

A Silent Church Amidst A In Sinful Nation

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Bible Text: Jeremiah 5:21-31

Preached on: Tuesday, March 5, 2013

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I have a video of Martin Lloyd Jones as he is touring England and visiting the sights where George Whitfield labored. While standing at the site of the Bell Inn where Whitfield was born, Lloyd Jones describes the moral climate of London in the days of Whitfield. He said that morality was at an all-time low, spirituality in the churches was almost nonexistent and that in London every fifth house was a gin-house, that it seemed the city itself was in a drunken debauchery and spiritual stupor. And Lloyd Jones glares into the camera and comments, "And where was the church in all of this?"

Today in America, our situation is far more grim than in the days of Whitfield and Wesley. Our national sins more multiplied. Evil increases at a rapid rate and our society slides into a sinkhole of perversion and debauchery. Our civic leaders call evil good and good evil. God has been legislated out of our once great country. The spirit of antichrist grows in the land and I ask the same question, "Where is the church in all of this? Where is the church? She is shamefully silent amidst a sinful nation."

And that's the title of my message today friends, "A Silent Church Amidst a Sinful Nation." It reminds me of the days of Nazi Germany where a German pastor made the following comments about the increasing evil in his day and his failure to cry out against it. He said, "First they came for the communists and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a communist. Then they came for the socialist and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the Catholics and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Catholic. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me."

Dear friends, this is a graphic picture of the church in America today. Evil abounds and the church is silent. God is systematically removed from society and the church is silent. Perversion permeates the fabric of our society and the church is silent. The government mocks God and his authority and the church is silent. The church sleeps a sleep of death and slumbers on corporal cushions of self-indulgence and soon they will come for her. Persecution is on the way to the church in America. We have missed our opportunity to cry out, we have remained silent for too long and the hour is now too late. We have been busy building our own islands and fortifying them by growing our church campuses and building a corporal environment where we can be entertained. The nation has passed the

boundaries of decency and crossed the line of blasphemy against a holy God and an offended creator. Yet the church is silent and her silence is deafening.

I can sum up the American church by description of a recent visit to a Baptist church. The church service led off with a Hollywood video. The content was banal, offensive yet the church laughed. The music minister laughed, the pastor laughed, the congregation laughed because they were embarrassed. I sat there looking down at the floor and my insides groaned within me. I wept inside at the state of the church in America today. That has wedded Hollywood and the world with sacred things of God. The pastor preached a doctrinally sound sermon but there was no power of the attending Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit had been grieved away before the pastor entered the pulpit. What occurred in that church service was a religious ceremony without spiritual transformation, worship without the presence of God. We have become as a people of God, impotent, apathetic and indifferent. We'd rather be entertained than challenged spiritually. We have turned into a cappuccino church, all froth and no substance.

Listen to the wise words of Samuel Chadwick, a pastor of former days, "When a church is run on the same lines as a circus, there may be crowds but there is no Shekinah." Oh, friends, where is the Shekinah glory in our churches today? How the glory has departed from among us and we have not even noticed. We are like Samson who left the tent and shook himself but knew not that the Spirit of God was no longer upon him.

Listen to the comments of another pastor, a godly man, W. Graham Scroggie, as he pleaded with pastors in his day. "Make a show. The people love a show and you will gain the end of your ambition at once. The crowd is always ready for a sensation and alas there are always those who are disposed to stimulate religion, to fill the churches by the method of sensationalism."

Listen friends, to yet another man, another pastor who was much wiser than us in his day. Listen to Alan Redpath, former pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago. Listen to his words, "Today, the Christian church is helpless. Behind the scenes and away from the public arena we are facing powers of darkness too strong for us because somewhere in our personal lives we have forfeited our right to the Spirit's anointing, his authority and his power. In his absence, all we can do is to substitute planning and organization, schemes and techniques." Alan Redpath's stinging observation can be modified for our day by adding to our substitution of God forms of entertainment in the sanctuary of God.

Dear pastor brother, Hollywood has no place in the sanctuary of God. How can you introduce strange fire into your assembly and still have the fire of God? You cannot. These idols should be removed from the house of God. When I visit churches and see the deplorable spiritual condition of the church in America today, I weep and groan and beg God to forgive us for our spiritual slumber and dishonoring of him. We have shrunken God down to our size and taken salvation out of the hands of God and placed it in the hands of man. Society crumbles all around us, there is little hope for the future of America as we as a nation have filled up the cup of our iniquity before an offended God.

It reminds me of the people of God in the days of Jeremiah, as described in Jeremiah, chapter 5, verses 21-31. Allow me to read this striking passage to us today.

“Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not: Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest. Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you. For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?”

What a sad, tragic picture that is of a people of God who have backslidden far away from the heart of God. Well, what did God do with such a strange people? This is what he did in the form of a severe judgment upon them as seen Jeremiah 5:15-17,

“Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say. Their quiver is as an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword.”

God will bring a swift judgment upon America if the nation does not turn back to him. It will be such a sudden and widespread calamity that it will be numbing in its intensity of destruction of human life. It will be such a national calamity that the government will be powerless to help anyone because they will be rendered powerless themselves. God’s answer to a wonderful and horrible thing committed in the land is judgment upon a sinful and disobedient people. And I ask, “Where is the church in all of this? Why is she silent while she still has the time to do something about it? Why brother pastor would you rather show Hollywood movies in your church and entertain your people rather than lead them in a time of brokenness before God in humility, in repentance and prayer. Why?” Because the people love to have it so. So you give them what they want instead of what they need.

God says, "No." We have misused the time given to us in this nation of ours. Misspent it on ourselves and our own selfish desires. Now it is time to pay the piper and we as a nation are unprepared for what is about to befall us from the hand of an offended God.

"Then came they for the Jews and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the Catholics and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Catholic. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me."

Oh Great God, forgive us for our national sins. Forgive America for grievously offending thee. Forgive us of our multiplied sins. Forgive our blind leaders who lead falsely. Forgive us for our allowing our nation to be permeated and saturated with perversion. Forgive us, O Lord, for our adultery and fornications, for our idol worship. But forgive us most of all, O Lord, for forsaking thee. We as a nation, a people, have forsaken thee. Forgive us for corrupting the house of God with abominable things. Forgive us for mixing true worship with strange fire. Forgive us for our vast personal and corporate sins. We beseech thee, O Great God, look down and hear our cry, we seek thy face and favor. Once again, visit us with a national revival, I beg you, rather than a national calamity that will come in judgment. In thy wrath, remember mercy. In thy wrath, remember mercy. Come again, O Lord, and fill our sanctuaries with your presence and preeminence. We pray in the strong name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.