

One of the Devil's Favorite Lies to Lull Weary Christians Back to Sleep

A parable is a simple story conveying a moral or spiritual lesson. We often don't like direct confrontation; thus, God uses parables to open our eyes. Self-examination is very healthy.

I recently heard a contemporary parable that is also a true story. A young girl, devastated by the choice her father made to leave her family for a younger woman, had a nightmare following his announcement. She dreamed that she, her mother and sister all died in a horrific car accident. When she told her dad about the dream, he simply replied, "I'm sorry to hear that. I'm glad it was only a dream."

Her response shattered his soul: "Dad, right before we were hit, I looked through the window and saw that you were driving the other car."

This broke the man. He repented and restored his marriage. Some of you reading this may need to examine yourself. This may be exactly what you're doing to your family. But pride and spiritual blindness are preventing you from seeing it (men and women).

Some time ago, we received the following email, "I'm leaving my husband and our two small children. I know what the Bible says, but God knows my heart. He just wants me to be happy." Another woman who was separated recently complained about her marriage but said that she was "seeking God's will" as she headed to Vegas with her boyfriend. I want to shout, "Wake up!" Sin blinds us from the truth and we blame everyone and everything instead of looking in the mirror.

Again, God often uses parables to break through our hard hearts. In Matthew 13:24-25, Jesus gives a parable of the wheat and tare: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away."

"But while men slept" reminds us that the enemy works in darkness while our spiritual eyes are closed. Most go through life asleep to the things of God because there is little self-examination. As soon as God's Spirit begins to convict, the enemy whispers, "It's not your fault, it's theirs ... go back to sleep. It's not 's your family. Go back to sleep. It's not you ... it's the government ... go back to sleep." And we fall deeper and deeper into spiritual slumber until we are difficult to awaken because we are desensitized to the voice that is calling.

The Parable of the Weeds should spark self-examination. Am I a weed? Am I just playing church, going through the motions and saying the right things? This is a serious parable: the weeds are the sons of the wicked one. "Therefore as the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send out His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who do evil, and will throw them into a fiery furnace. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:40-42).

You probably won't hear this passage preached from many pulpits because it offends people. Pastors can sometimes be more concerned about offending their audience than offending God. But until we turn back to soul-searching, Christ-centered, Bible-believing, truth-elevating, grace-filled preaching, we will not see change in our nation or the church. God is crystal clear that repentance is not a recommendation; it's vital to spiritual health. The present condition of the church leaves one to wonder if the lack of conviction is contributing to her spiritually dead condition.

A weed, in the biblical sense, is a person who has no heart for God. They say that they do, but their heart and actions reveal otherwise. Weeds are full of excuses and blame-shifting. Pride is the dominating characteristic of their life. But there is good news for weeds: "Open [your] eyes and ... turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that [they] may receive forgiveness of sins ..." (Acts 26:18). Isaiah 55:6-7 adds, "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

Some say these articles are hard and difficult, but I believe that they are timely and urgent. Upward of 2,600 Americans die daily. The occult is one of the fastest growing religions in our nation. Pornography is an epidemic that is destroying countless marriages, as is the suicide rate among young adults. Divorce is shattering families and most marriages are on life support. Whom are we fooling?

It is true that we have a loving Father abounding in compassion and mercy, but today's view of "permissive parenting" may explain why we also attempt to redefine God as "permissive." Has the enemy sown seeds while you've slept? Wake up, and ask the Lord to renew your heart. Let's be careful not to mistake God's patience for permission.

"As I was walking in the fields, the thought came over me with almost overwhelming power, that every one of my flock must soon be in heaven or hell. Oh how I wished that I had a tongue like thunder ... I fear that you will lay the blame of your damnation at my door" (Robert M'Cheyne; 1813-1843). I hold the same opinion today. Pastors can't avoid these difficult truths. We too must wake up. {eo}

Shane Idleman is the founder and lead pastor of Westside Christian Fellowship, in Lancaster, California, and Leona

Valley, California. His sermons, books, articles and radio program have sparked change in the lives of many. For more, visit .

For the original article, visit .