

This Catastrophic Error Is Infiltrating the American Church

Preaching to the saints? You need to understand that many of them are not safe—if they are saved at all.

“Who then can be saved?” (Matt. 19:25).

The call of church leadership is not to confirm someone's salvation but rather to challenge it. We need the fear and trembling to reverberate through our spirits night and day that only wrestling with our salvation can produce.

Jonathan Edwards brought his bold, fearful message to the church, to the saints:

The wrath of God burns against them; their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared; the fire is made ready; the furnace is now hot; ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet and held over them, and the pit hath opened her mouth under them.

The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession, and under his dominion. —Jonathan Edwards

I understand that many who read this will wholeheartedly disagree with my conclusions. They are either adherents of eternal security doctrine or some form of unstable, unbiblical or fully false-grace ideologies. Instead of tossing this article aside or attacking the viewpoint, I challenge you to humbly, soberly take it in and ask God to impact you, to shake you regarding this very serious topic.

As you might have guessed I believe that it's not only possible to surrender one's position in Christ, but I'm convinced it's common. Entire churches, many of them "Spirit-filled," are fully lost while others are filled with people who have never had their relationship with Jesus challenged, and are as lost as the wicked of the world—yet they don't know it.

It's from this position that I am shining the light on possibly the greatest epidemic regarding the issue of salvation in the construct of the church today. Pastors commonly presume those who are faithful attenders, givers and friends in their churches to be saved. It's a given. It's obvious. It's settled. If they are raising their hands, dancing at the alters, serving in ministry, leading small groups or involving themselves in other activities, then, of course, they are true followers of Jesus, right? Not always. In fact, the salvation journey is one of endurance, and it's extremely easy to pull back, to slip up, to become casual or to lose faith. "Because iniquity will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 24:12-13).

Many in the church are simply not saved. They are following Jesus in an unsaved condition, all while the pastor is sharing messages on how to be successful in Christ, how to prosper, how much Jesus loves them and the benefits of the kingdom—a kingdom they are not a part of.

Where are the gut-wrenching holiness messages? What happened to assaulting sin and compromise from the pulpit? Where is the weighty presence of the Holy Spirit that results in tearful repentance and an eager rejection of wickedness?

Pastors, do you realize that a large portion of your church is very possibly involved in pornography on a regular basis? Lust drives them. Many others are absolutely okay with filling their lives with movies, television and other media that is

filled with filth. F-bombs, nudity and absolute evil is consumed day after day without the slightest conviction of the Holy Spirit. This puts their salvation at risk. To presume they are safe and destined for Heaven is to be blinded and duped. It's utter foolishness.

You've made it easy for them to fit right in on Sunday mornings, after a night of debauchery, to sing songs of worship and to blend right into the fellowship. You've convinced them that all is well and heaven is their home, when the reality is that, absent legitimate repentance, they will be tormented in hell forever.

I'm talking about elders and worship leaders, Sunday School teachers, youth pastors, ushers, children's ministry workers and faithful attenders. Many of these people are entertaining themselves with evil, fully devoid of discernment and convinced that God is unconcerned about their lifestyles.

The Resolution

1. Preach Hellfire and Holiness

"The Christian world is in a dead sleep. Nothing but a loud voice can awaken them out of it." –George Whitefield

It's nonsensical to teach the joys and blessings of the kingdom to people who are foreigners, who are not truly adopted sons and daughters of the King. We have "rich young rulers" filling our pews, except instead of alerting them to their unsaved condition, they are confirmed as legitimate followers of Jesus.

Those who are perverse, sleeping, unconcerned and driven by their flesh must have a shock come to their system! The fire from heaven must consume them, but it's rare for a pastor to release that fire from the pulpit today. It's too risky. It's too costly.

Their eternal blood will be on the pastor's hands due to the failure to bring their rebellion and apathy to light. We need bold, confrontational messages today that strike us, break us and sear our flesh.

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:14, NKJV).

After a sermon in Lyme, Connecticut, "many had their countenances changed; their thoughts seemed to trouble them, so that the joints of their loins were loosed, and their knees smote one against another. Great numbers cried out aloud in the anguish of their souls. Several stout men fell as though a cannon had been discharged, and a ball had made its way through their hearts." ()

2. Cultivate an atmosphere of holy fire.

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16, ESV).

Every meeting should be driven by the raging fire of the Holy Spirit. Cultivating a culture where bold, deep groans of intercession and praying in tongues is normal will have a clear result: Those who are uncomfortable with an encounter with a very Holy Spirit will either repent or run.

I have often counseled pastors to bring this type of focus to their staff and leadership. Gather them to pray in tongues together for an hour a day and watch what happens. Staff members who are not on board with the vision, who are manipulative, who are functioning in Christian witchcraft and those who are gossips or resisters will be identified very quickly. When the Holy Spirit is present in such a deliberate and powerful way, impurities will be exposed. I also propose this type of environment be nurtured for the entire church

body.

I heard in a message at church this morning that in the Assemblies of God, a historic movement that was shaped by revival and Pentecost, only 22% of people in their churches today have been baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. How can this be?

Without this baptism of fire, oh my, the hope of living holy, obedient and fiery lives for Jesus is greatly and negatively impacted.

They are unable to build themselves up in the faith:

“But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith. Pray in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20, MEV).

They are unable to pray the mysteries of God: “For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit” (1 Cor. 14:2, ESV).

They are unable to overcome their limited understanding when praying: “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words” (Rom. 8:26).

Those who don't live, walk and pray in the Spirit are disadvantaged significantly. This is why it's crucial for all believers to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and to pray and groan in tongues daily. Doing so develops intimacy with Jesus. The prophetic in our lives intensifies. So do dreams and visions. Many will receive other gifts such as words of wisdom, words of knowledge, discerning of spirits, faith and more. And, most definitely, when the Holy Spirit is moving, the unholy won't be able to remain.

Stay tuned for part 2!