

Is 'Microwave Christianity' Destroying Today's Church?

As we all know, America is in a spiritual decline with no recovery in sight. Many churches have a form of "microwave" Christianity: service times last just over an hour, prayer is glanced over and worship is designed to entertain the masses. Many pastors avoid offending their audience and seek to be motivational rather than convicting. If we truly want to see revival, the face of the present-day church needs to change. Granted, there are wonderful churches, but as a whole, we have drifted significantly off course. For example, do you ever wonder how a Christian (let alone a pastor) can embrace gay marriage and encourage it? Listen to this Fox News interview archive to find out how.

"People are bored," they say, "so our services need to be more appealing." Church is boring because the power of God has vanished from many congregations; there is a lack of desire in the pulpit as well as in the pew to pursue Him. Like Samson, they don't realize that the Spirit of the Lord has departed (Judg. 16:20). But there is hope. We can once again position ourselves to seek God: "You shall seek Me and find Me, when you shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

To seek in this context means to "find what is missing." The Hebrew word for "seek," *baqash*, has a very strong meaning. Imagine losing your child in a crowded mall. Your entire heart would be engaged. How would you spend your time? Where would your energy be concentrated? Now parallel this with seeking God. Pastors and Christian leaders, we must again seek God as if our nation and the future of our children depend on it—because it does. Where is the weeping? Where are the early-morning prayer meetings? Where is the fasting?

Remember when the church sought God in an upper room for days

until fire fell? Remember when we were not in a hurry, and extended worship services drove us to our knees? Remember when seeking God through prayer drove the church? Methods, marketing programs and surveys now lead the way. Remember when prayer and seeking God were assets, not liabilities, to church growth? Remember when people were excited about seeking God rather than busy making excuses as to why they can't attend church?

While five-minute devotions and prayers have their place, we will starve in these dire days. We need powerful times of prayer, devotion and worship. "Without the heartbeat of prayer, the body of Christ will resemble a corpse. The church is dying on her feet because she is not living on her knees" (Al Whittinghill). Prayerlessness in the pulpit leads to apostasy and dead sermons. Prayerlessness in the pew leads to shattered lives and depression. Prayerlessness in men leads to the breakdown of the family. Prayerlessness in Washington leads to the breakdown of society.

God is not too busy, He's not on vacation, and He's not sleeping. He is an ever-present help in time of need. You can call out to Him in the deep of the night or in the midst of the storm. He hears the prayers of His children, but we must once again cultivate a life of seeking Him via prayer, brokenness, obedience and humility.

A word of caution though: We can humble ourselves, pray and seek His face, but all this will fall on deaf ears unless we turn from our wicked ways: "Certainly, the hand of the Lord is not so short that it cannot save, nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2).

We must turn from our rebellion, including idols that have diverted our passion for Christ. He came that we might be free from the bondage of sin, not continue in it. Surely we

understand that we cannot flaunt sin in the face of God without consequence.

Social media is filled with jealousy and envy; a competitive spirit permeates our lives. Self-indulgence is rampant in the church. Sexual sin has become an epidemic. Many churches add gimmicks and dumb down the gospel in an attempt to reach the culture. But the pulpit is to be sacred, not secular. And we wonder why the American church has drifted off course, why we're not experiencing powerful moves of God? Most churches resemble a social gathering rather than a powerful worship service.

The truth is that we have "perverted the words of the living God" (Jer. 23:36) by not warning and challenging people to turn from their sin. Pastors, as the church falls deeper into self-reliance and further from reliance on God, our need for bold leadership has never been greater. Life-changing sermons must come from a man whose life has been changed by God. Change will only occur in America when there is a strong conviction of sin and sincere repentance—may God grant us the wisdom and strength to proclaim these truths.

We must stop confusing God's patience with His approval and preach with conviction from the pulpits again. God help us, and our children, if we do not take seriously His call to return. Repentance is our only hope.

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