

God's Word to America's Compromised Evangelical Churches

With the shocking revelations of the moral sins of pastors of well-known megachurches, I am reminded of something the Lord said to me in 2015, shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court had legalized same-sex marriage.

It happened late one night as I sat in my chair grieving about America's cultural descent into moral confusion and depravity. I also grieved at the feckless state of the church, seemingly unable to stand against this tide of godlessness. I then heard the Lord speak clearly in my heart, "There is a lesson for today's church from the life of Samson."

As I then read and reread the life of Samson in Judges 16, it was clear that the word God wanted to speak to the church concerned the word "consecration." With the new and startling revelations of the moral failures of well-known Christian leaders, it seems appropriate and timely to share this message once again.

The Power of a Consecrated Life

Samson was consecrated as a Nazirite while in his mother's womb. "Nazirite" comes from the Hebrew word *Nazir* meaning "consecrated" or "separated." The Nazirite vow was a solemn commitment that Samson would live a "separated" life unto God, wholly dedicated to His purpose. The outward sign of this consecration was that he would never cut his hair.

So long as Samson lived in this consecration, he was invincible. He was able to face and overcome everything the enemies of God threw against him. On one occasion he alone killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey.

That his life of consecration was the secret of his power was made obvious when he compromised his consecration and lost his power. He compromised his consecration by consorting with a Philistine woman named Delilah and revealing to her the secret of his power. Falling asleep on her lap, she called in the Philistine warriors, who cut off his hair while he slept.

When Samson compromised his consecration to God, he was no longer able to face the enemies of God. Shorn of his locks and his power, Samson was taken captive by the Philistines, who gouged out his eyes, bound him with bronze fetters and put him to work pushing a turnstile in a circle all day, grinding grain. How the mighty had fallen!

Consecration Lacking in the Modern Church

When Jesus sent out His disciples to preach the Good News, He did not tell them to make people into Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics or Assemblies of God. He did not tell them to make church members. They were, instead, to go and make disciples (Matt. 28:18-20).

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It is easy to become a church member. It is not so easy to become a disciple. A “disciple” is a committed learner and follower. Consecration is required of a disciple. Jesus said, “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:33, NKJV).

The cost of discipleship being absolute consecration to Him was made clear by Jesus on different occasions. For example, in Matthew 10, He exhorted the crowds: “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses it for My sake will find it” (Matt. 10:37-39).

Interestingly, neither Jesus or Paul ever used the word “Christian.” In fact, the word is found only twice in the entire New Testament. Acts 11:26c reveals that “Christian” was a word first used by outsiders in referring to the disciples of Christ because their lives were so centered on Him. It reads, “And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

Is it possible that today’s church lacks the power to face down the rampant secularism and immorality engulfing our culture because, like Samson, we have compromised our consecration to God? Have we been focused on increasing church membership and gaining followers on social media rather than making real disciples of Jesus?

The scandals rocking so many megachurches and ministries are like the proverbial tip of the iceberg, and they indicate that consecration is missing in both pulpit and pew. In the deceitfulness of our hearts, we have imagined that we could have gifts without fruit and power without purity. There is hope for America, but there must come a widespread renewal of consecration among Christians throughout the land.

There Is Still Hope for the American Church

Even in his weakened and broken state, there was hope for Samson. Judges 16:22 tells how Samson’s hair began to grow as he toiled day after day in the prison. This was an outward sign that there was a renewal of his Nazirite consecration to God.

Then one day, during a festive celebration attended by thousands in a massive theater, the Philistines brought out Samson to entertain the gathered throng as an object of mirth and ridicule. He was forced to “perform” for the crowd so they could revel in the humiliation and devastation of their archenemy who had caused them so much pain.

What the Philistines did not realize was that Samson’s hair

had grown back—at least to a degree. His consecration had been renewed, and there would now be one final display of God's power through him.

Like Samson, when the church compromises its consecration and loses its power, it becomes an object of mirth and ridicule to this world. We will not gain the respect of contemporary culture by compromising with it but by standing firm in our consecration to God and commitment to His truth. He will then confirm His message with demonstrations of His power in our midst, as He did with Samson.

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After being taunted, mocked and ridiculed, a young lad led the blind and broken Samson to a place between the two giant pillars that supported the stadium. Samson placed a hand on each pillar, and prayed, "Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God!" (Judg. 16:28b).

Samson no longer feared death. He wanted victory again more than life itself. As he pushed against the two pillars with all his might, he cried out to God, "Let me die with the Philistines!" (Judg. 16:30b). The two pillars gave way, and the stadium came crashing down, killing thousands of Philistines and Samson with them.

God Has More for Us

Judges 16:30 tells us that Samson killed more Philistines at this death than in his life. In a similar way, I believe the American church could see a mighty outpouring of God's Spirit that could exceed all the awakenings that have occurred in the nation's young history.

We know America is not destined to last forever but will someday come to an end. However, God raised up America for a

purpose, and it was made very clear to me in September of 2010 that He is not yet finished with America.

At that time, I saw clearly that America “could” see another Great Awakening that would revive the churches of America, impact the culture, and stem the tide of secularism and immorality that is flooding the land. I documented all this in the book “America’s Revival Heritage.”

Those past awakenings, however, began with renewals of consecration. Jonathan Edwards was grieved by the immorality and spiritual indifference he saw all around him. He came to the place where he desired a heaven-sent revival more than life itself, and he prayed to God with great passion, “Give me New England or let me die.”

What came of that consecration and prayer was a revival that became known as the “Great Awakening” because entire cities and towns were suddenly awakened to the realities of eternity, sin, heaven, hell and salvation through Christ. As documented in my book “1726: The Year that Defined America,” this awakening had a direct bearing on both the founding of America and the ending of slavery on this continent.

Yes, we can see another national awakening, but it will require a renewal of consecration, as expressed in the well-known hymn, “I Surrender All”:

All to Jesus I surrender/ Humbly at His feet I bow/ Worldly pleasures all forsaken/ Take me, Jesus, take me now.

I surrender all/ I surrender all/All to Thee my blessed Savior/I surrender all.

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Dr. Eddie Hyatt is an author, Bible teacher, and revivalist who is convinced that God is not finished with America. This

article is derived from his books, 1726:The Year that Defined America and America's Revival Heritage, Second Edition, available from Amazon and his website at .