

NO SHAME AT ALL

A CALL TO SOLEMN WEEPING BETWEEN THE PORCH AND THE ALTAR

I have a simple question for you, "Can you blush?" The Church though has tragically forgotten how to blush. We have called good what God calls evil and love the things God utterly hates. There is no shame at all in the Church of Jesus Christ today. Oh how we need hot tears, broken hearts over the church that is so sterile and the world that is dead. It is a time to wake up to the realization that the Church is not able to blush over sin. - Greg Gordon

CAN YOU BLUSH?

Jeremiah has a very strong word for this generation of God's people hear the cry of this weeping prophet: "thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed." and in another place, "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush." I have a simple question for you, "Can you blush?" The Church though has tragically forgotten how to blush. We have called good what God calls evil and love the things God utterly hates. There is no shame at all in the Church of Jesus Christ today. Oh how we need hot tears, broken hearts over the church that is so sterile and the world that is dead. It is a time to wake up to the realization that the Church is not able to blush over sin. David Wilkerson preaching on this passage in Jeremiah said: "God's people had lost their sense of shame and grief for sin. Sin in society, sin in the church, sin in their own lives. They no longer felt God's hatred and wrath against sin. God must restore the blush to His people! Allow the Holy Spirit to probe your heart very deeply and very thoroughly, that you may walk wholly blameless before the Lord in this late hour." We are living desperate and deceived lives not realizing the nearness of the hour and the hardness of our hearts. We have forgotten to blush we have lost our modesty, decency, holiness, purity. Horatious Bonar stated 200 years ago that "he looked for the church and found it in the world and looked for the world and found it in the church." If it was true in

Bonar's day how much more it is in ours. We have never in Church history needed a humbling blushing of the Church then we do today! Modern day evangelicalism has gotten so far from the "original article" that we are powerless to impact the world. I speak to many pastors, leaders and lay-people and in our day of utter compromise in the Church where sin rules over many. The Holy Scriptures say "neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin" but the sad truth is that we are living we are saying that "sin shall have dominion over you" believing these modern day theologians that conveniently forget to add the "not!" God is "restoring the blush to His people!" He must! But alas it shall come with judgement unless we choose to weep and blush now.

THE CALL TO WAIL

If you cannot weep now you will never weep. Heaven is impeccable joy! Hell is eternal misery! Does it matter to you today that the Church barely resembles the apostolic original in its holiness, power and reliance in God. Does it bother you that what we call "Christianity" in North America is almost totally wrong and is not "Christianity" at all? J.B. Phillips stated of the Acts Church found in the New Testament: "This is the church of Jesus Christ before it became fat and out of breath by prosperity. This is the church of Jesus Christ before it became muscle bound by over organization. This is the church of Jesus Christ where they didn't gather together a group of intellectuals to study phycho-sematic medicine, they just healed the sick. This is the church of Jesus Christ where they did not say prayers, but they prayed in the Holy Ghost." This is not fancy word play dear reader but serious somber truth that we need to not only swallow but digest! Should not this cause us to wail "revive thy work O Lord!" to weep without words but a heart-wrenching desire to see the "church be the Church?"

The prophet Joel had a searing strong message for our generation: "Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" Leonard Ravenhill stated of this passage: "I believe the key to revival is given here in Joel, 'Let the priests, the ministers of God, weep between the altar and the door posts.'" Are you thinking this is just "Old Covenant" truth? here is the New Testament parallel: "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." Did not our Master also say "Blessed are they that mourn!" This is a time of wailing and mourning for the body of Christ, a time of repentance and pleading for God to restore and revive the Church. Ask any minister and they will tell you that we need revival but why are so few weeping over the fact of it?

Leonard Ravenhill said: "The church used to be a lightning bolt, now it's a cruise ship. We are not marching to Zion - we are sailing there with ease. In the apostolic church it says they were all amazed -

And now in our churches everybody wants to be amused. The church began in the upper room with a bunch of men agonizing, and it's ending in the supper room with a bunch of people organizing. We mistake rattle for revival, and commotion for creation, and action for unction.” Could the problem be as simple as “amusement?” Perhaps the words of Paul Washer are true: “Over the epitaph of this generation it will say ENTERTAINED TO DEATH.” Oh may it not be so! may we find tears and shame before it is too late!

MEDIOCRE CHRISTIANITY

A.W. Tozer said: “It is disheartening to those who care, and surely a great grief to the Spirit, to see how many Christians are content to settle for less than the best. Personally I have for years carried a burden of sorrow as I have moved among evangelical Christians who somewhere in their past have managed to strike a base compromise with their heart's holier longings and have settled down to a lukewarm, mediocre kind of Christianity utterly unworthy of themselves and of the Lord they claim to serve. And such are found everywhere. Every man is as close to God as he wants to be; he is as holy and as full of the Spirit as he wills to be. Yet we must distinguish wanting from wishing. By ‘want’ I mean wholehearted desire. Certainly there are many who wish they were holy or victorious or joyful but are not willing to meet God’s conditions to obtain. Oh Lord, give me that ‘wholehearted desire’ that keeps me from being satisfied with mediocre Christianity. Amen.”

C.H. Spurgeon over 100 years ago remarked: “Ah, sirs! there may have been a time when Christians were too precise, but it has not been in my day. There may have been such a dreadful thing as Puritanic rigidity, but I have never seen it. We are quite free from that evil now, if it ever existed. We have gone from liberty to libertinism. We have passed beyond the dubious into the dangerous, and none can prophesy where we shall stop. Where is the holiness of the church of God today? Ah! were she what she professed to be, she would be ‘fair as the moon, clear as the sun’, and then ‘terrible as an army with banners’; but now she is dim as smoking flax, and rather the object of ridicule than of reverence. May not the measure of the influence of a church be estimated by its holiness? God's saints may well mourn with Jerusalem when they see spirituality and holiness at so low an ebb! Others may regard this as a matter of no consequence; but we view it as the breaking forth of a leprosy.”

Will you share a “burden of sorrow” with God as Tozer did? Do you hear the warning and concern of Spurgeon’s words? Leonard Ravenhill stated at times all he could do “is sob and grieve” over the condition of the Church.

SAVONAROLA'S NEEDED!

David Smithers a contemporary church historian gives us some timely insight into the life of Girolamo Savonarola: "One day, he saw a vision of the heavens opened, and all the future calamities of the Church passed before his eyes. He then heard God's voice charging him to warn the people. From that moment he was convinced of his prophetic calling, and he was suddenly filled with a new unction and power. His preaching was now with a voice of thunder, and his rebukes against sin were so terrific that the people who listened to him sometimes went about the streets half-dazed, bewildered, and speechless. His listeners were often so overcome with tears that the whole church echoed with the sounds of sobbing and weeping. Workmen, poets and philosophers, all would burst into tears under his passionate preaching. Savonarola's zeal for prayer seemed to increase day by day. While engaged in prayer, he would sometimes fall into a deep trance. Often he was so completely gripped by the power of the Holy Spirit that he would be forced to retire to a secluded place. Some of his biographers relate that on Christmas Eve, in the year 1486, Savonarola, while seated in the pulpit, remained immovable for five hours, in a trance, and that his face seemed illuminated to all in the church. The life of Savonarola exemplifies many precious qualities that our fainthearted and distracted age so desperately needs. We are barren and deficient in prayer, patience, purity and most importantly a sacrificial love for Jesus. Until we as the body of Christ return to these holy principles, true reformation and revival will not be realized; Oh Lord break our hearts and open our eyes!"

We need modern day Savonarola's that will raise up their voice to "warn the people." We need prophets to speak to our backslidden situation we find ourselves in. Words that will pierce and draw tears! God is calling us to the "porch and the altar" and all that he wants us to bring there is "weeping" nothing else! We need revival God's way, we have tried it every other way with no results. Mordecai Ham that old famous evangelist spoke clearly to the place the Church finds herself: "One of our troubles is we are not willing to humble ourselves. We are not willing to give up our opinions as to how things should be done. We want a revival to come just in our way. You never saw two revivals come just alike. We must let them come in God's way. People are ashamed to admit they need a revival. If you are not willing to take the shame on yourself, you then let it remain on Jesus Christ. You must bear the reproach of your sinful state of indifference, or the cause of our Master must bear it." Hear the call that Leonard Ravenhill gave to us in our desperate time: "Do the Pentecostals look back with shame as they remember when they dwelt across the theological tracks, but with the glory of the Lord in their midst? When they had a normal church life, which meant nights of prayers, followed by signs and wonders, and diverse miracles, and genuine gifts of the Holy Ghost? When they were not clock watchers, and their meetings lasted for hours, saturated with holy power? Have we no tears for these memories, or shame that our children know nothing of such power?" Baptist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, it does not matter the denomination label. The fact is we have no shame over our condition. Oh! how we need God, let us weep.