.” The prophets would say things like “The word of the Lord is against you.” Young Jeremiah said ““The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city” (Jer 26:12.) Ezekiel said “thus says the Lord God: 'Indeed I, even I, am against you” Eze 5:8. God would often send people to preach against a certain place or to preach against a certain people. Some

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examples: Isa 21:13, 22:1, 23:1, Jer 1:18, 22:7, 21:13, 23:2, 26:12, 36:2, 44:11, 50:31, 51:25, 51:62, Eze 4:3, 4:7, 5:8, 5:16, 5:17, 6:3, 7:3, 13:8, 13:9, 13:20, 14:8, 15:7, 16:27, 21:3, 21:31, 23:22, 23:25, 25:7, 26:3, 28:22, 29:3, 29:10, 35:3, 38:3, 39:1, Am 3:1, 5:1, 6:14, Mic 1:2, 2:3, Na 2:13, 3:5, Hab 2:16, Zep 2:5, Mal 3:5, Ho 4:1. Because sinners are for ungodliness, God is against the ungodly. He is against all those who are against Him.

Malachi 3:5 says “And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts..” God is not only against sorceries but God is against sorcerers. God is not only against adulteries but God is against adulterers. God is not only against perjury but God is against perjurers. That applies to all sin and sinners. God is not only against drunkenness but God is against drunkards. God is not only against homosexuality but God is against sodomites. That is why Peter wrote, “but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil” (1 Peter 3:12). Notice Peter doesn’t say “The face of the Lord is against evil” as true as that statement would be. Rather Peter wrote “The face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”

Jesus Christ not only preached against sin but our Master preached against sinners. Jesus did not say “Woe to hypocrisy” but He said “Woe to you... hypocrites” (Matt 23:13). “And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way” (Mark 12:12). Christ also preached against cities just like the prophets of old by pronouncing their woes. “Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not” (Matt 11:20). Jesus also commanded His disciples to speak against people and places. “And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for

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a testimony against them” (Luke 9:5). Stephen in the book of acts not only preached against sin but also preached against sinners and that is what got him killed. He said “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*.” Acts 7:51-53. It is not biblical to merely preach *to* sinners. You must preach *at* them. And you must not merely rebuke their sins. You must rebuke them.

E. W. Hengstenberg said, “The prophet takes a lesson from a coarse human similitude, in order that he might inspire terror unto the ungodly. For he speaks against stupid and hardened people, who would not apprehend the reality of a divine judgment of which he had just spoken; but they might possibly be brought to consider this by greater earnestness on the part of man.”⁷⁸

Those today that are like Jesus and follow in His footsteps for ministry are not being treated any better than Jesus was. Acceptance by God is accompanied by rejection from the world. There is a remnant today that preach hard against sin and sinners and those who do so are certainly not on America’s most popular preachers list.

David Wilkerson wrote this, “I tell you, America has become sick! You can’t tell me that God isn’t angry, that He’s simply overlooking it all. I once received a note from a well-known evangelist that read, ‘Don’t speak against America. Her best days are ahead. God is pleased!’ No! That is exactly what the Bible says the false prophets will claim in the last days!”⁷⁹

⁷⁸ A Treasury of David: Psalms 7

⁷⁹ America’s Last Call

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We seem to have it all wrong today! What can the current church do with a scripture like Ps 5:5 that says “Thou hatest all workers of iniquity” considering modern messages? We say “God hates sin but loves the sinner.” So what do you do with Ps 5:5? It certainly throws a wrench into our theological gears.

Leonard Ravenhill said, “You see, all our people know in the church is now, is their sins forgiven. And they have been submitting to inward sin for years. I don’t believe there is a man on the whole TV that preaches salvation. They preach forgiveness. Forgiveness is not salvation. They point out, ‘There’s a man in bed with some other mans wife in a Motel. Oh you know the Lord loves you just as you are.’ Well then why get changed? Commit adultery as much as you like. He still loves you. Be a cheat, be a liar, be a thief, and be a failure. He still loves you. But there’s a scripture, isn’t it the Psalms 7? Where it says God is angry with the wicked every day. I heard somebody quote today God loves you but hates your sin – That’s bunken. God hates you for committing the sin! Is God going to take your sins and judge them at the Judgment and leave you alone?”⁸⁰

Leonard Ravenhill also said, “The menace of many of our meetings is; we are trying to get people saved who don’t know their lost. ‘Come forward. The Lord loves you. The Lord loves you.’ The Lord hates you! Instead of a bumper stick ‘God loves you’, ‘God is angry with the wicked everyday’ (Ps 7:11) or ‘The wicked shall be turned into hell.’ (Ps 9:17)”⁸¹

I only wish that I could begin to explain the mysteries of God, but I cannot adequately do so. As large ships need large rivers to sail through and can not move in small rivers, the fullness of the truth of God can not be fully comprehended by our shallow minds. Let me appeal to men greater then I to help us understand.

⁸⁰ Sermon: A Burning Heart.

⁸¹ An Interview with Leonard Ravenhill

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William Gurnall wrote, "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' For what God thinks of sin, see Deut vii. 22; Prov. vi.16; Rev. ii. 6,15; where he expresseth his detestation and hatred of it, from which hatred proceeds all those direful plagues and judgments thundered from the fiery mouth of his most holy law against it; nay, not only the work, but worker also of iniquity becomes the object of his hatred."⁸²

David Clarkson said, "Those whom the Lord hates must perish. But he hates impenitent sinners, 'Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' Now, who are so properly workers of iniquity as those who are so eager at it that they will not leave this work, though they be in danger to perish for it? Christ puts it out of doubt. The workers of iniquity must perish. Luke xiii. 27. Those whom the Lord will tear in his wrath must perish with a witness; but those whom he hates, he tears &c. Job xvi. 8. What more due to such impenitent sinners than hatred! What more proper than wrath, since they treasure up wrath? Rom ii. Will he entertain those in the bosom of love whom his soul hates? No; destruction is their portion. Prov. Xxi. 15. If all the curses of the law, all the threatening of the gospel, all the judgments in earth or in hell, will be the ruin of him, he must perish. If the Lord's arm be strong enough to wound him dead, he must die. Psalms lxviii. 21..... Avoid all that Christ hates. If you love, approve, entertain that which is hateful to Christ, how can he love you? What is that which Christ hates? The psalmist (Psalm xlv. 7) tells us, making it one of Christ's attributes, to hate wickedness.... as Christ hates iniquity, so the '*workers of iniquity.*' You must not love them, so as to be intimate with them, delight in the company of evil doers, openly profane, scorers of godliness, obstructers of the power of it. 2 Cor. vi. 14-18. If you love so near relations to wicked men, Christ will have no relation to you. If you would have communion with Christ in sweet acts of love, you must have no

⁸² A Treasury of David

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fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, or those that act them.”⁸³

Sin and sinners are both opposed to the Lord. God will not only cast sin into the fires of hell but He will cast sinners into the fires of hell. The Law is opposed to criminals who commit crimes and are not just opposed to the crimes themselves. Rev. 21:8 says “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” It does not say that “cowardice, murders, fornication, adultery, idolatry, and lies will be tossed into the lake of fire,” but cowards, murderers, fornicators, adulterers, idolaters, and liars!

You must pull a plant up by the roots or it will grow back again. God goes for the root not just the branches. Sins are the branches that spring up from the heart of the sinner. If you are outside of Christ, you are in desperate need of a heart transplant because the heart you have now is flooded with the waters of iniquity. It’s too sick to give you life.

God “commands all men everywhere to repent” (Act 17:30). But He is not merely asking that you give up a few bad habits. Jesus said “unless a man is born-again he will by no means see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3). In the light of the truth that God is against sin and sinners, the message of the new birth takes a new appearance. Being born-again is becoming a new person, receiving a new heart with a new mind! It’s so much more than simply straightening out your life or fixing up your behavior. It’s receiving new life! It’s more than giving up sins - it’s no longer being a sinner! You become a new creature! Because God is not only against sins but He is against sinners, we must be born again and made new creations. Sinners must be made into Saints so that it can be said of you, “and such were some of you” (1 Cor. 6:11). “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old

⁸³ A Treasury of David.

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things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). We must be able to say “all things are become new” or else we are still left abiding under the wrath of God. Both sins small and great can fit through the wide gates of hell. The heavy weight of even the least of your sins is enough to weigh your soul down so that you sink into hell. A man must stop being a sinner if he is going to be saved (1 Pet. 4:18). The unconverted must be made to know that they are not saved even if they have cleaned up their lives by getting rid of their major sins. They must be made to know that God desires to give them new lives all together.

It’s been said, “You can’t be angry at a dog when a dog barks. It is in his nature to bark. What do you expect him to do? Meow like a cat?” Although you may laugh there is nothing funny about it. This illustration is used to show that you can’t get angry with sinners when they sin because it is in their nature to sin. However, God does get angry with sinners when they sin. “God is angry with the wicked everyday” (Ps 7:11). Let’s apply that illustration to reality. What does it mean? Does it mean you can’t get upset with a rapist if he rapes your wife? Do you blame His God given nature? Does it mean you can’t be angry with a child molester when he molests children, maybe even your own children? Does it mean you can’t hold a murderer accountable to his evil actions if he murders and sheds innocent blood? Was he necessitated by his nature? It is in a dog’s nature to bark but it is not man’s nature to sin. To the contrary, it is against man’s nature to sin (Rom. 1:26, 2:14), thus God is angry with sinners everyday.

Keith Green said, “We shouldn’t scare poor sinners. No, that wouldn’t do. They are just poor, unfortunate, misguided souls, right? Wrong! The Bible clearly shows that they are criminals who have robbed and dishonored the living God, infinitely offending Him, and they have no right to look at themselves in any other way.”⁸⁴

⁸⁴ What’s Wrong with the Gospel?

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The truth is you will never commit a sin that you did not want to commit. Matt 12:35 says that all your sins come out of the desires of your heart. James 1:14-16 goes on to say “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.” The heart of man is the source of all the streams of sin that flood our land. Do you not see how the rivers of sin flow from your very own heart? A corrupt sinful heart is like an erupting volcano destroying the life around it. You are directly responsible for your sins every time you commit them. Be sure of that! When you sin you are not a victim but a criminal in the sight of God. People have various reasons why they sin but they have no justifiable excuses for their sins. You develop a sinful character and sinful habits by your own free will choices and you are responsible for not getting rid of such a sinful nature. The truth of it all is that because man is responsible for his actions, “God is angry with the wicked everyday”!

III. How Often is the Lord Provoked to Anger?

Now that we have established the biblical fact that the Lord does get angry and that he is angry with sinners, the question arises, how often is He angered? To answer that question, we must answer a different question which is directly related to the first. How often are sins committed? God’s anger is a reaction to action. God is angered because of the ungodliness of wicked men. If it were not for sins, the Lord would never be angry. However, since sins are committed daily the Lord is angry daily. “God is angry with the wicked everyday”!

William Gurnall wrote, “God hath set up his royal standard in defiance of all the sons and daughters of apostate Adam, who from His own mouth are proclaimed rebels and traitors to His crown and dignity; and as against such he hath taken the field, as with fire and sword, to be avenged on them. Yea, he gives the world sufficient testimony of his incensed

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wrath, by that of which is revealed from heaven daily in the judgments executed upon sinners, and those many but of a span long, before they can show what nature they have by actual sin, yet crushed to death by God's righteous foot, only for the viperous kind of which they come. At every door where sin sets its foot, there the wrath of God meets us. Every faculty of soul, and member of body, are used as a weapon of unrighteousness against God; so every one hath its portion of wrath, even to the tip of the long. As man is sinful all over, so is he cursed all over. Inside and outside, soul and body, is written all with woes and curses, so close and full, that there is not room for another to interline, or add to what God hath written."⁸⁵

God does not get angry for the sake of being angry. He is angered because He is just, benevolent, and good. His righteous fury is fanned, flamed, and fueled by his holiness. How could a holy God witness the rape of women daily and not be provoked to wrath? How can Judge of judges see little children molested continually day after day and not be provoked to fury? How can a God of righteousness see fornication committed daily by the young and the old and not be angered by such an enormous violation of His Law, of His design, and of His intention? These sins are committed day after day after day. The thought arises in my mind: It is obvious that the Lord is "angry with the wicked every day" but does He get angrier every day? Does His anger increase with the increase of sins? Is His anger greater as the days go on? That is a possibility. In civil court, if a man violates the law once, the judge is angered. If the man violates the law continually, the judge would be furious. The heart of the Lord does not become calloused and hard to abominations as the heart of man does. The Lord does not hate sin less today than he did in the days of Noah. If possible, the Lord hates those sins even more.

⁸⁵ A Treasury of David

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The Lord once flooded the entire world with water because of the iniquity that was being committed. The Lord saved one family, Noah's family, and sent the rest of the world to hell. The next flood that is coming upon the world due to the sins that are blatantly committed will not be a flood of water but will be a flood of fire. The entire world will be destroyed and the Lord will create "a new Heaven and a new earth". Could the increase of the punishment of sin be caused by the increase of God's anger towards wicked men? Are the bowls of God's wrath, that will be poured out in the end, waiting until they are full and on the verge of overflowing?

Jonathon Edwards said of the wicked, "They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God that is expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as he is with many miserable creatures now tormented in hell, who there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yea, God is a great deal angrier with great numbers that are now on earth: yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, who it may be are at ease, than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell."⁸⁶

God's anger towards sinners is not the same as the anger a father has towards his children when they disobey him. This is because the wicked are not children of God but are sons and daughters of the devil. Jesus said to the wicked "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not" (John 8:44-45). If they were children of God, then they would be like their Father. A child sees what his father does and then imitates him. But they do the

⁸⁶ Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.

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work and will of the devil and therefore are not children of God. Not all of creation is apart of the family of God despite popular opinion. There are sons of the devil, although they may not know it, and there are also sons of God. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (Jn. 1:12). And then again, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). In the Acts of the Apostles, Paul preached against and sinner, as is recorded in the following: “Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:9-10)

In order to be part of the family of God you have to be “grafted in” at conversion (Rom. 11:17-24), which means you were not previously in. Sonship comes only through faith in Christ (Gal 3:26). Therefore, God’s anger towards the wicked is not the same anger a Father has towards disobedient children. Rather, Gods anger towards the ungodly is the same of a judge towards a guilty criminal that is standing in His court room. Saying that “God is a judge” is not a metaphor. God actually is a judge (Ps 7:11). Can you imagine the feeling that a righteous judge has when a guilty criminal stands in his court room and has no shame or remorse for his crimes? If you intensify that feeling, you may get a glimpse of how God feels.

Every man in the world is either a child of disobedience or a child of the light: “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph 5:6). And then again, “For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience” (Col 3:6). Therefore, it says, “While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:36).

One of the most unbiblical terms I have ever heard is “carnal Christianity.” That term expresses the idea that someone

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can be a Christian and yet be as carnal as those who are outside of Christ. Jesus said “If a man love me, he will keep my words” (John 14:23). The terminology of “carnal Christianity” itself is an oxy moron. It would be like saying a person can be a loving serial killer. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). A worldly Christian is an enemy of God and therefore not a Christian at all. He’s a fake, a fraud, a phony! A carnal Christian is a counterfeit Christian!

Notice that the condition of not being under condemnation is not being carnal, meaning that those who do live after the flesh are condemned: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1). Paul went on to explain how the carnal were enemies of God. “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:6-8). “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13). Carnal Christianity is a counterfeit Christian. It claims to exalt grace when it actually degrades and denies it (Rom. 6:1, Titus 2:11-12).

Keith Daniels said, “There is no such thing as a worldly Christian. If you are worldly then you are not a Christian.”

Winkie Pratney said, “Christian’ implies being a ‘little-Christ’ or ‘Christ-like’ (1 Jn.2:6;4:17; 3:7,3). What kind of blasphemous combination is a ‘CARNAL CHRIST-LIKE.’ You might as well talk about ‘Godly sinners’ or ‘heavenly devils.’ God sees sinners; He sees saints. He does not see ‘sinful saints’ or ‘saintly sinners:’ What fellowship has light with darkness? We are either good or bad, selfish or loving. No definition of a Christian that allows fellowship with the sin that cost God His Son and Christ His life comes from the Holy Spirit of God. The

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‘carnal Christian’ philosophy is all right in its place; that place is Hell. If you are living in known sin, it is time you quit it for good. If you live a carnal life, you are not a Christian and have no right to call yourself one, ‘carnal’ or otherwise.’⁸⁷

Those who fornicate, those who murder, those who rape, those who lie and commit all sorts of abominable deeds are not sons of God; they are just like their father the devil. If they were sons of God, then they would do the work of the Father. They are enemies of God, not children of God. Because they have not been born of God they can not be pleasing to God (John 15:4). Those who are of Heaven are holy and those who are of the world are evil. Mark my words, if you share in the sins of the world, you will share in the punishment of the world (Eph. 5:6-7).

2 Timothy 2:19 says, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” It is not a light thing for a man to claim to be a Christian. The claim to be a Christian is the profession to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Those who follow Christ follow in His ways. Did Christ say in vain “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15)? Those things which Christ hates His followers also hate and those things which Christ loves His followers also love. It’s a mockery to the entire kingdom of God to even use the term “carnal Christian” in a way that hints to the possibility of living in sin while having a relationship with God, for it is impossible to serve the flesh and serve God at the same time. A servant cannot serve two masters (Matt 6:24). You either go the way of the world or the way of Christ. You are either for Christ or against Christ (Luke 11:23). You are going all the way with God or you are going the other way all together. If you love him, keep his commandments (John 14:15).

The Apostle John laid his axe at the root of the rotten tree of carnal counterfeit Christianity when he said, “He that saith, I

⁸⁷ “Carnal Christian” Tract

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know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 Jn. 2:4).

The Lord is angry with the “carnal Christian” for not heeding His call to repent of his sins and turn from darkness to light. Remember Luke 14:21. Those who were invited to the great supper all made excuses and did not come so the master, in his anger, sent his servant out to invite the lame and the blind. The truth is that God is angry with the wicked every day that they refuse to repent. He is provoked to anger every day that sinners make excuses about not coming to repentance. How can the Lord be anything but angry when the precious blood of His own Son, which He sent to save, is trampled upon underfoot? Those who trample the blood of Christ under their feet will one day themselves be trampled upon by God. “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:26-31).

IV. How will God's Anger Affect Wicked Men?

The scriptures state plainly enough that the Lord is angry and that He is “angry with the wicked *every day*” but what will He do with His anger? Since He does not get angry for anger's sake, what will happen to those with whom He is angry? A fire burns with the purpose to consume and the fire of the wrath of the Lord burns furiously to consume the ungodly. The judgment of God against those who will not submit to the reign of the King

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of kings will be set and final in only a matter of one day. Nahum 1:2-3 tells us what will become of the enemies of God. Nahum wrote those many years ago that “God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.” And again Psalms 9:17 says “The wicked shall be turned into hell.”

There are some who would use the argument that “those are Old Testament scriptures and therefore do not apply today,” however it is interesting to note that these are prophecies related to Judgment Day. That “great and terrible day” (Joel 2:11) of the Lord has yet to come about. Therefore, all the prophecies about that day, both from the Old and New Testament, are prophecies that are certainly valid today.

What about those who have never heard the gospel? This is a question I am sure every Christian has asked once in their walk with the Lord. What will happen to the tribal people in foreign countries that will die before they ever get a chance to even hear the name of Jesus?

Imagine a missionary in a foreign land laboring, sweating, and even bleeding at times to bring the gospel to people who have yet to hear the name of Christ. He has spent years studying and training. He has learned the language, he has studied the culture, he knows the scriptures, and he’s been called and anointed by God for this task. But after months and even years of laboring on the mission field, he has no converts. Can you imagine the frustrations and questions that a man like that has? Why does it look like the Lord isn’t blessing his efforts? There is no known sin in his life so why does it appear as though he is lacking the power of God in his ministry?

In a time of prayer he suddenly realizes that the entire time that he has been on the mission field he has simply told people about Christ but has never offered someone Christ. He has taught and explained Christianity to these people, but never explained why they personally need to be saved. So he leaves his

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time of prayer motivated to share the full counsel of God. He starts up a conversation with one of the tribal men about the Lord. He explains to the man his personal need to come to Christ because of his personal sins. He explains the wrath of God which will be revealed against the wicked. He shows the man how the arrows of the Law of God are already in the bending bow. He describes in detail the horrific and terrible place God created called hell. The tribal man is brought to tears over his personal violations of the Law and his rebellions against God. Then the missionary not only shares the message of Christ, but offers Christ Himself to this man. The man willingly receives the Lord and is born-again.

Then the tribal man suddenly realizes, “What about my father who has already died? What about all of those who have lived before me and have died without this knowledge?” He turns to the missionary and says “What has happened to my father and his father and everyone who has lived before me that has died without this knowledge?” What does the missionary say? After years and years of labor he has finally won his first person to Christ. He doesn’t want to offend this man or turn him off to Christianity now that he has finally won someone to the Lord so what does he say? This is where the missionary goes wrong. In order to please the man and give him the answer he is looking for He said “Well I personally believe that those who die without ever hearing the gospel go to Heaven because they didn’t have a chance.” To the surprise of the missionary, the tribal man gets upset and says, “Then why did you come to my land and tell my entire tribe about Christ? You should have left them in the dark completely! Now they have rejected the message and are going to hell but before you came they were going to Heaven in their ignorance! If what you are saying is true, we were all better off before you came here. Why are you a missionary at all?”

If ignorance of the truths was a free ticket to Heaven, then why tell anybody about Christ? If the truth of it all was that those who have never heard of Christ will automatically go to Heaven,

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then I would say let's ban the Bible and burn the Churches. Let's make sure that nobody ever hears the name of Christ again or reads a Bible. That way the next generation, as sinful as it would be, can never have the option of accepting or rejecting Christ and therefore go straight to Heaven. That would be the best way to save a generation. The world continues to reject the truth, so let's stop giving it the opportunity to reject it to make sure everybody goes to Heaven. The very thought of all that is absolutely ridiculous. If the heathen are saved then nobody needs to go and save them. The devil has snuck this false belief into the church to destroy the Great Commission and he does it with such subtlety!

What does the Bible say on this? "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (Rom. 2:12). "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:18-23).

Paris Reidhead said, If you'll ask me why I went to Africa, I'll tell you I went primarily to improve on the justice of God. I didn't think it was right for anybody to go to Hell without a chance to be saved. So I went to give poor sinners a chance to go to heaven. Now I haven't put it in so many words, but if you'll analyze what I just told you, do you know what it is? Humanism. That I was simply using the provisions of Jesus Christ as a means

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to improve upon human conditions of suffering and misery. And when I went to Africa, I discovered that they weren't poor, ignorant, little heathen running around in the woods looking for someone to tell them how to go to heaven. That they were Monsters of Iniquity! They were living in utter and total defiance with far more knowledge of God than I ever dreamed they had! They deserved Hell! Because they utterly refused to walk in the light of their conscience, and the light of the law written upon their heart, and the testimony of nature, and the truth they knew!" Paris went on to say that He felt the Lord speak to him, "The heathen are lost. And they are going to go to hell not because they haven't heard the gospel. They are going to go to hell because they are sinners who love their sin and because they deserve hell."⁸⁸

The Bible says in John 1:9 that God gives light to every man. All men everywhere have received a conscience and know right from wrong and that is why God calls "all men everywhere to repent" and not just some men in some places. Everyone, from those in China to those in Africa to those in America have been given a conscience. Therefore, we are all without excuse. God has made it impossible for any person to say "I didn't know any better." A sinner is not ignorant of the law and will of God. He is living in defiance and rebellion against it. On Judgment Day the conscience of man will testify against the wicked in the courtroom of God. God will be the Judge, the Law will be the prosecutor, and the conscience will be the witness. The conscience will point the accusing finger and say, "I was there when that one lied. I was there when that one blasphemed. I was there when that one murdered. I was there when that one committed adultery." A man's conscience was there every time that he sinned and it will accuse him on that great and terrible day.

⁸⁸ Sermon: Ten Shekels and a Shirt

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The end of the wicked is certain, so long as they remain in their sins (Lk. 13:3). Christ spoke continually through his parables and teachings about how Gods anger will affect wicked men. He said, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (Jn. 15:6). Sinners have nothing more to look forward to but the death of a traitor - the execution of a rebel. Even while the church sings worship songs about the mercy of God, the wrath of God can fall upon the world if it doesn't repent. Sinners are the target of God's righteous wrath and anger. As an archer will pull back his bow and aim his arrow at the bull's eye, so God, even *now*, has the bow of His anger bend with the arrows of His wrath aiming directly at His enemies. How terrible the day will be when the Lord says, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me." (Luke 19:27).

V. Will the Anger of God Burn Forever?

"How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?" (Ps 79:5).

God's anger burns viciously even now against every shape and form of vileness in our time. How long will Gods anger burn against the wicked? His anger will burn so long as they remain in their sins. For all of eternity God will be angry with all of the wicked that are in hell. Those who have never repented and trusted in Jesus Christ will only have the fury of God and never the favor of God.

There is hope for the ungodly in this life and it is only in Jesus Christ. God has a Kingdom and Christ is the King of kings. Those who rebel against the King by transgressing His Law are rebels and traitors in His eyes and rebellion is punishable by death - death by execution. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our

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Lord” (Rom, 6:23). This means that everyone deserves to die by the hand of God. Everyone from prostitutes to politicians to preachers are worthy of death according to the court room of the Lord. Even the least of sins brings the worst of punishments because all sin is rebellion. The good news is that Jesus Christ was executed for us on the cross so that we do not have to face the eternal execution of hell-fire. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). While we were enemies of God who set ourselves against His ways, He loved His enemies and showed His love by becoming a man and dying on a cross so that our penalty could be remitted and our crimes pardoned. Christ saves souls from God and He saves souls for God.

What will it be like for those church-goers and “good” people who thought in their lifetime that they were at peace with God but find out on Judgment Day that they were not? People have a way of putting themselves in their own false worlds with false comforts. Many are walking around in their own bubbles but God’s Word is sharper than any double edged sword and can pop those bubbles of false comfort and fantasy with the reality of truth. What words are sharper than “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:23)? May the words of God shake, shatter, and shoot through us now so that it will not have to do so then.

Christianity isn’t so much about what you know as much as it is about who you know. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (Jn. 17:3). There will be those on Judgment Day who have made a profession of Jesus as Lord and yet will find out they didn’t truly know God. “He knoweth them that trust in Him” (Nahum 1:7). Those that Christ will say “I never knew you” are those who did not trust in Him but in their works (Matt. 7:21-23). Don’t be so foolish on that day as to proclaim all the great things you think you did for God. Your sin is even greater than any good work you have done. Salvation comes through trusting in the sacrifice of Christ alone. No other name has been given by which

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man can be saved than the name of Christ. It is not by works, even casting out demons and raising the dead, but it is by grace through faith in the Son of God. It is by a living, obedient, purifying, overcoming faith that we are saved from sin, death, and hell. I fear that some will enter into a Christ-less eternity after their life because at one point they entered into a Christ-less Christianity during their life.

The majority of the world rejects the Son. No one has more enemies than God does. You can either kiss the Son or receive His rod. You may be saying to yourself, “Well my life is just fine without God.” You think you are living faith without God but that will all be over on Judgment Day. If you want to sin and live your life without God, you can be very happy and successful in worldly terms but what do you profit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? If you want to have a Christ-less life, don’t expect anything more than a Christ-less eternity.

The absolute most terrible tragedy in all of history was not the holocaust as horrific as that was. Neither was the greatest tragedy the Great Depression as devastating as that was for many. It was not the sinking of the Titanic or the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The greatest tragedy of history is found in John 1:10-11. “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” That should be enough to break our hearts with pain for hours, days, and even longer. You may be hooked on drugs. I know how that is from experience. You may be an adulterer or a fornicator. You may be self-righteous and think your sins aren’t enough to cast you to hell. The way to destruction is wide enough for even the smallest of sins to fit through. You may be a liar or a thief. You may be heading for jail, heading for the mental hospital, heading for an early grave, you may be as awful as they come but the worst scenario in the world would be that you can know God and choose not to know him. Rejecting God is the worst thing a man can ever do.

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God offers you freedom. Christian freedom is not freedom *to* sin but it is freedom *from* sin. Christ not only covers sin but He cleanses sin. If you don't put your sins to death your sins will surely put you to death. Jesus said "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:13-14). The cross of Jesus Christ saves those who do whatever He asks. Even the worst of men can be reconciled to God and no longer be an enemy of God but can be a friend of God. Not only can you be a friend of God but also a son or daughter of the Most High. You have the option of being able to say "O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me" (Isaiah 12:1).

God has had compassion on you but will you have compassion on yourself? "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3).

THE ANGER OF THE LORD

Sinners, turn; why will ye die?
God, your maker, asks you why?
God, who did your being give,
Made you with himself to live;
He the fatal cause demands;
Asks the work of his own hands,
Why, yea thankless creatures, why
Will ye cross his love, and die?

Sinners, turn; why will ye die?
God, your Saviour asks you why?
He, who did your souls retrieve,
Died himself, that ye might live.
Will ye let him die in vain?
Crucify your Lord again?
Why, ye ransom'd sinners, why
Will ye slight his grace, and die?

Sinners, turn; why will ye die?
God, the Spirit, asks you why?
He, who all your lives hath strove,
Urged you to embrace his love.
Will ye not his grace receive?
Will ye still refuse to live?
O ye dying sinners, why?
Why will ye forever die?⁸⁹

⁸⁹ An Old Methodist Hymn called "Sinners, Turn; Why Will Ye Die?."

“The devil has the largest Youth Group in America.”
Unknown

Chapter Twenty Nine

The Devil is Retired

Good news! After much hard work at stealing, killing, and destroying, the devil has finally thrown in the towel. That means we no longer have to worry about the devil here in the 21 Century. Today the devil has taken up much milder innocent occupations.

No longer interested in brainwashing our children and society, to pollute their minds with filth and rot, the devil has changed occupations to become an innocent music producer!

No longer interested in tempting with lust and vanity, the devil changed occupations to become an innocent fashion designer!

No longer interested in cultivated an appetite for blood and violence in people, the devil has changed occupations to become an innocent movie producer!

No longer interested in searing the consciences of children soon to be adults, numbing their senses and promoting beatings and shootings, the devil has changed occupations to become an innocent video game manufacturer!

No longer interested in corrupting our government, outlawing Christianity and legalizing immorality, the devil has changed occupations to be an innocent politician!

No longer interested in molding and shaping our future world leaders, to instill in them unbelief and hostility towards the gospel, the devil has changed occupations to be an innocent college professor!

And no longer interested in perverting the gospel of Jesus Christ, giving false peace and false assurance of salvation,

THE DEVIL IS RETIRED

convincing men that God is not angry and that He accepts them as they are, the devil has changed occupations to become an innocent preacher of grace.

Let's just enjoy our innocent music, our innocent fashion, our innocent movies and our innocent video games. Let's just trust our politicians, our professors, and our preachers.

Isn't it great that we don't have to worry about the devil in the 21 Century? Be at ease. Be at peace. Stop striving and fighting for there is no war to fight anymore. All is well with hell. Be at peace with the devil. Let's just keep blindly believing that the devil is no longer here to "steal, kill, and destroy." Let's just keep living as though the devil is retired, as the world around us continues to sink deeper and deeper into hell. After all, the church has been doing this for years.

"Listen, I'm against sin. I'll kick it as long as I've got a foot, I'll fight it as long as I've got a fist, I've butt it as long as I've got a head, and I'll bite it as long as I've got a tooth. And when I'm old, fistless, footless, and toothless, I'll gum it till I go home to glory and it goes home to perdition." Billy Sunday

Chapter Thirty

A Plague to the World

"For we have found this man a pestilent fellow" Acts 24:5

Our prayer ought to be "Oh God make me a plague!" We ought to desire to be plagues to the darkness as the Apostle Paul was in his day. The world should deem us a pestilence! Everywhere Paul went the fire for God would spread, passion for God would spread, the truth of God would spread, hatred for sin would spread, and the cleansing blood of Christ would spread! This man was a plague! Can that be said of us the way we are currently living? May the Kingdom of God spread through us so rapidly and so widely that it will completely baffle and befuddle the powers and principalities of the air, that the devil won't know what to do to stop it.

Yes, God make us all plagues to the system of the world! But of course if we are going to be plagues we will have the multitudes come against us to stop us from affecting, or should I say infecting others. The call of Christ is a call of complete abdication, a total abnegation of self-preservation and self-service. The Great Commission requires reckless abandonment and ruthless self-denial. There is no other way to see the purposes of God fulfilled here on earth. You will be thought of badly; they will think and say of you, "There is something wrong with him" and they will distance themselves from you. Others will attempt to cure you. Paul had every "cure" tested on him that the devil knew of. This man, this plague, was starved, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, impoverished, abandoned, until finally execution

A PLAGUE TO WORLDINESS

was the only way to stop him from spreading the message of the new-birth. BUT HE WAS A PLAGUE! Glory to GOD!

Paul reached Jews, he reached Italians, he reached Asians, he reached Greeks, he reached Romans, he reached the high class, he reached the low class, and he reached the world for the Lord Jesus Christ! Even today millions are being inspired by the dedication and self-sacrifice of this man who gave all that he had to the furthering and establishing of the Kingdom of God. Oh Lord, make us plagues!!

“Popularity has slain more prophets of God than persecution ever did.” Vance Havner

Chapter Thirty One

Taking a Punch

"Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 2:3

The world needs to be changed for God. This always comes about by challenging and convicting the world. Doing this however has always come with consequences that few are willing to bear. That consequence is rejection. Even the strongest have a hard agonizing time handling rejection. No man has changed the world more than Jesus Christ and yet he was rejected. If we are ever to change this doomed and damned world, we must be strong enough to follow Christ and bear the cross of rejection and persecution.

You will never be able to change the way of the world or the current way of modern Christendom without causing uproar. The life of the man who attempts to change the minds, hearts, and lives of people will be marked by controversy and rejection. Did Jesus cleanse the temple without causing a ruckus? Did Paul not see uproar as a result of his preaching in Ephesus? People practice those things which they love. If you seek to change lives, you are seeking to get people to forsake that which their hearts love. Many are willing to fight and even kill in order to hold on to their sins. Therefore, don't expect to change this world without severe opposition coming against you by the ungodly world. And many of those ungodly worldly oppressors will come from within the four walls of the church! We seem to be so quick to apologize if we cause uproar or a stir when we go out and preach the gospel

TAKING A PUNCH

but I say that it is time that we start apologizing to God when our preaching fails to cause an uproar!

It is time that we learn how to rock the boat and make people feel uncomfortable in their compromise and sin. It's time that we stop trying as best we can to fit into the world so that we won't be rejected. We need to get to the point when we say "It doesn't matter if the world rejects me because I didn't want to be apart of the world to begin with!" To be accepted by the world means to be rejected by God. You will not fit in with the Saints of God if you fit in with the sinners of the world. Often people attempt to walk, talk, and look like the world in order to "be a better witness" or "to be more relatable" however that is truly not what the world needs. The world needs to see the drastic differences between their lives and our lives if we ever hope for them to be converted and changed.

If all you wanted was a happy little life you joined the wrong army! If you wanted to live at peace with the world you're reading the wrong book! Jesus came not to bring peace but a sword. It is time that we, The Church of Jesus Christ, stop seeking after being at peace with the world because Jesus certainly didn't. To truly follow Christ here in this fallen world you have to kiss acceptance good bye. The closer that you get to Christ, the farther you will get from the world.

God needs men who are fighters. The Christian life is a war and if you're not willing to fight then you can not follow Christ. You may die in this battle. But my prayer for us all is not that God keeps us alive. Rather, my prayer is that we learn how to take a punch and if we go down that we may go down swinging!

"How is it that the world couldn't get on with the holiest man that ever lived but it can get on with you and me? Are we compromised? Have we no righteousness that reflects on their corruption?" Leonard Ravenhill

"I was honored with having stones, dirt, rotten eggs, and pieces of dead cats thrown at me." George Whitefield

Chapter Thirty Two

Hated for the Name: Persecution for Preaching

"We don't experience persecution here in America" has been uttered from the lips of many Christians in our day. I have heard people say things like: "There is severe persecution in other countries, but here in America we have freedom and rights that keep us safe." I am sure you have heard this as well. While it is true that there is severe persecution in other countries, it is not true that there is no persecution here in America because we have "freedom" or "rights." I know of many Christians here in America who that have been persecuted, even to the extent of being thrown in jail, for nothing more but preaching the gospel. Street preachers are arrested in America on a regular basis and its been going on for decades. The reason the majority of the Church never suffers the pains of persecution is not because of "freedom" or "rights" but because they do not preach the gospel to the lost. The devil will oppose you if you are a threat to his kingdom! The absence of biblical persecution in America today is directly related to the absence of biblical preaching.

If a Christian falls out of bed in the middle of the night, he may blame the devil and call it spiritual warfare. If a Christian stubs his toe walking down the sidewalk or gets a flat tire driving to church, he may call it "an attack from the enemy." But the truth is that the devil himself is not concerned with many church goers nor does he take much notice of most church services. It is pride that causes many of us to believe that the devil is coming against us. If we do not hit the devil hard, neither will he hit us hard. Do

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we really believe that the devil takes any notice of us, and that we are known in hell, if we merely keep to ourselves and stay in our “Church” buildings? If our witnessing merely consisted of the occasional friendly act of charity, why would the devil persecute us when he very well knows that “faith comes by hearing” (Rom 10:17)? We talk too much about having to defend ourselves from the enemy but talk very little about the enemy having to defend himself from us!

The persecuted Christian will be the preaching Christian who calls out to the world “cleanse your hands you sinners, and purify your hearts you double-minded” (Jas 4:8). The man who rattles the bee hive is the one who gets stung. The man who disturbs the mound of the fire ants will suffer their vengeance. The devil is very occupied leading the chain of bound sinners to hell. But as soon as you come with the key to set the prisoners free, you’ll discover that the preaching Christian is the persecuted Christian. “I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God (Rev 20:4). The reason that there is much persecution upon our brothers and our sisters currently preaching the gospel in Asia and the Middle East is because they are witnessing to the lost of the life-changing power of Jesus Christ and preaching the Word of God. And because many here in America do not preach as they do in those countries, neither are we a part of the “fellowship of His sufferings” as they are there (Php 3:10).

While we may feel as though we are fulfilling our Christian duty if we faithfully attend Sunday Service at our local Church, I would like to say that we are sadly mistaken. Christ did not say “follow me and I will make you Church-goers.” The world will never be changed by going to Church only. That is why Christ said “follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19). Christ came to seek and to save the lost. Therefore, those who follow in His foot-steps do likewise. If you want to see if a man truly is a follower of Christ, take a look at his witnessing

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life and it will reveal how closely he follows and how much he believes in the Word of God.

One of the very first experiences that I had when I started witness was shortly after my conversion. I was banned from a High School Bible Study because they knew I gave out gospel tracts to the lost and it was upsetting the administration. “We don’t want you to give the Bible Study a bad name” they told me. Yet Christ himself “made himself of no reputation” (Php. 2:7). At one point, the other members of this Bible Study also gave tracts out with me. But when our message brought the reproach of the world it was quickly abandoned. When the ship of our reputation starts to sink, men will throw anything or anybody overboard to keep it afloat. If you want to change the world, toss out your reputation. And if you want to be a soldier of the Cross and wage warfare to win the souls of men, don’t even think about joining a Christian Club. Soldiers never fit in with mere Club members. So long as we hold on to our reputations and try not to “ruin our good name” with the world, we will never change the world as the New Testament Church did. We would be giving Christ a bad name if we were to allow the fear of man to overrule the fear of God in our lives. Many of us wouldn’t mind it being said of us “that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world” as it was said of the New Testament Church (Romans 1:8), but we certainly wouldn’t want to hear, as the New Testament Church did, “for concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against” (Acts 28:22). You may become known throughout the world but that just means that you will be hated throughout the world.

If we do as the New Testament Church did and reason about “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come” (Acts 24:25), then we will experience what the New Testament Church experienced: persecution and the saving of souls. If our ministries are not New Testament ministries, then they aren’t ministries at all.

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As soon as the noses of many Christians start to smell even the hint of hardship, or when their flesh starts to feel the heat of persecution, they shrivel back in terror and fear rather than marching forward in godly boldness and peaceful confidence that Christ is with us always, even in the fiery furnace. We must remember when we stand face to face with tribulation and when we stand toe to toe with oppression, that Christ will help us in our hardships and will give us peace in our persecutions. When we are put in the position to compromise that which cannot be compromised, to deny the undeniable, when forced to decide to obey the authority of man or to obey the authority of God, holy defiance and godly disobedience to those unreasonable requests is not only necessary in this war but is our only option. Preachers have told me, "The authorities are trying to silence my public message, should I obey God or man?" I tell them that if they want to get an honest answer, ask the souls in hell what they think and they will be sure to tell you.

The early Methodist preachers received much persecution when they preached the gospel in public but rather than retreating in defeat, they marched on into glorious victory. These men turned the world upside down, and the world tried to turn them upside down for it.

John S. Simons tells us the story: "If Methodism had not come into contact with the mob it would never have reached that section of English people which most needed Salvation. The 'Religious Societies' shut up in their rooms, would never have reformed the country. It was necessary that a race of heroic men should arise, who would dare to confront the wildest and most brutal of men, and tell them the meaning of sin, and show them the Christ of the cross and the Judgment Throne. The incessant assaults of the mob on the Methodist preachers showed they had reached the masses. With a superb courage, rarely equaled on the battlefield, the Methodist preachers went again and again to the places from which they had been driven by violence, until their persistence wore down the antagonism of their assailants. Then,

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out of the once furious crowd, men and women were gathered whose hearts the Lord had touched.”⁹⁰

Much like the Methodists the Salvation Army faced biblical persecution for their biblical preaching. In the open-air glory days of the Salvationists they had to persevere through many tough battles in order to win their war.

Winkie Pratney said, “Throughout the early years of the Army’s ministry, its young soldiers had to dodge missiles of rotten fruit, dead animals, rocks, and brickbats from crowds that did not appreciate being called out from the deeply entrenched wrong that filled their nation... Salvationists were roped, punched, kicked, spat on, and pelted with ships’ rockets and burning sulfur, while entire gangs of hundreds, even up to thousands, rallied to stop the little holy band. But the Army marched into town anyways, covered in slime but not ashamed. Kneeling in the center of the town they lifted up their battle cry: ‘Lord Jesus, in Your name we claim this city for God,’ and then they got up to take it, regardless of circumstances!”⁹¹

We too can change the world as they did, if we become as dedicated and devoted as they were.

While I have seen professing Christians abandon what I call “frontline evangelism” as soon as any persecution arises, assuming that they must have done something wrong, nothing can be further from the truth. Persecution is a sign that you are being a threat to the powers of darkness and that you are making a difference for the Kingdom of God. There is something terribly wrong with our ministries if we never face persecution. Did Christ not say “And ye shall be hated of all for my name’s sake” (Luke 21:17)? We must be misrepresenting His name if it does not bring us the same reproach that it brought Him. Preaching open-air will not get you the praises of men. Open air ministry

⁹⁰ The Revival of Religion in the Eighteenth Century

⁹¹ William & Catherine Booth: The Life and Legacy of the Booths by Trevor Yaxley, p. 18

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got Jesus lifted up on a cross not lifted up in awe and admiration from the people of His time.

Even when we must run up hill, we must finish the race. Even when we have to swim against the current, we must keep going! At the rate things appear to be going here in America for street preachers, many more American Christians will be forced to start prison ministries because that's exactly where we're heading. I am not surprised any longer when I hear of an open-air preacher being arrested, but I am surprised when I hear of one who never has been. I'll never complain about the few times I have been arrested for preaching, neither will I complain when it happens again. I'll expect no greater treatment than what Jesus my Lord received and all those great men of faith who have gone before us. Did not the preaching of John the Baptist lead him to prison and a grave? Did not the preaching of Christ lead him to a cross?

I. H. Evans wrote: "Stephen preached until the people were so stirred and excited that they stopped their ears. That is the kind of preaching that accomplishes results...When people become really afraid to hear a man because of his message, and try to silence him by putting him to death, he has done powerful preaching."⁹²

We can only buy the prize of souls if we are willingly to pay the cost of suffering. There is no other way to follow Christ, except to take up your cross. As painful and agonizing as it is the cause of Christ is more than worthy enough.

Leonard Ravenhill wrote: "When a nation calls its prime men to battle, homes are broken, weeping sweethearts say their good-byes, business are refitted for wartime production, rationing and discomforts are accepted - all for war. Can we do less for the greatest fight that this world has ever known outside

⁹² The Preacher And His Preaching, p. 208

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of the cross - this end time siege on sanity, morality, and spirituality?"⁹³

While I was preaching to a mocking crowd of sinners in a Connecticut green, the crowd vehemently and viciously shouted out accusations against me to remove the focus and attention off their own sin. One man in particular I can remember being outrageously furious beyond all the rest. He was even more upset than his friend who had already threatened to beat me up and to knock out my teeth. So angry and disturbed this one man was that he eventually stormed away in a rage because he could no longer bear the preaching. Shortly after he left he returned again, but this time I saw his facial expressions change as I said "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3). Rather than spewing out his normal venom, he astonishingly said (I believe to his own amazement), that what I was saying was true. The Holy Spirit had gotten a hold of him and was confirming the Word of God in his heart. Without any further interruption from him I finished my message as he stood there and listened to every word.

After preaching he came up to me and apologized for his ridiculous behavior. While I continued to speak to him about his soul, serious conviction seemed to grip him that showed in his eyes. He said that he needed to get right with the Lord. He turned to his friend and told him "I am done with all of it, I'm done with it all!" referring to his sin. He assured me that he was going to seek after God, repent of his sins, and start to read the Bible which he already owned. Usually those who oppose you the most are being impacted the most.

It's true that the opposition to the public declaration of the Gospel has always been great and will be great in our day but the rewards of souls have always made it worth it. George Whitefield, who was the open-air preacher who sparked America's first Great Awakenings, tried to share this truth with

⁹³ The Jesus Manifesto

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his generation. I pray that our generation will hear his words loud and clear.

Arnold Dallimore writes of Whitefield: “He urged all ministers not to be satisfied with preaching on Sundays only, but to do so seven days a week; to preach in the open-air and not to be limited to their own parishes, but to go forth wherever lost souls were found and to proclaim the grace of God to them. Such actions, he assured them, would bring the opposition of authorities and the hatred of the world, but it would also witness the blessing of God.”⁹⁴

Whitefield knew all too well the opposition of authorities and the hatred of the world, but he was also a man who witnessed the blessing of God in remarkable ways, leading thousands of desperately lost sinners to the rivers of Life for cleansing! Whitefield thundered the Word of God to awaken men out of their deep slumber in their comfortable beds of sin. We need men like him in our day who will be the annoying alarm clocks calling men to wake up to go shower in the cold showers of repentance. Unless they shower in those cleansing waters, they can not put on the white robes of righteousness. Sure the world may hit the “snooze” button through persecution, but we can carry on through Christ who strengthens us.

After Whitefield, there came a young man who brought the gospel where it belonged. He too experienced both the battering of the world and the blessing of God. This young man was named William Booth, who was the Founder of the Salvation Army. Because the poor very seldom went to church, he decided to take the gospel to the poor. He would preach on street corners, in alleys, on chairs or barrels, so all could freely hear the Word of God.

⁹⁴ George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival

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Trevor Yaxley tells us one remarkable story:

“One early success came with a preaching venture that found him in Kid Street with Will Samson. Expectantly, they had positioned themselves on the street edge, outside the home of a notorious drunk, Besom Jack. Their open-air meeting commenced with a hymn that seemed to be appropriate for the occasion. It was from the Methodist songbook:

*‘Outcasts of men, to you I call,
Harlots and publicans and thieves!
He spreads His arms to embrace you all;
Sinners alone, His grace receives:
No need of Him the righteous have,
He came the lost to seek and save.’*

They had no sooner raised their voices than a large, boisterous crowd encircled them. Young William was on his chair in an instant. ‘friends,’ he cried as he dodged a well-aimed, overripe missile, his large hooknose having a somewhat magnetic appeal to the tomato-launching public. ‘I want to put a few straight questions to your soul,’ he declared passionately. “Have any of you got a child at home without shoes to its feet? Are your wives sitting now in dark houses waiting for you to return without money? Are you going away from here to spend on drink, money that your wives need for food?’

At that moment the front door behind him flung open and out stumbled Besom Jack, eyes aflame and heading straight for the preaching duo, shouting abuse and lunging at them while still six feet away.

‘Jack, God loves your wife, and so did you once,’ said William steadily, looking the broom-seller in the eye. Jack stopped in his tracts and immediately became quite. ‘Can you remember how much you loved her and cherished her when you first met?’ the teenager asked

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tenderly. Jack nodded; his eyes fixed on the ground. ‘Well, Jack, God loves you with a love like that, with a love far deeper and greater than that.’ The hushed crowd strained to catch what the boy-preacher was saying, amazed at the change that had overcome the drunkard.

Jack lifted his eyes and blinked sheepishly. ‘Me?’ he asked in wonderment. ‘Yes, Jack, you,’ said William as he stood down from the chair and took hold of Jack’s arm.

Jack’s wife recounted the end of this meeting the following week, saying, ‘And ‘e said to ‘im, ‘Come Jack, just kneel down ‘ere and tell the Lord you love ‘im too. And ask ‘im to forgive yer.’ And ‘e did! My jack knelt there in the gutter and ‘e’s bin a different man ever since; ‘e says ‘e’s a Christian now!’

Young William’s heart beat for souls! His desire to help the poor had grown into a desire to see them saved. Gone were his notions of joining the Chartists, whose policies could only address the outward, political symptoms of poverty but never affect the heart of a person caught in alcoholism or despair. He had found his calling as a preacher of the gospel, the only true agent of inward change.⁹⁵

Now here we are in our own day when it is the norm to be a fornicator, a blasphemer, a liar, and a drunkard. Here we are in our own day when millions of lost souls rebel against God and are on a grease slide down to hell. The devil is playing for keeps. So here we are in our own day when many of us hide from the world in our Church rooms while the world around us perishes. We would rather not witness because it is so inconvenient and uncomfortable. But tell me, was the cross comfortable or convenient for Christ? How many souls are lost so that comfort and convenience can be kept?

⁹⁵ William & Catherine Booth: *The Life and Legacy of the Booths* by Trevor Yaxley, p. 57-58

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Dr. Michael L. Brown exhorts and encourages us to be the life-changing force which God desires for us to be here in our generation. He said, “America can be impacted for the good, and as followers of Jesus, we are called to make that impact. We do it by walking in the light, as He is in the light; by calling the lost to turn back to God in repentance; by preaching the gospel and making disciples; by proclaiming liberty to the captives; by pursuing righteousness in every area of our public and private lives; by acts of kindness, mercy, compassion, overcoming evil with good; by prayer, fasting, and the power of God; by living holy lives, and setting holy examples; by being a prophetic voice and a moral conscience to society; by Spirit-lead community involvement and godly political action; by non-violent resistance of injustice and oppression.”⁹⁶

The purpose of this entire chapter is to help you understand the personal sacrifice which is required with personal service to the Lord Jesus. Many in our day can not follow Christ because they do not know the cost of following. God forbid that any preacher ever hid the true cost. I don’t want anyone who preaches publicly to be surprised when persecution arises. I don’t want you to leave your work believing that you must have done something wrong. If you preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth you will be mistreated, misunderstood, and misrepresented. If you are going to stand up for Christ expect the world to try to push you back down again. Expect to have to carry your cross up the hill of Calvary to be crucified. We must overcome any hardship for the sake of the gospel of everlasting life. We have too many soft-men and not enough watch-men who will blow the trumpet declaring “flee from the wrath to come” (Luke 3:7). If we overcome all the opposition and preach the gospel regardless of what happens, we too can eye witness the miracle of the new birth in the lives of the lost.

⁹⁶ The Jesus Manifesto

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No war has been won without battles being fought. You never know just how much you believe and value something until you have to suffer for it. At the end of time, when we stand in eternity and appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and look into the face of the Crucified, we will know that it has all been worth it. Could you look Him in the face that day and tell the One who bleed for you that you could not bleed for Him? Could you look Him in the face that day and tell the One who died for you that you could not die for Him? No matter how difficult and painful the means may get, we have a glorious and wonderful end, to present to Christ the reward of His suffering.

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Hast thou no Scar?
No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?
I hear thee sung of mighty in this land,
I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star,
Hast thou no scar?

Hast thou no wound?
Yet I was wounded by the archers, spent,
Leaned me on a tree to die, and rent,
By ravening beast that compassed me, I swooned;
Hast thou no wound?

No wound, no scar?
Yet, as the mast so shall the servant be,
And, pierced are the feet that choose to follow me;
But thine are whole: Can he hath followed far
Who has no wound nor scar?

~Amy Carmichael

*It is a fine sight to see the minister of the gospel
marched off by the servant of the law! It excites sympathy for
him, and the next step is sympathy for his message.”*
Charles Spurgeon

Chapter Thirty Three *Arrested for the Gospel*

While I was on my normal route to New Haven Connecticut back in 2004 I felt the sudden urge to turn around and go to the city of Hartford for ministry instead. I had never preached open-air in Hartford before and wasn't sure exactly how to get there either. I did however find my way easily and located a great public place downtown for preaching.

When I first got out of my car a man was walking by and I greeted him. We started talking and apparently his truck ran out of gas and he was stuck in Hartford. I don't know if he was lying or not but if he was lying then I am sure he got convicted when I gave him money and a gospel of John. He said he would read it.

There were a lot of people in the downtown area when I got there. I set up my stool on a big brick walk way that had benches full of people and vendors. Like Paul I used a statue to spring board into the gospel. Near me was a statue of Rev. Thomas Hooker who founded the city of Hartford in 1636. He had a Bible in his hand and the monument said it was in that spot where He preached the sermon that inspired the Hartford constitution. “There is a difference between the Hartford Thomas Hooker founded and the Hartford we see today. And what is the difference? The difference is the book that he is holding in his hands...” Some children gathered near me to listen while other people were listening from the benches.

A man came out of one of the offices and asked me to move. I asked if I was breaking the law and he said "No." When he realized that I was not going to move he told me that I was on

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“private property” and have to move. I think that was a lie because there were public benches all over that area and it was a public sidewalk but I said, "Okay sir, where can I preach?" He showed me an area right across from where I was. When I started preaching there a different security guard came and said, "Oh no! They can't send you over here." Then all the security guards came together from all the difference offices and agreed on a spot that I could preach.

Although the only spot they said I could preach was only inches away from the main road, I preached there just the same. As soon as I started a man came out of the office buildings nicely dressed, looking like an executive. He started swearing and cursing at me over and over again. He got closer and closer until he was only maybe an inch away from me. He acted as though he would put out his cigarette on my face. It was so close I felt the heat of it on my skin but he never actually did it. He was repeatedly saying, "YOU SHUT THE @\$% UP". He got me a big crowd. I said, "Sir, you keep this up and your going to draw me a bigger crowd." He continued to yell and to spit and would not ease up. I told him if he doesn't stop I'll call the cops. He started doing a satanic sign with his hands along with his cursing and then told me, "I WORSHIP SATAN." I said, "In the name of Christ Jesus you leave me alone!" At that he walked off without saying a word.

That's when the cops showed up. They pulled me aside and said I can't use the portable battery operated microphone without a permit. Then they put me in the back of the Police car and talked with me for a few minutes. When they released me there was an even bigger crowd there waiting to see what was going on. I stood up on my stool to address them but first looked over to the office and said, "Can I preach now?" He said, "You can preach whatever you want without your microphone." So I preached the Law, sin, righteousness, judgment, and offered them Christ. A vendor came and complained to the cops and then to me. I told him that I had just as much of a right to preach as he

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had to sell but that I will keep him in mind while I'm preaching and that I had only been there a total of ten minutes and won't be there too much longer.

The cop pulled me aside and said I can't preach anymore because someone complained. I attempted to reason with the Officer by saying that we have the first Amendment because not everyone agrees with each other. I said, "If I have a crowd of thirty people that are interested in hearing me, and one man complains, I have no more right to speak?" He said, "Correct, your bothering people." I asked the crowd if they were bothered by what I was doing. Many in the crowd said "NO" and not a single person said "Yes." That's when they put the hand cuffs on me which gave me marks for two days and put me in the back of the Police car. The officer went around the area for about ten minutes talking to people to try to get as many complaints as possible. When he returned he told me that nobody wanted to leave their information in order to complain. Finally, the cop said, "Look, we don't want to arrest you. We will release you *if* you promise not to preach." I said "Officer, it is 2:44pm right now. If you release me then by God's good grace, I'll be preaching again in public by 3:00pm." He said, "Then your going to jail." I said, "I would rather go to jail then to forfeit my right of freedom of speech. I would rather go to jail even for the rest of my life then to deny my Lord who commanded that I preach." He brought me to jail where I was able to witness to a young man in the cell with me named Jeff. He seemed touch. Eventually I was taken out of the cell and was told that I was going to be released. I requested another ten minutes behind bars so I could finish witnessing. They were kind enough to grant me the favor.

Of course the cops claimed that I was not "arrested for the gospel" but in reality, the only thing I was doing was preaching the gospel. I was doing nothing more and nothing less. The case did not hold up in court and was immediately dismissed, no questions asked. The prosecutor didn't want to touch the case and told me, "You need to tell the Police that you have First

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Amendment Rights.” I told the prosecutor, “I did tell them that. I think you need to tell them.”

I think I did good going two years of open-air preaching on the streets without getting arrested. John the Baptist lasted only six months. A fellow open-air preacher told me, "You're not really apart of the club until you've been arrested."

We must remember the encouraging words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who said, “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” (Matthew 5:11-12)

“I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience.” John Bunyan

Chapter Thirty Four

Two Days and One Night in Jail for Jesus

Krista: “I had a day dream today that you went to jail!”

Jesse: “Did you really?”

Krista: “Yes!”

Jesse: “Well, what happened?”

Krista: “You were arrested and brought to jail. You had an option of either paying to get out or staying in jail, and you choose to stay in jail so you could minister. And a lot of people got saved.”

Jesse: “Hmm... That’s a weird day dream. Don’t worry about it Krista.”⁹⁷

That was a conversation I had with Krista, the woman of God I am courting, three hours before I was arrested and brought to jail.

To the glory of God, I spent two days and one night in jail ministering to roughly sixty inmates with great success. It all started when I went to a local Junior College area to preach the gospel. I prayed from my home to the campus that the Lord would give me His heart and His compassion for these people and that my ministry would be just as His ministry. I was planning on preaching around the campus as the administration of the campus said I could. I did the smart thing and found the cops as soon as I arrived. I asked them if they would bother me if I preach outside the campus. They made a call and told me I can’t preach on the surrounding sidewalks but that I could preach

⁹⁷ This is a dialog I had in 2005.

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from the actual streets. I thanked them very much and started looking for a nice street to preach from.

I found one spot and thought I may be able to draw a crowd there but I still wanted to know if there was a better spot. I walked on a sidewalk to another street to see if there would be more students in that section. As soon as I stepped off the sidewalk two cop cars came pulling up and said, “That’s it, we warned you to stay on the street, now you’re going to jail!” Apparently the public sidewalk was not open to the public. I didn’t even get to open my mouth once and witness to even one student and they brought me to jail. It was quite bizarre. I never wanted to break the law but only to preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When the jail processed me in and asked me if I was going to bail out, I asked, “How much is the bail.” They said “\$500.” “I think I’ll stay in jail” I told them.

In the jail I wasn’t able to preach to the college students that day but I did preach to the other inmates. I was placed in a cell with about six other guys. I stood at the door and did as the Bible tells us to and lifted up my voice as a trumpet, spared not, and told the inmates their transgressions (Isaiah 58:1). “Jesus Christ is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.” As soon as I started preaching down the hallway for all the inmates to hear, six or so guards came rushing towards me, took all the other inmates out of the cell, and slammed the metal door on me. I was in what was called. “The Drunken Cell” that was nothing but cements walls, a cement floor, and a thick metal door with no window for me to look out of. But preaching to the door, the other inmates were able to listen to me and I was told that when I preached, all the inmates would stop talking and would listen.

For roughly four hours I preached “sin, righteousness, and judgment to come” and “Christ and Him crucified.” Taking drinks of warm water helped sustain my throat the entire time. Warm water is the best. Cold water will only close your throat more. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23), “it’s appointed

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unto man once to die, after this the judgment” (Heb 9:27), “how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation” (Heb 2:3), “cleanse your hands you sinners” (James 4:8). The entire hallway listened intently as I preached. Once and awhile I would hear someone yell “Hey Reverend, Reverend!” “Yes sinner?” “What does Ps. 69 say?” “I don’t know, but I know what 1 Cor. 6:9 says. It says...” I also took a few breaks to get on my knees and pray for the inmates and the guards and also to sing songs. The disciples in the New Testament sang hymns when they were in jail and sinners were converted (Acts 16:25), so I thought I would do likewise. Though I may not have gotten all the words right, I sung it with all my heart.

“What can take away my sins?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
What can make me born-again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
Oh precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow
No other fount I know
Nothing but the blood of Jesus”

There is nothing like singing hymns while you are in jail for serving the Lord! I almost with every Christian could experience it.

The guards did not like my preaching and singing in the cell. They played music and a vacuum to try to drown me out. When that was not successful, they tried threats. They entered my cell and put me up against the wall and said, “You are not going to be preaching anymore.” I said, “Yes I am.” They said, “We have ways of making you stop.” I said, “Let’s see them.” They both looked at each other and left my cell.

When they came back, they gave me an orange jump suit to wear. Then they placed me in a cell with about 20 other inmates. The inmates warmly welcomed me in and said, “Are you the preacher?” I said, “Yes I am.” They said, “We are the

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cigarette sucking sinners.” I said, “Nice to meet you.” And I got to witness to them one-on-one. When I started talking to one of them, they all would quite down and listen. They had a respect for me and a fear of God and reverence for the scriptures. Their faces lit up as I told my testimony and talked about the new-birth. After I stopped I looked around, one guy said, “Wow, you can keep talking like that!” with a huge smile on his face and a glow in his eyes. Certain inmates would sit and talk very seriously with me about their sins, the state of their hearts, and their eternal destiny. Many seemed to be greatly impacted and disturbed.

There was also a Christian brother in there that had a New Testament that I was able to fellowship with. I opened his Bible and the first thing I read was “the prisoner of Jesus Christ” in Eph. 3:1, which I thought was rather interesting.

They then moved me to a small cell for the evening. I did not sleep much that night. It was hard because there was nothing but a toilet, a cement floor, and a long wooden bench. There were so many inmates in each cell sitting on the bench, the only place to lie would be the filthy floor.

The guards who did not like me because of my preaching had put me in this cell with high-risk inmates. I was talking to one man who has been in jail for sixteen years, and he once was on trial for capital murder. There were two other inmates who are finishing up a five-year sentence, one man just starting a five-year sentence, one inmate just starting a four-year sentence. “So what did you do man?” “Well, I was walking on a sidewalk trying to find a place to preach the gospel.”

When I asked the guard if I would see the judge today he said I was not on the list. I asked when I would see the judge and they said “Probably in five months,” with a completely serious look on his face! I thought maybe I’d have to spend the weekend and see the judge on Monday, but I decided I would rather bail out and get a court date. Now the guards wouldn’t let me bail out! They either ignored me or would say they would look into it and then never do anything. When I asked one guard if I could bail

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out now he said, “Ha ha, very funny.” I said, “What’s so funny about that?” He said, “You just transferred in from _____ prison and you all are about to transfer back out again.” He thought I was one of those high risk inmates pretending like I had the right to bail out!

The guards kept ignoring my request to bail out and now were threatening to transfer me to a prison for five months! I suppose this is what the guards the day before meant when they said they had “ways” of shutting me up. I figured if I wanted these guards to pay any serious attention to me I just need to start preaching again. I didn’t know what else to do so that is what I did. I started preaching and the guards tried to get me to shut up but I wouldn’t, so the Sergeant came over.

I spoke to the Sergeant and told her that I was only there on a trespassing charge from the day before and would like to bail out now. She said, “What are you talking about trespassing charge? You’re not here on a trespassing charge. You all just got transferred in from prison and are all about to be transferred back to prison again.” I said, “No, I just got arrested for walking on a sidewalk looking for a place to preach yesterday.” She said, “Then why are you in that orange jump suit? Why are you in that cell with all those other inmates?” “I don’t know. This is where they put me yesterday!” The Sergeant said, “What is your name?” I said, “Jesse Morrell.” She said, “Hold on, let me look into this.”

She looked into it and came back very quickly and pulled me out of that cell really fast! “I don’t know why you were in that cell. Why aren’t you in your normal clothing; why are you in that orange jump suit?” She asked, obviously indicating that the shift the day before did not follow protocol. “I don’t know, this is what they put me in yesterday” I said. She said, “Make your phone call and bail yourself out.” I called the Christian Ministry Bail Bondsmen and they said they will bail me out for \$140 and all I need is a co-signer. The only name I could find in the phone book was my local friend David Ravenhill, who willingly came and co-signed me out.

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On the car ride home David told me how his father Leonard Ravenhill used to get arrested for street preaching in the streets of England because he would draw such large crowds it would block the flow of traffic. Then Leonard would stand before the judge and warn the judge, "One day you will have your day in court and will have to stand before the Judge of judges."

This is from the article I wrote called, "Power in Preaching: Unveiling the Fire:"

"Don't let anyone tell you otherwise, if there is going to be power in our preaching, then there is going to be persecution in our lives. When you assault the devil's territory he will retaliate hastily against you. That is to be expected if we go the way of our Lord. Many times in our society the sinners that are accepted are the ones who should be arrested, while the preachers who are arrested are the ones that should be accepted. The more our ministries become like the ministry of Jesus, the more our suffering will be like the suffering of Jesus. If Jesus was just another Mr. Rogers type character in the world and merely went around telling everyone, "I love you," He would never have been as hated, rejected, and tortured as He was. If we are to be as powerful in our preaching as Jesus was in His preaching, then we must learn to minister as He did. And what did he do? He said Himself, "The world ... me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." (John 7:7). Who does that today and still has the stamp of approve by the world? There are those who profess to love Jesus and faithfully go to church week after week that treat holiness as if it were a sin, and treat sin as if it was the normal Christian life. How can they tell the world that its works are evil when they themselves are evil? No one can minister as Jesus did until they become as Jesus was. Jesus "loved righteousness, and hated lawlessness" (Heb. 1:9) and if you hate lawlessness then the lawless will hate you."

This much I know, the gospel must be preached. Not only must we preach the gospel because we would be in direct

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disobedience to God if we didn't and that is sin, but because the world is dying and going to hell and we have the message that can save them for all eternity. This mission is of the utmost importance! Any obstacle must be overcome. Any fear must be forgotten. Any desire to preserve our own lives must be entirely abandoned. There is a dying world out there that needs Jesus Christ and how can they hear without a preacher (Rom. 10:14)? Do we want the world to have faith? Well, faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17)! If you are not willing to die for the gospel, I would dare to say you know nothing about the gospel. Brethren, those of you who love God and love your neighbor, **PREACH** the gospel to every creature!!

“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” Acts 5:41-42

*“He is the best orator who can turn men’s ears into eyes.”
Arabian Proverb*

Chapter Thirty Five

Wisdom in Witnessing and Points for Preaching

I. The Art Form of Preaching

We must first recognize that open-air preaching is an acquired skill as opposed to being a supernatural gift. That notion that preaching is a “gift” is in fact a great myth-conception. “He who wins souls is wise” (Prov. 11:30), yet some view soul winning as though it said, “He who wins souls is gifted.” Public speaking may come more naturally to some and seem quite fearful to others. Open-air preaching will not be easy for everyone who is supposed to do it. Once we view preaching as a skill we can learn to improve our skills to better present the gospel to the lost. It’s been said that “the worst tragedy of your life would be if you step on the stage of history and can’t remember your lines.” This is our chance and our time to make an eternal impact for the King of Heaven. My prayer is that we all be well equipped for the war that is in front of us. May this help feather your arrows and sharpen your axes.

II. Passionate, Fiery Preaching

History has shown that people will listen to anybody talk about anything so long as it is said with passion. Even a wicked man like Hitler had a massive following that believed his lies because he spoke with passion. If you want others to believe you, you must first believe yourself. The Israelites followed “fire by night” (Ex 13:22) and in this dark hour we need our lamps to

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shine the brightest in order to lead the multitudes out of bondage and into the Promised Land.

C. H. Spurgeon said, “If I were asked – What in a Christian minister is the most essential quality for securing success in winning souls for Christ? I should reply, ‘earnestness.’ And if I were asked a second or a third time, I should not vary that answer, for personal observation drives me to the conclusion that, as a rule, real success is proportionate to the preacher’s earnestness. Both great men and little men succeed if they are thoroughly alive unto God, and fail if they are not so...”⁹⁸

Spurgeon said, “In many instances ministerial success is traceable almost entirely to an intense zeal, a consuming passion for souls, and an eager enthusiasm in the cause of God, and we believe that in every case, other things being equal, men prosper in the divine service in proportion as their hearts are blazing with holy love. ‘The God that answers by fire, let him be God’; and the man who has a tongue of fire, let him be God’s minister.”⁹⁹

This one characteristic of earnestness, zeal, and passion was so important and valued by this master orator that he went on to say “No man who preaches the gospel without zeal is sent from God to preach at all.”¹⁰⁰

As a general rule, monotone preaching is not very moving preaching. You will sooner see a row boat tugging an ocean liner or a go-cart toying a Mac truck before you see a monotone preacher persuading those who are dead in their sins towards repentance. Fire begets fire. Passionate preachers will create passionate converts. Preaching that is cold and dry will typically not create hearts that are ablaze for the Lord. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29)

⁹⁸ “Lectures to My Students,” p. 339

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 308, 310

¹⁰⁰ “The Evidence Bible,” compiled by Ray Comfort, p. 1409

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If passion and urgency belong anywhere at all, they belong in preaching repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ. If men can be passionate about earthly things, how much more can we be passionate about eternal things?

Dr. Michael Brown said, “Here is an overwhelming truth. Every human being will experience either eternal life or eternal loss, eternal peace or eternal pain, eternal blessing or eternal burning.”¹⁰¹

Oh! That we may preach as though we truly believed this! May the lost see the seriousness in our eyes and hear the urgency in our voices. Jeremiah spoke with tears in his eyes and fire in his words. “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But *his word* was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not *stay*” (Jer. 20:9).

Charles G. Finney said, “Go to a sinner, and talk to him about his guilt and danger; and if in your manner you make an impression that does not correspond, you in effect bear testimony the other way, and tell him he is in no danger. If the sinner believes at all that he is in danger of hell, it is wholly on other grounds than you saying so. If you live in such a way as to show that you do not feel compassion for sinners around you; if you show no tenderness, by your eyes, your features, your voice, if your manner is not solemn and earnest, how can they believe you are sincere?”¹⁰²

A preacher once asked a successful actor how it was that he was able to attract multitudes of people to watch him perform, while he was struggling to get crowds to hear him preach. The actor responded with something to the effect of, “I present artificial stories as though they were real, while you present real stories as though they were artificial.”

¹⁰¹ “The End of the American Gospel Enterprise,” p. 58

¹⁰² “Revivals of Religion,” p. 148

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III. Be A Story-Teller

A good preacher is a good story teller. While people may not remember the words they heard, they will remember the images and pictures that they imagined. We must aim to bring people through an experience of the imagination rather than merely having them receive intellectual information. We want the message to be felt, not merely heard. We do this through using illustrations that will engage their imagination.

A. W. Tozer said, “The value of a cleansed imagination in the sphere of religion lies in its power to perceive in natural things shadows of things spiritual. It enables the reverent man to ‘see the world in a grain of sand...and eternity in an hour.’”¹⁰³

C. S. Lewis said, “All our truth, or all but a few fragments, is won by metaphor.”¹⁰⁴

The Master of Metaphors, Christ Jesus, taught with what I call “profound simplicity” so that both children and theologians could say “I get it.” Christ was profoundly simple and therefore he was simply profound. He spoke about the birds of the air, the grass of the ground, the trees of the woods, the fields of the land, the seeds of the farmers, the vines of vineyards, and pulled out divine truth from ordinary objects.

Oswald Chambers said, “Learn to associate ideas worthy of God with all that happens in nature - the sunrises and the sunsets, the sun and the stars, the changing seasons, and your imagination will never be at the mercy of your impulses, but will always be at the service of God.”¹⁰⁵

While ministering on a beach you may say, “Living in sin is like swimming in the ocean. It certainly is fun, but it wears on you through time. You can’t swim forever! If you try you will

¹⁰³ “Born after Midnight” page 92-95

¹⁰⁴ “Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language” by Sallie McFague, p. 201

¹⁰⁵ “Preaching and Teaching with imagination,” by Warren W. Wiersbe, p.

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certainly die. You need to get onto dry land and be restored in strength. True repentance is just that. Turning away from sin and to the solid rock of Jesus Christ because you know that if continue to swim in sin you will die.” Or you can say something like, “God’s grace is not simply sun-tan lotion to keep you from getting burned when you play under the sun of sin. God’s grace is like a full grown tree providing shadow for those weary of being beaten by the scourging rays of sin.”

When preaching on a college campus you may say, “God will not ‘grade on the curve’ and there is no way that you can skip the Final Exam that He gives.”

When you are arrested for preaching and are brought before the courts, ask the judge if he is ready to stand in The Court Room of the Judge of Judges.

If ministering to those waiting outside a court house to get in, put it in terms they will understand. “One day you will have to answer in God’s courthouse for the crimes you’ve committed against Him. In that Day your conscience will be the witnessing, the Law will be the merciless prosecutor, God will sit as Judge, but Christ can be your advocate if you’d have Him.” Take something that people know in order to teach them something that they don’t know.

Warren W. Wiersbe said, “It’s by using metaphorical language that you turn people’s ears into eyes and help them see the truth.”¹⁰⁶

Use your words to take sinners on a tour of hell. Let them see the souls in tormenting flames crying out in continual pain and eternal agony. Let them smell the burning flesh and the burning sulfur. Let them feel the great and terrible horror of God’s true and righteous judgments. Then take them on a tour of Heaven to see all the wonders and glories of God. Let them hear the praises of the heavenly hosts. Let them see the glorious and victorious Lamb that was slain; to see the precious red blood that

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 42

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was spilt for them. Let them feel the peace of God's prepared resting place for all His Saints.

God is an artist. We are his brushes. Words are His paint. Hearts and minds are His canvases. And His desire is to paint a masterpiece!

IV. Preach Life from Your Own Life

A testimony is a powerful weapon in the hands of a witness. As the saying goes, "A man with an experience is not at the mercy of a man with an argument." Who can argue with your personal testimony? Who can tell you what you did or did not experience? What is a witness if he is not someone who testifies to that which he has seen and heard? It is of such high importance that we use our testimonies when testifying that the Bible mentions it multiple times and God is typically not one to repeat himself! "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). "For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard" (Acts 22:15), "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Rev. 12:11).

I would recommend telling the crowd your testimony, even if it is brief, as soon as possible. This can lay the firm foundation of rapport for the rest of your message and will also serve by shattering any "holier than thou" misconceptions that they might have. Give people water to drink out of the wells of personal experience. Certainly some will have deeper wells to draw from than others but all should have water that can be pulled from them just the same.

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V. To Know What To Preach, Know To Whom You Preach

We must know our audience if we are going to preach to our audience. The crowds are quite different if you are preaching on a college campus or if you are preaching in front of a bar. What will stir up people in one place will fall on deaf ears in another.

The words of your preaching needs to match the lives of your hearers. You find out where the people are in order to know where to take them. If we are going to preach against the sins of the people, we need to know what their prevalent sins are. On a college campus you may attack sexual immorality and humanistic philosophies, while in the downtown areas late on a Saturday night you would attack the sin of drunkenness. If people are to be personally convicted for their sins, we must not be afraid to preach against their personal sins. This is the way that we need to be “relevant” to our audience.

One dark night I was walking to my car to drive home as I got my keys out of my pocket. When I put my key into the car door I found that it wouldn't turn. I struggled and struggled to make it turn, remembering that sometimes it gets stuck. No matter how hard I tried, it wouldn't turn. Rather than breaking the key in the door I stopped and took a step back to try to figure out what I was going to do. As I stepped back and looked at the car I realized the problem - it was the wrong car! It was the right key, just the wrong car. But in order to notice it was the wrong car I needed to step back. Many preachers do the same thing as they walk into the pulpit or stand up on a street corner. They don't step back and take a look at the crowd so they too often are preaching the right words to the wrong crowd and then get frustrated when they fail to get the result they wanted.

While preaching in Daytona during a college Spring Break I realized that I needed to adjust my message. The typical message that I would preach in a normal park would not grab the attention of those there who were so focused on sin. I would have merely been a single buzzing fly in the midst of a jungle full of

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animals. Taking a step back and looking at those I was trying to preach to, I fitted my message to fit their lives. Everyone was walking around with alcohol, men had cameras to film sin, and women were wearing what some were scarcely call and others would dare to call clothing. “People, put your alcohol down! Men, put your camera’s down. Women, put your clothes on! The wages of sin is death! Turn to God and live!” It wasn’t until we fitted our message to the audience that we got a reaction out of the audience because the bullets were hitting the bulls eye as the words were now hitting home. Peter did this when he said “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole.” (Acts 4:10).

To captivate the attention of our calloused society and pierce their hearts with the conviction of sin we must not merely preach to sinners but we must preach at them. That is the Bible example or model we see from the prophets, Jesus Christ, and the Apostles.

When Stephen preached in the open air, and was full of the Holy Ghost, and brought conviction of sin to his audience, this is what he said, “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*” (Acts 7:51-53).

Charles Finney said, “Bring up the individual’s particular sins. Talking in general terms against sin will produce no results. You must make a man feel that you mean him. A minister, who cannot make his hearers feel that he means them, cannot expect to accomplish much. Some people are very careful to avoid mentioning the particular sins of which they know the individual to be guilty, for fear of hurting his feelings. This is wrong. If you

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know his history, bring up his particular sins. Kindly, but plainly; not to give offense, but to awaken conscience, and give full force to the truth.”¹⁰⁷

This revivalist goes on to say “Preaching should be direct. The gospel should be preached to men, not about them. The Minister must address his hearers. He must preach to them about themselves, and not leave the impression that he is preaching to them about others, He will never do them any good, further than he succeeds in convincing each individual that he is the person in question.”¹⁰⁸

Billy Sunday said, “The law tells me how crooked I am. Grace comes along and straightens me out.”¹⁰⁹

VI. God’s Word, not our words, never returns void

While preaching the gospel, quote the bible as much as possible even if the audience doesn’t know you are preaching scriptures. Nothing that we can say will be more powerful than what God has already said. We must take the time to remember the scriptures that will be relevant to those who are living in sin. Scriptures that are perfect would be: “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23), “God calls all men everywhere to repent because He has appointed a Day when He will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:30-31), “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3), “God demonstrated His love towards us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8), “unless a man is born-again, he will by no means see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Fill your heart to the full with the Words of God so when you go to preach, they will flow out of you rather than being forced out of you. “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (Joh 7:38)

¹⁰⁷ “Revivals of Religion” p. 166

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 206

¹⁰⁹ The Westminster Collection of Christian Quotations by Martin H. Manser, p. 153

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VII. Go for the Jugular

It can be very easy to run off on a rabbit trail answering an objection. Never lose sight of what our mission truly is.

Warren W. Wiersbe reminds us “As we walk down the middle of the broad road, we meet lost people face to face; and our task as witnesses is to warn them that the map they’re using is all wrong and the destination they’re heading for is named destruction.”¹¹⁰

Go for the real issue, seek to solve the serious problem, and be “determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2)

Use every effort to turn every single answer to an objection back around to the message of repentance. If a man says that the bible is not true, reason with him as to why the bible is true. Then say “because the bible is true, then it is true that God is calling you to repent. You must do that today.” If someone says “Science disproves the bible”. Answer their objection and say “so because science confirms the bible, you need to obey the bible and repent.” While it is good to be on the defense at times, defending the faith, we must also learn how to switch it back over to the offense, over turning every stone until we come upon the snake of sin to kill it. Remember that it is God who is true, and every man a liar. (Ro. 3:4) It is the sinner that must be on the defense. He should either be defending his sin from the Spirits attacks or surrender the fight, yielding his life wholly to God.

The aim, the goal, the desired result by both Christians and Christ is a spiritual conversion, not merely a spiritual conversation. If you have thoroughly explained both “the goodness and severity of God” (Rom 11:22) then do not be afraid to stress immediate repentance. Our main objective is simple and clear: “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations.”(Luke 24:27). All down through the New

¹¹⁰ “Preaching and Teaching with imagination” by Warren W. Wiersbe, p. 285

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Testament we are told that they preached repentance. John the Baptist: "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matt 3:1-2.) Jesus: "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mt 4:17) and "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." (Lu 13:3) Peter: "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord," (Ac 3:19) "Then Peter said to them, "Repent" (Ac 2:38) Paul: "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent," (Ac 17:30) James: "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." (Jas 4:8) And all the disciples: "So they went out and preached that people should repent." (Mr 6:12). Is this message foreign to many of our preachers?

Leonard Ravenhill said, "The evangelists today are very often prepared to be anything to anybody as long as they can get somebody to the altar for something."¹¹¹

We must preach one message: "Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mr 1:15)

VIII. You don't belong in a box! And neither does God.

There was a time that I become so dependant upon all the equipment that I brought out to help me with open-air preaching. I started feeling as though I couldn't preach if I didn't have my microphone with easel and displays. Yet no one in the early church had any of those things, they didn't even have a bible to carry in their hands but they did have the Word in their hearts! I stood up to preach at a bus stop once and I heard a women say with horror in her voice "Oh no! Not him again! He always says the same things!" I put myself in a box that God never intended

¹¹¹ "Why Revival Tarries" p. 58

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for me to be in. Don't be afraid to break out of your box. Once when I was preaching someone yelled out: "let him who is without sin cast the first stone". My canned response was "I am not throwing stones; I am throwing a rope to save those drowning in sin." However rather than saying what I always say, I said "who is without sin? God is without sin and He has ten stones which He will one day throw. Those ten stones are his Ten Commandments etc etc."

Martyn Lloyd-Jones said "We are not going to fight this modern battle successfully by repeating the sermons of the Puritans verbatim, or adopting their classifications and subdivisions, and their manner of preaching. That would be futile. We must learn to hold on to the old principles but we must apply them, and use them, in a manner that is up-to-date... The moment that we become slaves to any system – I do not care how good it was in it's age and generation – we are already defeated, because we have missed this whole principal of adaptability."¹¹²

We must witnessing using solid biblical principles, and be careful of falling into a set pattern of witnessing. Each individual is different, and yet each individual is the same. They all have the same problem: death and hell without Christ. Though a set pattern will not reach everyone, set principles such as Law before grace will.

IX. Humor and Entertainment

While it would be great if we could simply preach a 20 minute message out there on the streets to an attentive audience, it typically won't work that way. Normally those on the streets are rather busy in their own lives, and it will take more then the average sermon to break them out of that. We must be entertaining. Even the prophets had to do out-of-the-norm acts to get peoples attention. Isaiah walked around barefoot, Ezekiel laid on his side, Jeremiah walked around with a yoke, John the Baptist

¹¹² "The Christian Soldier" by Martyn Lloyd-Jones, pg. 290-291

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was quite the spectacle himself wearing camel's fur, a leather girdle, and eating bugs. However, we don't always have to be "strange" to captive people's attention. Some people are rather humorous; don't be afraid to use your humor for the Lord. Some people are musically talented; use your talent to draw a crowd. What is your gifting and talents? Don't be afraid to be creative.

We also must remember that we are called to preach the gospel, not entertain people or make them laugh. While entertainment and humor has its place, we must always be aware that we can entertain people and make them laugh even while they are on their way to hell. That is not doing a bit of good. We are to be much more than just another street entertainer, we are called to be preachers of the Gospel!

X. We must be Engaging to Keep the Crowd

While many people won't stop to listen to a 20 minute sermon, many will stop if you are having a dialog back and forth with someone. While you're preaching, ask questions and then pause to give someone walking by a chance to answer. "How many of you are out here to get drunk tonight?" as a crowd walking by starts to cheer. "But the bible says no drunkard will inherit eternal life. You guys are in big trouble. What are you going to do on Judgment Day?"

Be as inviting as you can for people to ask questions. Let them know that you want to dialog. You can say certain things that will stir up a potential heckler like "I just can not believe why a logical, reasonable person wouldn't believe and live by the bible, it's just so foolish not to" or "Does anyone here not believe in what I am saying?" Don't be afraid to stir up a heckler. If you want to keep your crowd, you must connect with the crowd. Preach until you get a heckler, and use your heckler until you get a crowd. Then preach the Law until they are wounded, and then grace until they are healed.

While preaching at an "Earth Day" the only response I got from the crowd was strange stares, but no crowd. I studied

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the audience and saw a man dressed up as a Wizard with a hat, cape, and staff. As he was walking by I said “Wizards, witches, and warlocks God will judge” which got his attention really quick. He stopped and started heckling me which created quite a scene. Groups of people stopped, some sat in the grass, to see the man with a bible and the man dressed as a wizard verbally battle back and forth. Through that one heckler I was able to secure an engaging crowd that lasted for quite some time.

XI. To Preach the Gospel, You must live the Gospel

There is a true story of a well known preacher when he was young. The young man who just recently decided to be a preacher said to his Pastor “I’ve decided that I’m not going to preach anything that I am not living first.” The Pastor, after his many years of experience said “Then you’re not going to have many sermons.” The young man a bit stunned from his pastors response quickly thought about it and said “Well, at least they’ll all be good!”

Andrew Bonar said of Robert Murray M’Cheyne “from the first he fed others by what he himself was feeding upon. His preaching was in a manner the development of his soul’s experience. It was a giving out of the inward life. He loved to come up from the pastures wherein the Chief of Shepherds had met him- to lead the flock entrusted to his care to the spots where he found nourishment...His heart was filled, and his lips then spoke what he felt within his heart. He gave out not merely living water, but living water drawn at the springs that he had himself drunk of, and is not this true gospel ministry?”¹¹³

If you are to preach repentance, you must be walking in repentance. If you are to preach the gospel, you must be living the gospel. This is not an option; it is a direct order from God. “Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.” (1 Co 9:14). A river never

¹¹³ “Memoir and Remains” by Andrew A. Bonar, pg. 36, 40

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raises higher than its source. You can not expect others to live holy if you yourself are not. Civilians are not likely to keep the Laws that they see the government officials breaking.

Do you see a man who is battling with temptation? Then you see a man who is just like the Lord, who was Himself tempted yet without sin. (Heb 4:15). Do you see a man battling against sin? Then you see a man fighting a good fight, in fact you see a man fighting the most serious battle of all time. Some do not feel qualified to preach the gospel. And some truly are not qualified to preach the gospel. But the man who battles against sin is precisely the type of man who is qualified to preach open-air. So long as you are battling against sin and not surrendered to it, you can go out and recruit others to do battle against it as well.

John Wesley, one of history's most successful open-air preachers, wrote in his Journal "I was much buffeted with temptation; but cried out and they fled away... and herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law as well as under grace. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror."¹¹⁴

XII. Prayer; most power and yet most neglected weapon

The area of most vital importance seems to be the area most are weakest in. Prayer is our most dangerous weapon in this battle, and yet seems to be the most neglected weapon as well. If you are not willing to pray, then neither should you be willing to preach. I charge you prayer-less Christian, if you any love for the lost then pray for the lost. Do you suppose to win souls without praying first for them? I suppose you expect birds to fly without wings as well! We've many men who want to preach yet so little men who want to pray.

Martin Luther said "Three things make a divine: prayer, meditation, and temptation."¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ "John Wesley" by Basil Miller, p. 63

¹¹⁵ "Preacher and Prayer" by E. M. Bounds, p. 1

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Pray before you go out witnessing, while you're witnessing, and after you have witnessed. It is not the public ministries of the showmen that change the world but it is the private prayers of the saints that does.

Samuel Chadwick said, "Satan dreads nothing but prayer. The Church that lost its Christ was full of good works. Activities are multiplied that meditation may be ousted, and organizations are increased that prayer may have no chance. Souls may be lost in good works, as surely as in evil ways. The one concern of the devil is to keep Saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayer-less studies, prayer-less work, prayer-less religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray."¹¹⁶

William Cowper said, "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees."¹¹⁷

Is there a greater service to God and all of mankind than prayer? Prayer-less preaching is damaging preaching because you will be hardening the hearts of sinners and their condemnation will be worse on Judgment Day. Continually rub a dull knife on your hand and you will callous your skin instead of puncture it. But if you sharpen that knife it will slice the skin. If we ever hope to pierce the hard calloused hearts of sinners with conviction and see them converted rather than left in a worst state, we must sharpen our words through prayer until our words are sharper than a two edged sword.

Prayer serves as our reinforcements in this end time siege for souls. It must be our last resort as well as our first! Is there no power in your preaching? I may safely assume that there is no praying in your preaching either! Wherever our preaching goes, there also our praying should go. As a faithful follower and as a trust worthy friend our prayers must do the work of preparation and the work of follow-up.

¹¹⁶ "The Possibilities of Prayer" by E. M. Bounds

¹¹⁷ Olney Hymns: What Various Hindrances We Meet

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A Christian cannot live anymore without prayer than a man can live without breathing. And when we see those around us dead in their sins, prayer is a spiritual “mouth to mouth” which breaths back into the dead the living breath of God in order to resurrect, restore, and revive them again to life.

John Wesley said “For if all your arguments and persuasive fail, there is yet another remedy left, and one that is frequently found effectual when no other method avails. This is prayer.”¹¹⁸

Oh that we preachers might say “we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).

XIII. Love As Christ Loved

Finally, we must love those to whom we minister. We must not merely say we love them, we must show that we love them. Love them enough to make yourself a fool. Have compassion enough to convict them of sin. “Open rebuke is better than secret love” (Prov. 27:5). Many in our day wrongfully mistake being “friendly” or “nice” as love. And because they do not want to ruin a friendship or ruin their image of being nice, they will not rebuke men for their rebellion against God. This is very unloving! Do you love God and the lost enough to be cast away by men that they may draw near to God? If you care about the man, you must warn the man to “flee from the wrath to come” (Mat 3:7).

Walter Russell Bowie said “The Christian Church does not need more popular preaching, but more unpopular preaching.”¹¹⁹

O. S. Hawkins wrote, “Many modern appeals are superficial or designed to make hearers feel good. Some churches even rejoice in the fact that people can attend their services without being made to feel guilty about their lifestyles, whatever

¹¹⁸ “E M Bounds on Prayer,” p. 194

¹¹⁹ “Preaching and Teaching with Imagination” by Warren W. Wiersbe, p. 178

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it may be. Simon Peter's appeal did not have that effect. It cut and pierced his hearers to the heart. Perhaps that is the reason 3,000 were saved and baptized that day, but also the reason one out of four churches in today's greatest missionary-sending denomination cannot even baptize one new convert in an entire year!... Conviction always proceeds conversion."¹²⁰

We must remember that those whom we are preaching too are the very ones for whom Christ died. We must love them as He loves them. And in the ministry of Jesus Christ we see Him calling sinners to repentance, warning them about hell-fire, and rebuking those who remained impenitent. We need to follow the example of Jesus in loving sinners.

Street preacher Gerald Sutek wrote, "Though I preach on the streets of Harlem with a tongue of courage and fire and have not love, I am become a blaring boom box or a noisy muffler. And though I have the gift of voice and can rattle windows and anger shoppers three blocks away, and though I preach coarse and brash so that no person would dare approach me, and have not love, I am nothing. And though they spit at me and curse me and arrest me for disobeying a police officer, and though I may resist unto blood striving against sin, and have not love, it profits me nothing."¹²¹

So now, when you go out into the world to preach the gospel, remember to yourself "I am now on the stage of history." The question is, will you remember your lines?

¹²⁰ "Drawing the Net," by O. S. Hawkins, p. 34

¹²¹ "I am not Ashamed" by Gerald Sutek, p. 132

“Another of these false views of Christ is that which presents Him as a future deliverer, without being a present Saviour. It is to be feared that thousands are looking to Him to save them from the consequences of sin--that is, hell, who continue to commit sins; they utterly misunderstand the aim and work of the Christ of God.”
Catherine Booth

Chapter Thirty Six *Why I Won't Preach*

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” Acts 5:42

The surest way to receive the criticism of the public is to put yourself in the eye of the public. No matter whom you are, what you do, how you do it, or why you do it, there will always be someone, somewhere, who doesn't like it, for some reason. These criticisms can catch you off guard, come from all sides, and can cut sharper than a razor. But the preacher of God must be one who does not need the encouragements of men but only encouragements from his Master. The man who finds his strength in the Lord and not in the church or in the world will be a man that hell itself cannot shake or silence.

With much criticism coming from every side, fighting without and fighting within, I have firmly made up my mind that I will not preach...

I will not preach:

- I. Another Jesus
- II. Another Gospel
- III. A Message Void of Hell
- IV. A Message Void of Repentance
- V. A Message Full of False Peace

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VI. Anything except the Word of God

I. Why I will not preach another Jesus, the popular Jesus, the soft and sentimental Jesus:

Today there is another Jesus being preached which is different than the Jesus the Bible speaks of. There is a Jesus who is merely waiting to comfort and hug sinners in their sin. This Jesus does not require repentance, does not threaten with hell, is never angry with sinners, and does nothing but accept them as they are. And this Jesus is not the Jesus of the Bible.

T-Shirts sold in Christian stores today read: "Jesus Is My Homeboy" but the Jesus of the Bible is your Lord, Savior, and Judge. It is not this new smiling Jesus which needs to be preached. The Jesus that needs to be preached is the Jesus who commands men to repent (Matt 4:17), who does not accept sinners as they are but requires they be born again (John 3:3), who taught the fear of God and warned about hell (Matt 10:28), who will judge the secrets of men's hearts (Rom 2:16), who will slay his enemies (Luke 19:27), and who saves men from their sins (Rom 6:18), transforming them into new creatures (2 Cor 5:17), if they will obey Him (Heb. 5:9). And it is this Jesus that I'm going to preach!

II. Why I will not preach another Gospel, the modern gospel, the "easy-believism" gospel:

Today there is another gospel being preached. This modern gospel saves men in their sin but not from their sin. This modern gospel, this new gospel, requires only that sinners believe but not that sinners repent. This modern gospel, this new gospel, has been fitted for sinners and forged in the pits of hell. This modern gospel has no cross but only comfort, no repentance but only remission, no persecution but only prosperity, no threats of hell but only hopes of heaven.

The gospel that must be preached today is the biblical gospel, the powerful gospel, not a neutered gospel. We need the

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sin trampling, death destroying, hell conquering gospel! We need the gospel which plucks men out of the fires of hell, out of the clutches of death, and out of the reign of sin. It is this gospel of light which is needed for this dark hour, this gospel of victory for this day of defeat, this gospel of deliverance for this day of bondage. And it is this gospel that I'm going to preach!

III. Why I will not preach a message void of hell:

Today there are many pep-you-up, happy hour, preachers. They have taken the messages of motivational speakers, edited them to add the words "God" and "Jesus," and deliver them as sermons to congregations of thousands. They have graduated from the seminary of smooth talking, intentionally removing any "rough corners" and "bumps" found in the Scriptures. With these preachers, it is not always what they say which is the problem but what they fail to say. They speak of the Savior but not of sin, of Heaven but not of hell, of forgiveness but not of repentance. And a half-gospel cannot fully save.

The messages of Jesus often warned the wicked about their eternal consequence - hell-fire. The first preacher in the Bible to coin the phrase "hell-fire" was Jesus Christ (Matt 5:22). Jesus often publicly warned that God will cast sinners into "a furnace of fire" and "outer darkness" where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 8:12, 13:42, 13:50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30, Luke 13:28). Jesus warned about the "eternal damnation" (Matt 3:29), the "damnation of hell" (Matt 23:33), and "the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29). Jesus warned about "condemnation" (John 3:19, 5:24), warned about "the wrath of God" (John 3:36), and we must do the same if we are to dare say we love the lost. And it is this hell, God's hell, Jesus' hell, that I'm going to preach!

IV. Why I will not preach a message void of repentance:

Today, the most uncommon sort of preacher in the American Church is a repentance preacher. Yet the most

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common type of preacher found in the Bible are those who firmly and boldly preached repentance. This high cost message can result in low income and so seems to be tossed out the window of the Church more concerned with it's own kingdom than the Kingdom of God. For fear of repentance becoming a stumbling block many have removed this corner stone to make the gospel a little bit more easy to accept, with less requirements and more blessings.

Repentance is foundational and fundamental to preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God that to remove this foundation and yet to continue to build is inevitably building the kingdom of this world that can never be the Kingdom of God. To remove repentance from the gospel is to so disfigure and manipulate the gospel so that it is no longer the biblical gospel at all!

The Bible records that "Jesus began to preach, and to say, repent" (Matt 4:17). This ought to be sufficient enough for us to go and do likewise. The Bible also records of His disciples that "they went out, and preached that men should repent" (Mark 6:12). Christ himself, lovingly yet boldly, twice declared, "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 13:5). It is this biblical ingredient that must not be left out of our public proclamations of the gospel. And it's a message of "turn and live" that I'm going to preach!

V. Why I will not preach a message of false peace:

Today there are thousands upon thousands who sit in Church buildings week after week, month after month, year after year, with smiles on the outside and sin on the inside. "Peace, peace" comes wonderfully flowing from the pulpit to the pews, smothering consciences with false comfort and strengthening sinners in their sins.

The false prophets in the Old Testament preached "peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). God has uncompromisingly declared, "there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21). They must be washed, cleansed,

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renewed in the blood of Jesus Christ, transformed into Saints of God, if they are ever to have God's peace and take hold of eternal life with Him. Wrath is promised to the sinful. Peace is only promised to those made holy and righteous by grace through faith.

The gospel of God is one that is sharper than any two edged sword (Heb 14:12). It is never dull but deeply penetrates the hearts and consciences of men. It awakens, startles, and transformed the lives of men. It does not rock to sleep, it does not gently pat on the back, and it does not cover without also cleansing. And it is this Word, sharper than a two edged sword, that I am going to preach!

VI. Why I will not preach anything but the Word of God:

Today popular preachers preach many things but not the full counsel of the Word of God. They get on TV, the radio, behind the pulpit, and perform with their polished personalities, speak with their refined eloquence, and declare things that the Lord has not declared. There is no famine of food or of water in America today. But there is a famine of "hearing the word of the Lord" (Amos 8:11).

It is neither personality, eloquence, brilliance, nor the abilities of men that the lost and dying world needs. But the world needs Jesus. The world needs to hear the word of the Lord. When a preacher needs to rely or depend on anything except God and His Word there is something terribly wrong with Him. God's Word is not only sufficient, but God's Word is all we need in the convicting of sinners and in the comforting of the saints. Preach the book! That's all you need. And it's that book, God's book, that this preacher is going to preach!

“You have no right to whip before you weep.”
Leonard Ravenhill

Chapter Thirty Seven

Preachers Passion: Hearts of Love and Eyes with Tears

In the day and age in which we live we have a great deal of things. Many of us have nice jobs which provide for our nice homes and our nice cars. We have lovely little churches on every corner that work tirelessly to accommodate our weekly social needs. Yet in a day of such physical prosperity, there is much spiritual bankruptcy. How many of those who go to church on Sunday are also at the club on Fridays? Let us get honest. Churches have hearts of sin and eyes of lust but I am telling you that the Lord is calling us to have hearts of love and eyes with tears!

Jesus wept over that which He loved and He weeps for us today because we are not weeping for ourselves. How can it be that our hearts are not in torments living in this mad world where the single greatest threat to an unborn child is its own parents? How do our hearts not ache over the thousands of souls who have yet come to even an understanding of the gospel? May our hearts fill with the love of God and may our eyes flow with the tears of God! May we be the open channel in which God can transform the world! I have soaked myself in many tears in public and private. Even while preaching open air I have cried in front of those perishing souls who are heading for the wrath of a Holy God. But it is going to take more! Forgive me for being the one who says it but whatever we have been doing hasn't been working.

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Charles Finney said, "The church is full of Christians who would rather spend their time in singing joyful hymns than in agonizing prayer for sinners, but they do not show such fruits as would make their example one to be imitated. Such was not the temper of the Apostles. They travailed for souls, and labored in dangers and deaths and weariness to save sinners. A deep agony for souls is more profitable than high flights of joy."¹²²

I wrote in a previous chapter:

"In the early days of the Salvation Army certain soldiers had tried everything they could and labored every way they knew how to in order to be a successful mission and save souls in the ghettos of Los Angeles until they finally were on the verge of quitting their work all together because they weren't seeing any results. They wrote a telegram to William Booth in England saying, "It just won't work. We have tried everything. The gospel is just not being received here." A couple days later William Booth wrote back just two words, "Try tears." They did and they saw God move."

Church, lets try the one thing we haven't yet tried. Let's finally do the one thing we've been avoiding. Let's try tears. Wake up! Is it possible that the only reason your own neighborhood is going to hell is because you've been sleeping when you should have been weeping? Come on, let us answer the question honestly!

Charles Finney said, "A revival may be expected when Christians have a spirit of prayer for a revival. That is, when they pray as if their hearts were set upon it. When Christians have the spirit of prayer for a revival. When they go about groaning out their hearts desire. When they have real travail of soul."¹²³

¹²² Lectures on Revivals of Religion; Instructions to Young Converts.

¹²³ Lectures on Revivals of Religion; When a Revival is to be Expected.

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A revival from God comes when the people of God pray for it. If we haven't been seeing revival is it because we haven't been praying like we ought to? The Bible promises, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14). But it also says, "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none" (Eze. 22:30).

Make sure you hear me correctly - If anyone should have secrets it's Christians. Let the hypocritical showmen do as they please parading themselves all around. They have their reward. But let us live secret lives of prayer which is known only to God (Matt. 6:6). It is the private prayers of the saints and not the public ministries of the showmen that deliver souls from death. Nothing so waters the seeds of the gospel, besides the blood of the martyrs, as the tears of praying saints. I don't believe in making promises that I can not keep and neither does God. You have God's promise that if you sow in tears, you will reap in joy (Ps. 126:5). Let's take God up on the deal.

*“Let every preacher read carefully over
the Life of David Brainerd” John Wesley*

Appendix I *David Brainerd*¹²⁴

Hebrews Chapter 11 is the hall of fame for Christians. It is tremendously moving to read about the possibilities of faith. The men listed in the hall of fame overcame remarkably huge obstacles for the glory of God by faith. Faith can move mountains and dry up rivers. Faith weakens the devil and strengthens the Christians. Faith is what makes a hero. That's why they are sometimes called the Heroes of Hebrews.

I am sure you all know who Abraham was, as well as Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Hebrews also lists men like Gideon, Samson, Moses, Samuel, and others. There are names in which we all know. There is, however, a hero of the faith that you might not know about. His name is David Brainerd. Although he is not one of the Heroes of Hebrews, he is certainly one of the Heroes of Heaven.

Leonard Ravenhill listed some of those who have been touched by the life of David Brainerd in his book, *Why Revival Tarries*. Ravenhill said, "Let's line them up: Payson, McCheyne, Carey, Edwards, Wesley, men of renown, yet all kindled by one flame, and all debtors to the sickly but supplicating Brainerd."¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Why I normally would not recommend anything from any Calvinist to anybody, I would recommend the Dairy of David Brainerd to everyone. There are some men who live better than their Calvinist theology. Men like Spurgeon, Whitefield and Brainerd were such men. I despise their theology but I admire their lives.

¹²⁵ *Why Revival Tarries* by Leonard Ravenhill

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Let's now take a look at the inspiring life of this man. David Brainerd was born April 20th, 1718 at Haddam, a town of Hartford county, Connecticut.¹²⁶ He was the third son of his parents. All together his parents had five sons and four daughters. I know of at least 3 of their sons that went into the ministry, including David Brainerd.

The work of the Spirit of God was clearly seen in the early life of Brainerd in order to bring about his conversion. Listen to this account by Brainerd himself about his childhood. "Though I daily longed for greater conviction of sin, supposing that I must see more of my dreadful state in order to receive a remedy; yet when the discoveries of my vile, hellish heart were made to me, the sight was so dreadful and showed me plainly my exposedness to damnation that I could not endure it." The Spirit of God was making the proper preparations for Brainerd's true conversion. If you yourself have had a real conversion, then you know the pains of such a birth. Just as physical birth is painful, spiritual birth is painful.

In another passage of his life and diary, Brainerd records this: "Sometimes I grew remiss and sluggish, without any great convictions of sin, for a considerable time altogether; but after such a season, convictions seized me more violently. One night I remember in particular, when I was walking solitarily abroad, I had open to me such a view of my sin that I feared the ground would cleave asunder under my feet and become my grave; and would send my soul quick alive into hell before I could get home."

Now that's incredible! He literally feared that the ground would open up and cast him into hell before he could even get home. There were nights when he would force himself to try to sleep but couldn't because of great fear of impending wrath. But then he says he would return to a "state of carnal security."

¹²⁶ I was very familiar with the places Brainerd mentioned in his journals when I read them because I was born and raised in Connecticut. That made his diary all the more impressive and impacting when I read it.

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It was July 12th, 1739 during a time of prayer in a thick grove that Brainerd had an encounter with God that changed his entire life. He received a new view of God that he never had before. A God that was wonderful and admirable. A God that was awesome and excellent. He said that way of salvation opened up to him with such infinite wisdom, suitableness, and excellency, that he wondered why he had never complied with the way of salvation before.

That was the end of his false security and the beginning of a true right standing with God. You will never convince others of their sinfulness if you are not first convinced of your own. It's no wonder a revival amongst the Indians came through him as a personal revival first occurred in his own life. I heard that D.L. Moody took a piece of chalk once and drew a circle around himself. He then prayed "Lord start a revival within this circle." Before Brainerd revived anybody, God first revived him.

Shortly after Brainerd's experience with God, he started attending Yale in New Haven.¹²⁷ He was, however, a little reluctant of going to Yale because feared that he would not lead a life of strict religion in the midst of so many temptations. If Brainerd were alive today and saw the moral bankruptcy of Yale students now, he would probably not go anywhere near the place. I've seen first hand how those students do the unthinkable and yet think nothing of it. But in his day he chose to go despite the "many temptations."

Even during his days in college he had a strong devotional life. That is what he is known for - his prayer life. During this time Brainerd writes, "Oh! One hour with God infinitely exceeds all the pleasures and delights of this lower world." If Brainerd truly believed this, that an hour spent with God is better than anything else at all, then his chief focus in life would be his devotional life. And it certainly was. He set aside days to secret

¹²⁷ As a side note, I have personally had the privilege of preaching open air at the green right next to Yale. That is where I started my ministry. It's really a blessing to me to have seen these places first hand.

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prayer and fasting. His diary records more of his prayers than anything else. What we sow in time we will reap in eternity and what we sow in eternity we will reap in time. I believe that if Brainerd was told he was not allowed to pray, he would not want to live any longer because he valued his prayer life more than anything else.

In Brainerd's third year of college he was expelled.¹²⁸ In the situation Brainerd felt he was mistreated. The spring after his expulsion he went to live with the Rev. Mills of Ripton in order to study for the ministry. During this time he frequently went and visited neighboring ministers such as Mr. Cooke of Stratford, Mr. Graham of Southbury, and Mr. Bellamy of Bethlehem.

During this time of preparation, he grew greatly spiritually. He writes how the thoughts of suffering hardships, distresses, and even death itself in order to preach the gospel gave him a sweet joy. He was willing even to be banishment from his own native land if God willed it. He said, "I felt weaned from the world and from my own reputation amongst men, willing to be despised and to be a gazing stock for the world to see."

The Lord is able to use men like this. Men who are willing to submit to the plan of God no matter how painful that plan may be. Leonard Ravenhill said, "God is looking for nobodies. God is

¹²⁸ This was written on Wikipedia: "Brainerd's life also played a role in the establishment of Princeton College and Dartmouth College. The 'College of New Jersey' (later Princeton) was founded due to the dissatisfaction of the New York and New Jersey Presbyterian Synods with Yale; their expulsion of Brainerd and subsequent refusal to readmit him was an important factor in driving individuals such as Jonathan Dickinson and Aaron Burr to act on this dissatisfaction. Indeed, classes began in Dickinson's house in May 1747, while Brainerd was recovering there. Dartmouth College originated from a school founded by Eleazar Wheelock for Native Americans and colonists in 1748, and Wheelock had been inspired by Brainerd's example of Native American education. Despite Brainerd's expulsion from Yale, the University later named a building after him (Brainerd Hall at Yale Divinity School), the only building on the campus to be named after a student who was expelled. David Brainerd Christian School was also named after him."

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looking for dead men. God is looking for men who don't want to be esteemed or thought about but will live solely to God." It is only that kind of man that God is able to use and that is precisely the type of man Brainerd was. In his eyes, everything in the world was vile and little. The only thing of importance was Christ.

During this time of growing, his desire was to be more holy and more like Christ. His continual longing was for sanctification. To serve the Lord fully you must be cut off from worldliness fully.

This is a poem Brainerd wrote during this time:

"Farewell, vain world; my soul can bid Adieu,
My Savior taught me to abandon you.
Your charms may gratify a sensual mind,
Not please a soul wholly for God's design.
Forbear to entice, cease then my soul to call:
Tis fixed through grace; my God shall be my ALL.
While He thus let's me heavenly glories view,
Your Beauties fade, my heart's no room for you."

Monday, July 19th, 1742 Brainerd writes, "My desires seem especially to be carried out after weanedness from the world, perfect deadness to it, and to be even crucified to all its allurements. My soul longs to feel itself more of a pilgrim and stranger here below; that nothing may divert me from pressing through the lonely desert, till I arrive at my Father's house."

Brainerd was having a wilderness experience that every man of God needs to experience before he enters the ministry. During this time Brainerd also learned humility. He said, "I never felt it so sweet to be nothing, and less than nothing, and to be accounted nothing." The humility in Brainerd life was a key to his ministry. Jesus promises us that if we humble ourselves then he will exalt us. I believe the only reason the name David Brainerd is so exalted among men today is because he humbled himself among men in his day. Proverbs 15:33 says, "before honor is humility." He even referred to himself in his diary as a

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dead dog and he pitied those who had to hear him preach. He wrote, "If God's people knew me, as God knows, they would not think so highly of my zeal and resolution for God, as perhaps now they do! I could not but desire they should see how heartless and irresolute I was, that they might be undeceived and 'not think of me above what they ought to think.' And yet, I thought, if they saw the utmost of my flatness and unfaithfulness, the smallness of my courage and resolution for God, they would not be ready to shut me out of their doors as unworthy of the company or friendship of Christians."

May we all learn from his humility and honesty of heart. If a man with a prayer life like his, a passion and a heart like his, and a ministry of revival like his can be humble, then how much more so should we be?

It was Thursday, July 29th 1742 that He was examined by The Association of Ministers of the Eastern District of Fairfield County, Connecticut. They granted him a license to preach the gospel so he began preaching in churches.

There was one passage in his diary that I wish I had more of an explanation on. It was Monday, September 6th, 1742. It says, "Was informed that they only waited for an opportunity to apprehend me for preaching at New Haven lately, that so they might imprison me. This made me more solemn and serious, and to quit all hopes of the world's friendship." And that's all that it says. The only explanation he gives as to why they want to imprison him was for preaching but there are no details. That passage actually brought me some comfort because I myself have had four threats of arrest in New Haven for preaching the gospel. Nothing is new that is under the sun. They actually did arrest me for street preaching in Hartford, which is Brainerd's birth place.

April 1, 1743 Brainerd rode on horse back to Kaunaumek where the Indians lived in whom he was to be a missionary. His time at Kaunaumek was hard. He had only one person there who could speak English and no fellow Christian. His diet was boiled corn and hasty pudding etc. He slept on a

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bundle of straw. And many of the people there, as far as he could tell, hated him because he came to preach. He spent most of his time in prayer and study. If I could tell every missionary only one thing it would be that 90% of their labor should be in prayer, and 10% should be in preaching. It is the private prayers of the saints and not the public ministries of the showmen that truly deliver souls from death.

He also would ride into civilization on occasion to see people. He was grieved when he did so because he would see the 'vanity of the multitude'. He would enjoy conversations with other Christians but admits that most of the time he would rather have been alone. If I could compare Brainerd to someone from the Bible, it would have to be Enoch. Enoch walked with God and not with a sinful world. As Ravenhill said, "Enoch didn't even walk with Noah." From what I can tell from Brainerd's diary, he did nothing at all besides pray, fast, study, write, preach, and whatever physical labor was required of him. If there was any time wasted in his life it doesn't seem like much.

After Brainerd labored a full year to the Kaunaumeeek Indians, they became few in number. Brainerd felt his energies might be more effective elsewhere. The Commissioners granted his request to be transferred and so he went to minister to the Delaware Indians. He was ordained and sent to the Indians at Crossweeksung where he had his most remarkable success.

During this time he would travel on horse back to minister to other Indians. He was in danger of wolves as well as freezing to death when he sometimes would get lost and had to spend all night in the woods alone. He writes, "I was afraid of nothing but sin, and afraid of that in every action and thought." His travels were even harder due to the fact that he was often terribly sick.

The focus of his preaching he said was to "set before sinners their sin and danger." He did this with compassion and tender affection with the help of God. Those preachers, who warn others of the coming destruction are the preachers who don't want others to be destroyed. There are some in our own day that accuse

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the preachers that preach strongly against sin and strongly about hell as being harsh or unloving. The truth of the matter is that it is the exact opposite. Brainerd preached against sin and about hell because of his great love for souls. God so loved the world that He sent His only Son so that none should perish. Therefore, the focus of our preaching must be so that none should perish.

Brainerd also said, "I was satisfied if not one of the Indians should be profited by my preaching but should all be damned, yet I should be accepted and rewarded as faithful." He was concerned about being faithful with the gospel, not successful as we would say. Too many preachers set out to be "successful" and if they don't get X amount of people at an altar they feel they failed. Or because they had X amount of people at the altar then they must be somebody. There is nothing farther from the truth. The prophet Jeremiah, for example, won absolutely zero converts but yet, I guarantee you, was more faithful than these fancy preachers we see on TV.

However, Brainerd was remarkably successful. A great deal of the Indians would be in tears when hearing him preach. After only speaking a few words about their souls, tear would flow freely among them producing many sobs and many groans. On one occasion there were no more than three Indians in forty that could refrain from tears and bitter cries. They would be in great distress for their souls that some could neither leave the meeting nor stand to their feet but would lay on the ground as through someone had pierced their hearts, crying out incessantly for mercy.

While John Wesley was slaying the English with the word of God, George Whitefield was slaying American colonists with the word of God, and David Brainerd was slaying the native Indians with the word of God.

In the afternoon of August 8th, 1745 David Brainerd preached to the Indians. Afterwards, when he spoke individually with those who were obviously awakened and concerned for their souls, in his own words, "the power of God seemed to descend

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upon the assembly like rushing mighty wind and with an astonishing energy bore down all before it."¹²⁹ The Indians were not "merely frightened" he said "but were made sensible of their danger, the badness of their hearts, and their misery without Christ." People would be afraid "of the anger of God" and would fall helplessly to the ground. One lady stayed there on the ground many hours and would answer no one who tried to talk with her. They would cry out in anguish of soul, Brainerd said, "Although I spoke not a word of terror."

This revival had nothing to do with words of terror. He did not cause them to cry out for mercy, God caused them to cry out for mercy. The work was entirely supernatural that he could hardly believe God used him as an instrument or his words to carry on the work. It seems not to have any connection with him at all. He wrote, "God appeared to work entirely alone." Even after he would withdraw from the meeting because of exhaustion the Indians would stay and pray for a few hours even without him there.

To finalize the conversion of the Indians, Brainerd would perform baptisms. However, He would put off the baptisms many weeks in order to see the evidence of them having had great change. He would then be able to observe their fruits and to make sure he was not doing as the Puritans would say, "Plucking unripe fruit." One of the greatest evidences that they truly had repented would be that they had stopped getting drunk.

¹²⁹ A similar experience happened during the Revivals of Charles Finney. Finney had also been inspired reading the Dairy of David Brainerd. In a town called Sodom in New York, Finney preached a sermon in which he described the moral state of the city of Sodom before God destroyed it. "I had not spoken in this strain more than a quarter of an hour," says he, "when an awful solemnity seemed to settle upon them; the congregation began to fall from their seats in every direction, and cried for mercy. If I had had a sword in each hand, I could not have cut them down as fast as they fell. Nearly the whole congregation were either on their knees or prostrate, I should think, in less than two minutes from the first shock that fell upon them. Every one prayed who was able to speak at all." Finney's Memoirs of Revival

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Tuesday, September 9th 1746 Brainerd writes, "Rode down the river near thirty miles. Was extremely weak, much fatigued, and wet with a thunderstorm. Discoursed with some warmth and closeness to some poor ignorant souls on the life and power of religion; what were, and what were not, the evidences of it. They seemed much astonished when they saw my Indians ask a blessing and give thanks at dinner; concluding that a very high evidence of grace in them; but were astonished when I insisted that neither that, nor yet secret prayer, was any sure evidence of grace. Oh, the ignorance of the world! How are some empty outward forms, that may all be entirely selfish, mistaken for true religion, infallible evidence of it! The Lord pity a deluded world!"

On the Lord's Day, May 24, Brainerd writes about true religion. "Could not but think, as I have often remarked to others, that much more of true religion consists in deep humility, brokenness of heart, and an abasing sense of barrenness and want of grace and holiness than most who are called Christians imagine; especially those who have been esteemed the converts of the late day. Many seem to know of no other religion but elevated joys and affections, arising only from some flights of imagination, or some suggestion made to their mind, of Christ being theirs, God loving them, and the like."

In another place he wrote, "Especially, I discoursed repeatedly on the nature and necessity of that humiliation, self-emptiness, or full conviction of a person's being utterly undone in himself, which is necessary in order to a saving faith, and the extreme difficulty of being brought to this; and the great danger there is of persons taking up with some self-righteous appearance of it. The danger of this I especially dwelt upon, being persuaded that multitudes perish in this hidden way; and because so little is said from most pulpits to discover any danger here; so that persons being never effectually brought to die in themselves are never truly united to Christ, and so perish."

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At one point Brainerd said that none of those whom he baptized disgraced their profession of Christianity by any ungodly actions or behavior. He was saying he knew of no backsliders at that point.

Of course He received great discouragement from some of the white folks in that area. They would tell him that the Indians were just fine as they were and didn't need to have this big fuss over Christianity. That is a lie that Christian missionaries still hear about heathen today. Others even lied to the Indians saying that Brainerd planned on selling them as slaves to England.

There were a great deal of incidences that I would be willing to preach about when souls were awakened and God manifested His presence, but now I would rather point out two keys which I believe made Brainerd successful.

Brainerd wrote what he thought was the chief cause of the most powerful awakening among the Indians. He wrote, "Nor have I ever seen so general an awakening in any assembly in my life as appeared here, while I was opening and insisting upon the Parable of the Great Supper, Luke 14. In which discourse I was enabled to set before my hearers the unsearchable riches of gospel-grace. Not that I would be understood here that I never instructed the Indians respecting their fallen state, and the sinfulness and misery of it; for this was what I at first chiefly insisted upon with them and endeavored to repeat and inculcate in almost every discourse, knowing that without this foundation I should but build upon the sand; and that it would be in vain to invite them to Christ, unless I could convince them of their need of Him, Mark 2:17. But still, this great awakening, this surprising concern, was never excited by any harangues of terror, but always appeared most remarkable when I insisted upon the compassions of a dying Savior, the plentiful provisions of the gospel, and the free offers of divine grace to the needy distressed sinners. Now would I be understood to insinuate that such a religious concern might justly be suspected as not being genuine,

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and from a divine influence, because produced by the preaching of terror; for this is perhaps God's more usual way of awakening sinners, and appears entirely agreeable to Scripture and sound reason. But what I meant here to observe is that God saw fit to employ and bless milder means for the effectual awakening of these Indians, and thereby obviated the fore mentioned objection which the world might otherwise have had a more plausible color of making."

That was what caused the greatest awakening Brainerd saw in his ministry. Not the truth of the terrors of God but the compassion of a dying Savior. Even a razor blade is not sharp on all sides. Neither should our preaching be.

The second key to his success I found in his diary was written Thursday August 28, 1746. He said, "Scarce ever saw more clearly, than this day, that it is God's work to convert souls, and especially poor heathens. I knew I could not touch them; I saw I could only speak to dry bones, but could give them no sense of what I said. My eyes were up to God for help. I could say the work was His, and if done, the glory would be His." The reason Brainerd won so many souls was because he prayed for many souls, the reason he prayed for many souls was because he knew the only thing that truly won souls was the power of God. It was not his hand leading the Indians to Christ but it was the Father's hand. The glory of these revivals does not belong to Brainerd but to our most excellent and wonderful God!

If we apply these two principals to modern Christianity, then I see no reason we can't see a revival. If we teach men both the terrors of the Law and the compassion of Christ, if we rely solely on the power of God and His hand and His Spirit, then we can reap a harvest in our own day. If sinners must be damned, I pray that they have to swim through the rivers of our tears to get there. So long as sins are sending souls to hell, our hearts should send tears to our eyes. It is far easier to complain that souls are going to hell than it is to have compassion on the souls that are going to hell. Brainerd did not complain he had compassion.

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David Brainerd died in October 1747 in the house of Jonathon Edwards. Although Brainerd was a Christian only 8 years of his life, I fear he was more prepared for eternity than some who have been Christians for decades. If we can learn only one thing before we ourselves die, I pray that it be obedience. It's not a matter of getting knowledge. Anyone can get knowledge. It's a matter of applying it. That is what not everybody does.

Until we have God we must long after God. If you don't have God, it is because you haven't longed after Him. Brainerd longed for God so He had God. May we seek after the hand of God as Brainerd had, may we seek after the face of God as Brainerd had, and may we seek after the glory of God as Brainerd had.

*“Every true Christian is a missionary
in whatever country he lives in.” Jesse Morrell*

Appendix II

James Hudson Taylor

In 1832 James Taylor and Maria Taylor, of Yorkshire England, prayed, "Dear God, if you should give us a son, grant that he may work for you in china." Time will tell that this was a prayer the Lord heard and answered.

On May 21, 1832 James Hudson Taylor was born. He was born into a Methodist family. The evangelistic zeal that started the Methodist church under the preaching of John Wesley in the 1700's was still burning strong and bright in the 1800's.

At the age of five Taylor said, "When I am a man, I mean to be a missionary and go to China." As a teenager he had his time in sin and rebellion. During a season of rebellion, his sinful behavior had so burdened his mother that fifty miles away from home his mother locked herself up for prayer and was determined not to leave until her son was saved. Praying like that gets God's attention. At the age of seventeen, during the praying of his mother, Hudson was saved. He was given a gospel tract about "the finished work of Christ." After reading it he decided to accept "this Savior and this salvation."

He wrote to his sister, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! And all that is within me shout His praise! Glory to God, my dear Amelia. Christ has said, 'seek and ye shall find,' and praise His name, He has revealed Himself to me in an overflowing manner. He has cleansed me from all sin, from all my idols. He has given me a new heart. Glory, glory, glory to His ever blessed Name! I cannot write for joy."

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Taylor believed the Christian life was a life of complete and total obedience to Christ. He said, “Christ is either Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all.”

He grew in grace and continued his desire to be a missionary to China, without any knowledge of his parent’s prayer prior to his birth. Prayers are not something that the Lord forgets. And earnest prayers are prayers that God is eager to grant. He said, “I feel I cannot go on living unless I do something for China.”

The missionary movement of Moravians in the 1700’s had inspired a young man by the name of William Carey. Carey had to battle against the lukewarmness and carelessness of his church age that was caused by the deterministic theology of Calvinism. When Carey shared in church his desire and calling to go to the mission field to preach the gospel, a reformed elder stood up and said, "Young man, sit down! You are an enthusiast. When God pleases to convert the heathen, he'll do it without consulting you or me.”

Ignoring this rebuke, Carey went on to inspire a major missionary movement. David Livingstone and J. Hudson Taylor were men that were inspired by the work of Carey.

During a night of intense prayer Taylor’s call to China was confirmed. There are those who call themselves to ministry and then there are those whom the Lord calls. There are many men willing to preach before an audience of people but not many who are willing to spend all night in secret prayer. Taylor was a man of prayer and that is why the Lord was able to use him as He did.

To prepare for the foreign mission field, Taylor spent the next few years fervently studying language, medicine, and the Scriptures. By the age of twenty-one, on Monday September 19th, 1853, a three mass clipper named “Dumfries” set sail from Liverpool to China, with J. Hudson Taylor on board.

Taylor said, “The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.” He also said, “Let

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us give up our work, our thoughts, our plans, ourselves, our lives, our loved ones, our influence, our all, right into His hand, and then, when we have given all over to Him, there will be nothing left for us to be troubled about, or to make trouble about.”

During his voyage there was a terrible storm. Convinced that he would die, Taylor trusted God and was content to die trying to obey the Lord. But by the grace of God he arrived in Shanghai in March of 1854 ready to begin his work. Taylor had a faith that worked. While many in his day had “faith” for their own salvation, he had faith to work for the salvation of others. It’s a living and working faith that brings faith to others. It’s a dead demonic faith that does not.

Taylor said, "China is not to be won for Christ by quiet, ease-loving men and women ... The stamp of men and women we need is such as will put Jesus, China, [and] souls first and foremost in everything and at every time—even life itself must be secondary."

Taylor worked for a Chinese Evangelization Society started by Karl Gutzlaff. That same year, Taylor adopted the Chinese style of clothing and hair. Like the Chinese men, Taylor grew a pigtail. Adopting the culture of the community you are trying to reach was revolutionary to the mission world. Indeed, it brought criticism to Taylor by his fellow missionaries. But the Chinese were hesitant to accept Christianity when they viewed it as “Western,” and while acceptance of it usually meant a cultural change to western practices.

Taylor saw other missionaries living in luxury and thought that they were worldly. K. P. Yohannan, in his book *Revolution in World Missions*, has also remarked on this being done today. K. P. pointed out that American missionaries who go overseas often live luxuriously compared to the community around them that they are trying to reach. Some will even live in massive homes with hired servants. J. Hudson Taylor, however, was paid less than everyone else. Most missionaries received

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seven hundred dollars a year, not including rent. Taylor received eighty dollars a year including rent.

In December of 1854 Taylor sailed, with fellow missionary Joseph Edkins, with Bibles and gospel tracts to the people of Huangpu River. Large crowds grew to receive from the men but mobs also were formed and began threatening them. The two barely escaped by hopping a boat.

In 1857 Taylor resigned from the Chinese Evangelization Society after much prayer, finding it insufficient. He completely trusted God for finances and did not ask for any donations from anyone, not even letting his friends and family know of his situation. Taylor said, "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply. He is too wise a God to frustrate His purposes for lack of funds, and He can just as easily supply them ahead of time as afterwards, and He much prefers doing so."

In January of 1858 he married Maria Dyer, a twenty-year old girl with the same heartbeat for China that he had. By March of 1860 his church in Ningbo had twenty-one members. He had a simple strategy in soul winning. He said, "Not by discussions nor by argument, but by lifting up Christ shall we draw men unto Him."

In 1861 Taylor caught a disease and had to go back to England to recover. While in England he tirelessly worked on translating the Bible into Chinese and also recruited other missionaries to join his work. Frustrated with other Christians and the lack of concern English believers had for the Chinese, Taylor wrote in 1865, "Can all the Christians of England sit still with folded arms while these multitudes (in china) are perishing-perishing for lack of knowledge, for lack of that knowledge which England possesses so richly, which has made England what England is and made us what we are? What does the Master teach us? Is it not that if one sheep out of a hundred be lost, we are to leave the ninety-nine to seek one? But here the proportions are almost reversed, and we stay at home with the one sheep, and take no heed to the ninety and nine perishing ones!"

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How sad it is to think that because our hearts do not burn within us, there are souls who will be burning in hell. Some people tell me that their church doesn't witness. Well, I know the name of their church. It must be the "Good for Nothing" Church. That may seem harsh and offensive but I didn't say it. Jesus said it. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13).

Taylor developed a new vision for a new organization and a new strategy for mission work in China. So far missionary work in China had been confined to only five treaty ports. There were eleven unreached inland provinces in China. Taylor recruited twenty-four missionaries so that two of each could go to the eleven unreached provinces of China and two more for Mongolia. At the time there were only ninety protestant missionaries in China, so just by recruiting twenty-four more, Taylor increased the number of missionaries in China by twenty-five percent!

The new organization was called the "China Inland Mission." Its missionaries were to simply trust God for their finances, as they had no guarantee of any salary from the organization and could not make any appeals for funds either. And unlike any other mission organization in China before it, the missionaries would adopt Chinese dress and would take the gospel into the interior of China. This was a revolution in missions. And China has never been the same since!

Taylor said, "If I had a thousand pounds China should have it- if I had a thousand lives, China should have them. No! Not China, but Christ. Can we do too much for Him? Can we do enough for such a precious Saviour?"

The China Inland Mission continued to grow as more and more missionaries joined the ranks. Eventually Taylor would inspire thousands of Christian missionaries to forsake the

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

comforts and ease of Western culture for the sacrificial work of taking the gospel to the interior of China.

After hearing a preacher by the name of D. L. Moody, C. T. Studd, who had a very promising athletic career in England as a star cricket player at Cambridge, left it all to become a missionary in China for Hudson Taylor. He forsook the popularity, prestige, and prosperity he had in England to save lost souls abroad on the mission field. With six of his other fellow Cambridge classmates, Studd joined the Inland Mission. They became known as "The Cambridge Seven."

He said, "What good will it do to anybody in the nest world to have been the best player that ever has played? And, then, think of the difference between that and winning people to Jesus." He also said, "I cannot tell you what joy it gave me to bring the first soul to the Lord Jesus Christ. I have tasted almost all the pleasures this world can give. I do not suppose there were pleasures were as nothing compared to the joy that the saving of that one soul gave me."

C. T. Studd expressed his missionary zeal when he said, "Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop, within a yard of hell." C. T. Studd spoke, I believe, not only for himself but also articulated the zeal of his fellow missionaries with the China Inland Mission. He continued to express his missionary fervor in these quotes:

"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him."

"True religion is like the smallpox. If you get it, you give it to others and it spreads."

"The "romance" of a missionary is often made up of monotony and drudgery; there often is no glamour in it; it doesn't stir a man's spirit or blood. So don't come out to be a missionary as an experiment; it is useless and dangerous. Only come if you feel you would rather die than not come. Don't come if you want to make a great name or

JAMES HUDSON TAYLOR

want to live long. Come if you feel there is no greater honor, after living for Christ, than to die for Him.”

On explaining his message and strategic method in soul winning C. T. Studd said, “Now the main thing is to get the eyes of the people open. They need to see hell as the result of their sin, and that produces fear, the fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom. Once they get this fear and all will be comparatively easy; but if this fear does not lay hold of a man, his so-called conversion is a sham.”

At the age of twenty-five C. T. Studd received an enormous inheritance. It was a fortune in his time. But he decided to give it all away and to live by faith. He donated to George Mueller’s orphanage and also William Booth’s Salvation Army. And he served the Lord by faith, as J. Hudson Taylor taught. A missionary zeal burned in the heart of C. T. Studd all the days of his life, taking him from China to India and finally Africa. A missionary movement was spreading all over the world and Hudson Taylor was one of the candles God used to light the blaze.

Taylor said, “There are three stages to every great work of God; first it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is done.”

When J. Hudson Taylor was asked why God was able to use him so mightily in China, he replied, "God had looked long for a man weak enough, and He found me." He also said, “All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them.” And, “God uses men who are weak and feeble enough to lean on him.”

If we will empty ourselves, God will fill us. We need men today with missionary hearts like J. Hudson Taylor, who will lay down everything and risk it all for the lost souls of men. Who need men who will trust God completely and entirely, willing to go anywhere that the Lord sends them. We need men who will not simply follow the crowd and do what everyone else is doing but will be lead by the Spirit of God. Are you such a man as that? If so, God can use you to change the nations of the world.

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

ONLY ONE LIFE, 'TWILL SOON BE PAST

“Two little lines I heard one day,
Traveling along life's busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart,
And from my mind would not depart;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,
And stand before His Judgement seat;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, the still small voice,
Gently pleads for a better choice
Bidding me selfish aims to leave,
And to God's holy will to cleave;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, a few brief years,
Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;
Each with its clays I must fulfill,
living for self or in His will;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

When this bright world would tempt me sore,
When Satan would a victory score;
When self would seek to have its way,
Then help me Lord with joy to say;

JAMES HUDSON TAYLOR

Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Give me Father, a purpose deep,
In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Oh let my love with fervor burn,
And from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,
Now let me say, "Thy will be done";
And when at last I'll hear the call,
I know I'll say 'twas worth it all";
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last. "

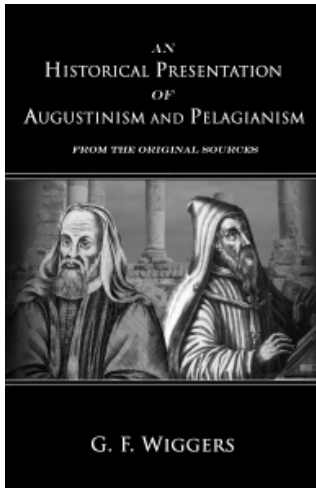
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.
And when I am dying, how happy I'll be,
If the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee."

~ C.T Studd ~



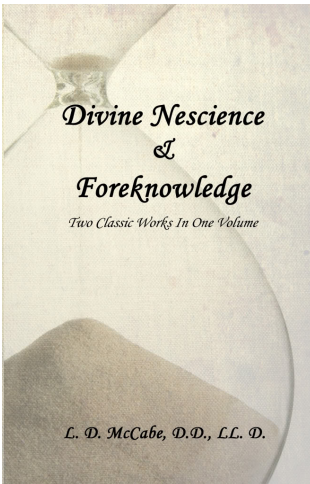
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An Historical Presentation of Augustinism and Pelagianism by **G. F. Wiggers** is a classic and impartial work on the Augustine/Pelagius debate. By appealing to the original sources that are available, Dr. Wiggers compares and contrasts these two opposing theologies, defining and explaining the various doctrines within each system of thought.

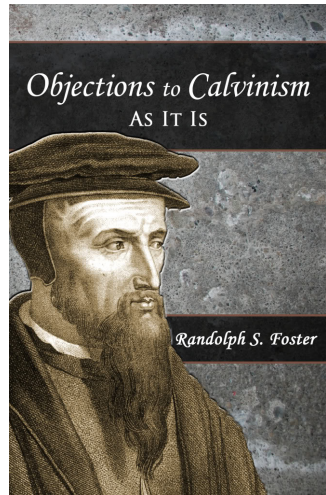
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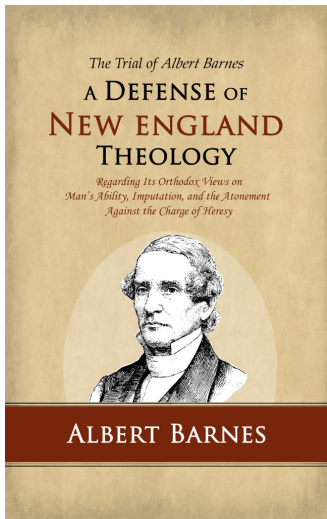
Divine Nescience & Foreknowledge contains two classic works in one volume. They are “Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies A Necessity” and “The Foreknowledge of God, and Cognate Themes in Theology and Philosophy” by **L. D. McCabe**. Because these books were out of print, these books have been very hard to find and very expensive to purchase, until now. These two profound books were written in the 1800’s and brilliantly expound upon the open view of God. They are two of the most important

theological writings of the 19th Century and arguably two of the best writings on the topic of open theism. This book is a must read for any Christian who wants to understand the scriptural and logical arguments for the open view of the future.

Objections to Calvinism As It Is by Randolph S. Foster is a classic rebuttal to the doctrines of “Reformed Theology” from the 1800’s. The false theology of Calvinism is refuted by the authors scriptural and rational arguments, plainly exposing the so-called “Doctrines of Grace” for what they really are. Some Christians have called this work the best book on Calvinism out there. The authors use of logic, scripture, and sarcasm makes this book a blessing to read!



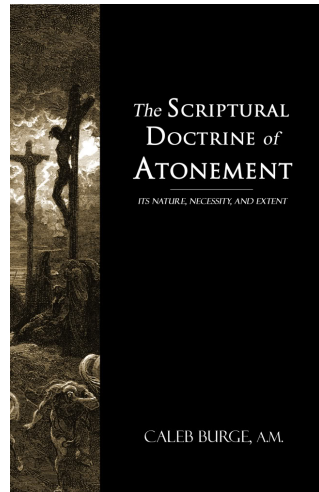
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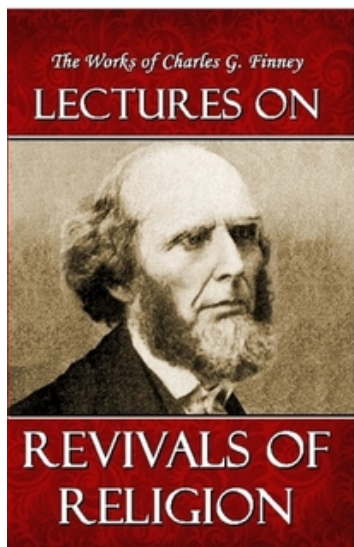
A Defense of New England Theology by Albert Barnes is a very rare book, originally published in 1829. It contains Barnes sermon, “The Way of Salvation” for which he was accused of heresy by Rev. Dr. George Junkin. The doctrines in question were human ability, imputation, and atonement. Barne’s response and defense to the charge of heresy is also contained in this volume, for which Barnes was acquitted by the Synod of Philadelphia. “New England Theology” was a theological movement with

notable men like Moses Stuart, Albert Barnes, Charles Finney, Asa Mahan, and others. The modern movement of “Moral Government Theology” has its roots in what was “New England Theology.”

The Scriptural Doctrine of Atonement by Caleb Burge has been said to be the best book on the Governmental Atonement theory. Burge expounds upon very profound concepts and presents them in a very intelligent and understandable way. This book was originally published in 1822. It contains pure theological gold on one of the most important doctrines of Christianity. It will be an absolute treasure in your library.

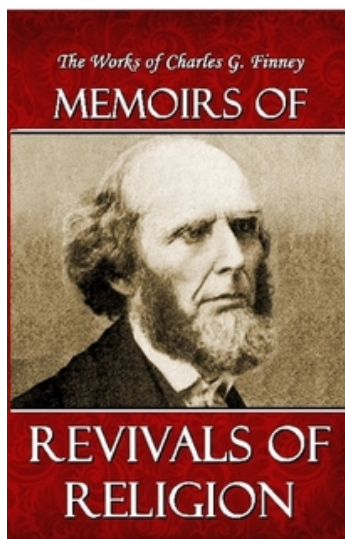


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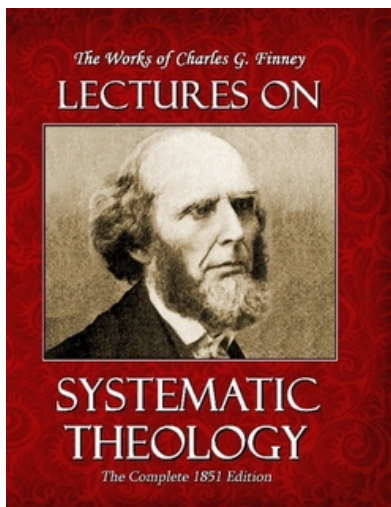


Lectures on Revivals of Religion by **Charles G. Finney** is a classic volume on revivals. Finney was America's greatest revivalist. Over half a million souls were soundly saved under his ministry. After Finney published his lectures on revival, revivals started breaking out all over the place. This book is a must read for any believer who wants to win souls to Christ!

Memoirs of Revivals of Religion contains the unedited autobiography of **Charles G. Finney**. The text comes from the 1878 edition. This volume describes the amazing details of the extraordinary revivals which God used his servant Finney in. A Christian will find it hard to be able to read this book without getting on his knees to pray for revival!

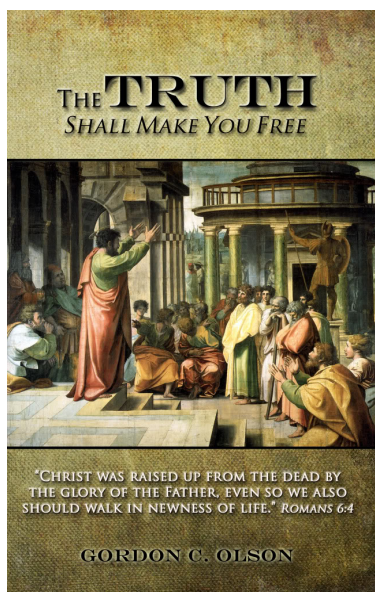


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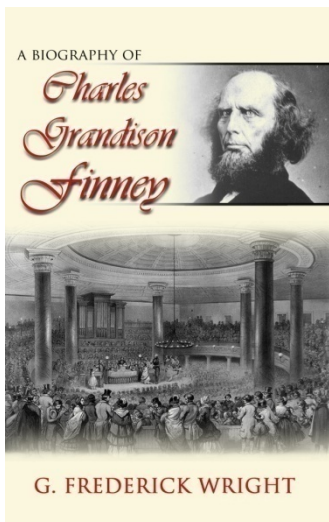


This is the complete 1851 edition of **Lectures on Systematic Theology** by **Charles G. Finney**. This is also a “Note Takers Edition” as the bottom of each page has a large empty area for the reader to write their own personal notes as they study this wonderful piece of Christian theology.

The Truth Shall Make You Free by **Gordon C. Olson** is an absolute essential for any Christian library. It has been said that Gordon C. Olson was the greatest theologian of the 20th Century, and “The Truth Shall Make You Free” was his masterpiece. This is a monumental work of theological literature. To reprint this very important volume is one of the reasons that we even started reprinting books at all. We would like to see this book in the hands of every believer. It is our opinion that “The Truth Shall Make You Free” is one of the greatest theological works of Christian history

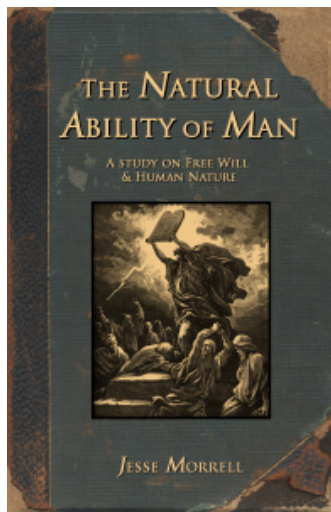


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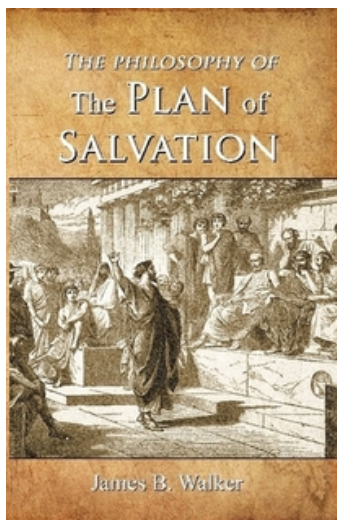


Charles Grandison Finney by **G. Frederick Wright** is one of the best biographies on this hero of the Christian faith. This book details the life, ministry, and theology of the greatest revivalists America has ever seen. While Finney's modern critics always try to downplay his success as an evangelist, this book was written by someone who was actually there in the 19th Century, who knew and worked with Finney for 30 years.

The Natural Ability of Man: A Study On Free Will & Human Nature by **Jesse Morrell** is an exhaustive theological volume that defends the Christian doctrine of man's free will against the false Gnostic/Calvinist doctrine of man's natural inability. This volume explains the truth of man's freedom in light of Church history and other doctrines like total depravity, regeneration, atonement, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, predestination, repentance, faith, the believers security, original sin, etc. One Bible teacher called this book "the most comprehensive exposition on man's natural ability in print."

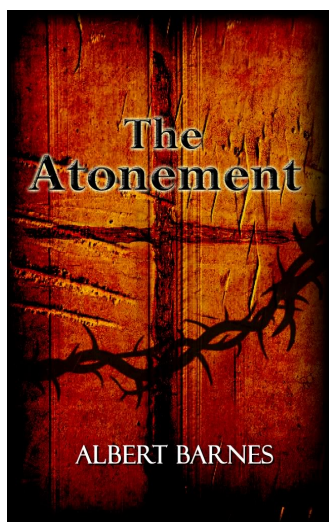


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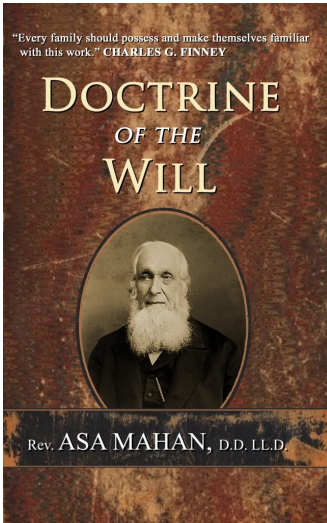


The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation by James B. Walker is a discussion on the fundamental facts about God's dealing with the human race throughout history, to convince the rational reader that the religion of the Bible is from God and is uniquely adapted to produce the greatest good for mankind. Some readers have called this book the best apologetic of the Christian faith that they have read.

The Atonement by Albert Barnes is a classic book on the governmental theory of the atonement from a very prominent pastor and world renowned Bible commentator from the 1800's. Barnes work on the Atonement was Leonard Ravenhill's number one recommended book out of forty listed. It is very insightful, thought provoking, and spiritually rich.

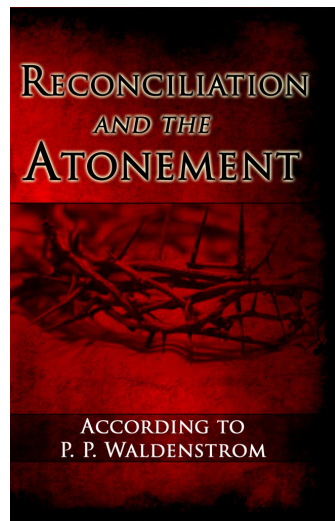


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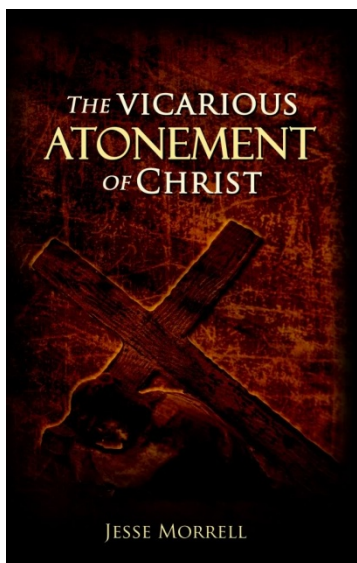
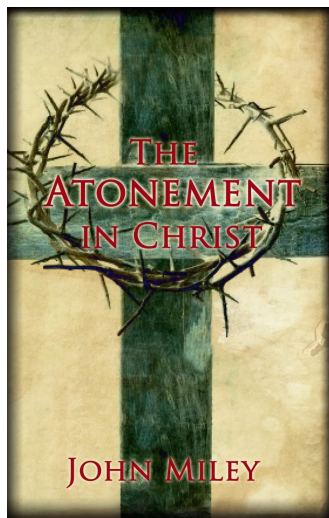
The Doctrine of the Will by Asa Mahan is possibly Mahan's best book. It is a satisfactory rebuttal to the doctrine of the Necessitarians, specifically the Edwardian kind, who taught that the will operated under the law of necessity rather than liberty. Revivalist and theologian Charles Finney said that this classic was "a highly important work" that "every family should possess and make themselves familiar with."

Reconciliation and the Atonement according to P. P. Waldenstrom is actually two writings compiled into one. The first writing is, "Be Ye Reconciled to God: A Look at the Atonement" by P. P. Waldenstrom and the second is, "The Christian Doctrine of the Atonement According to P. P. Waldenstrom" by Axel Andersson. This book answers the question, "Was the atonement designed to change God or to change man? Is God reconciled to man or is man reconciled to God?" This is a must read for every Christian believer!



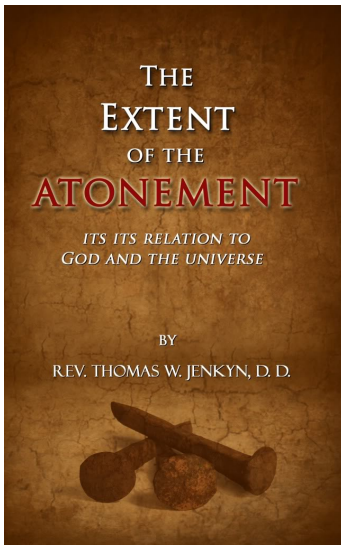
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The Atonement in Christ by **John Miley** is one of the most exhaustive and important writings on the various atonement theories that have existed throughout Christian history. This classic writing advances the Governmental theory of the atonement as true and scriptural and critiques the opposing perspectives like that of the Penal Substitution theory of atonement.



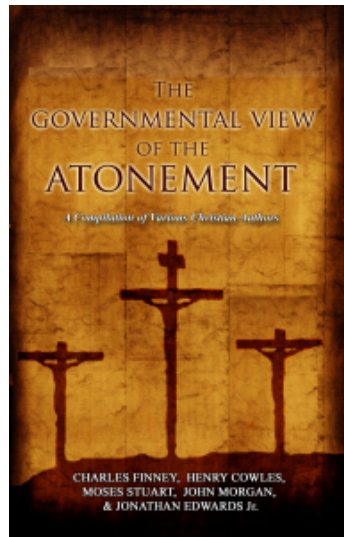
The Vicarious Atonement of Christ by **Jesse Morrell** is a systematic presentation of the governmental atonement view. This book answers questions like, “What is the purpose of moral law?” “What is the purpose of penalty?” “What is the nature of forgiveness?” “What are the problems in the way of forgiveness?” “What is the atonement?” “What is imputed righteousness?” This book is full of logical and scriptural arguments as well as quotes from great Christian leaders throughout history.

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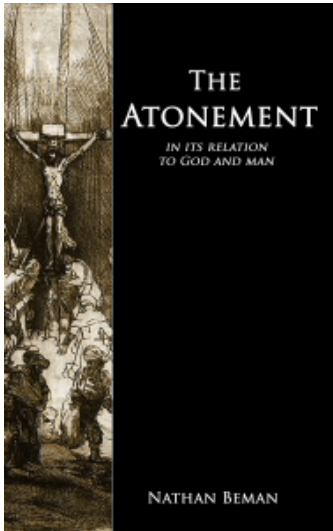


The Extent of the Atonement: *In Its Relation to God and the Universe* by Rev. Thomas W. Jenkyn is a classic work expounding upon the Governmental View of the atonement. It is a thorough explanation of the atonement in reference to its nature, the character of God, the purposes of God, the works of God, the moral government of God, the providence of God, divine truth, the rebellion of man, the salvation of mankind, the work of the Holy Spirit, the Christian church, etc. This book presents the truth of the Scriptures in clarity and is an absolute joy to read.

The Governmental View of the Atonement is a compilation book with writings from some of the best theologians on this topic. The authors include Charles Finney, Henry Cowles, John Morgan, Moses Stuart, and Jonathon Edwards Jr. These authors present the truth of the atonement of Christ in a very clear Scriptural and reasonable light. Their writings show the necessity, nature, and extent of Christ's atoning sacrifice. The benevolence and brilliance of God in providing a way to sustain His moral government while pardoning transgressors will be clearly seen as you read this wonderful piece of literature.

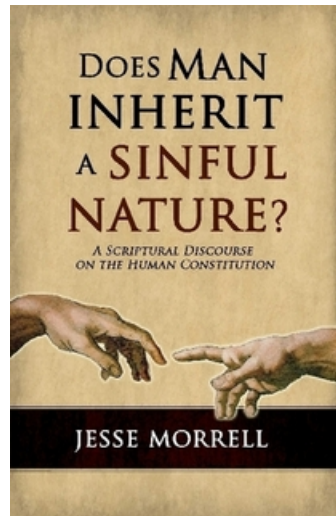


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The Atonement as it Relates to God and Man by Nathan Beman is a wonderful exposition on the Governmental View of the atonement of Christ. With precision and excellence the author explains why it was necessary for God's moral government that the atonement of Christ be made if God is going to pardon sinners, the nature of Christ's atoning death, and the extent of who this loving sacrifice has been made for. The reader of this book will be left with a crystal clear understanding of the doctrine of atonement.

Does Man Inherit A Sinful Nature by Jesse Morrell is a thorough examination and refutation to one of the oldest theological excuses for sin – a sinful nature. With an abundance of scripture, keen logic, and an appeal to Christian teachers throughout history, this book not only shows that men are not born with a sinful nature but that sin is actually contrary to the nature God gave us.



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CONTACT THE AUTHOR

If you would like to contact Jesse Morrell to invite him to come and preach in your church or to do some evangelism with him in your area, this is his contact information:

EMAIL: jessewm218@hotmail.com

PHONE: 203-444-1912

MAIL: PO Box 1527 Lindale TX, 75771

WEBSITE: www.OpenAirOutreach.com

