

The Altar of Expediency

Today's complacency is tomorrow's captivity. We cannot be complacent in these troubled times. For as 21st-century American Christ followers, we cannot deny we live in difficult times—times of great moral relativism, cultural decadence, spiritual apathy and ecclesiastical lukewarmness.

For many, the obituary of American Bible-believing, Christ-centered Christianity seems, for all practical purposes, written and poised to be published on the annals of American history.

Yet there exists one fundamental truth poised to thwart any and all premature burials of this powerful faith narrative: The gates of hell cannot, may not, shall not and will not prevail against the church of Jesus Christ. To that regard, I stand convicted and convinced that our Christian faith, our Judeo-Christian value system, will not only survive these troubled times, but surprisingly, we may very well stand at the precipice of a Third Awakening.

Parenthetically, while our Bible-based, Christ-centered values and mores stand under unprecedented assault from culture and legislative initiatives, the number one problem in America may be nothing other than a lukewarm church—a church willing to sacrifice truth on the altar of political and cultural expediency.

The Truth of Our Identity

First, corporately, we stand guilty of sacrificing the truth of our identity, of who we are in Christ. Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16 the following: “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see

your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Accordingly, the question must be asked: Who are we? Are we just another institution in society? Are we another religious faith narrative competing in the marketplace of ideas? Are we a feel-good machinery for the spiritually impaired? Are we an antiquated conduit for a set of irrelevant values no longer applicable in the world of Facebook, iPads, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube?

How this generation responds will determine whether in this generation of light will overcome darkness.

Who are we? We must respond with clarity, conviction and courage the following:

We are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14).

We are a city on a hill. (Matt. 5:14).

We are people of the Word (1 Kings 8:56).

We are salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16).

We are prophetic and not pathetic.

We are disciples, witnesses and Christ followers (Matt. 28:16-20).

We are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11).

We are children of the cross (Rom. 8:17), fruit of the empty tomb (John 12:24) and product of the upper room (Acts 2).

We are the redeemed of the Lord (Ps. 107:2).

We are the sheep of his pasture (Ps. 100:3).

We are forgiven, free and favored.

We are called and chosen (1 Pet. 2:9).

We are warriors and worshippers (Ps. 144:1).

We are world changers and history makers (Mark 16:15).

We are the church of Jesus Christ, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against us (Matt. 16:18). Hallelujah!

Therefore, if we embrace all the above, then why do we seem to be surrendering? Why do we seem to be hiding under the canopy of despair and acquiescence? Why does the perception exist of a church in America retreating into the margins of irrelevancy?

For biblical contextualization purposes, let us consider the prophet Elijah. When facing the false prophets sacrificing on the altar, the prophet did not surrender truth on the altar of expediency. He exposed truth via the convicting conduit of God's transformative power. God's Word serves as a prophetic prescription for our time. Jesus, the truth, reminds us that it takes conviction to repent, courage to speak truth, holiness to see God, faith to move mountains, and love to change the world!

In that respect, let us confront this current darkness with the light of truth. Let 2014 be the year that we:

Walk like Enoch,
Believe like Abraham,
Dress like Joseph,
Stretch like Moses,
Shout like Joshua,

Dance like David,
Fight like Gideon,
Pray like Daniel,
Build like Nehemiah,
And live like Jesus!

All the while reminding ourselves and our fellow Christ followers that truth must never be sacrificed on the altar of expediency.

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