

Spirit-Filled Pastor Reveals the Simple but not Easy Cure for Spiritual Cancer

I recently read an intriguing excerpt from a book—paraphrasing, it says:

“A very prosperous and divided nation is about to implode. Many hold to a form of godliness but deny the true God. As drunkenness and addiction spiral out of control, sexual sin and perversion have captivated the minds of millions. Marriages are crumbling, families deteriorating, and children are suffering. There is little hope for justice when oppression and abuse run rampant. The cry goes out, ‘Is there any hope?’”

Although it fits the bill, this is not a description of America; it’s the description of spiritual cancer in Israel in 700 B.C. And yes, there is hope. God, in His mercy, gave a remedy that is timeless—a healing balm for spiritual cancer. We must simply listen and obey those same principles.

Diagnose the Disease

Like physical cancer, spiritual cancer spreads and affects all areas—from the family to the government and the schools. And like a doctor, we too must properly diagnose the disease.

According to Barna, nearly 72% of churches don’t look to the Bible as their final source of authority and direction. But this isn’t surprising; the same was true in 700 B.C. As in Israel’s day, we have also committed two evils: “They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jer. 2:13).

For true healing to take place, we must return to the fountain of living water and drink deeply. The Christian life is to be living and vibrant, not dry and dead. Cisterns hold water, the source of life. Broken cisterns represent pride that drains spiritual life from the soul.

If we diagnose the disease of pride and return to Him, His healing touch can revive, renew and restore our barren wasteland. We must be desperate for more of God! Desperate for His presence in our churches again. It's truly our only hope.

The Sin of the Silent Shepherd

When the pew is sick, the pulpit must prescribe the remedy. But the remedy—the life-changing application of God's Word—is being withheld. As a result, Jeremiah 5:31 is eerily similar to our condition today, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own authority; and My people love to have it so. Yet what will you do in the end?"

As the Isaiahs and Jeremiahs of Israel's day, pastors must diagnose spiritual cancer and provide treatment. A doctor would lose his license for saying that everything is fine where there are clear signs of cancer. How much more dangerous is it to remain silent in the midst of spiritual cancer?

Instead of completely changing their spiritual diet, silent shepherds continue to consume the junk food of liberalism and the downward pull of compromise. Instead of following Isaiah's lead of crying out and lifting their voice like a trumpet to warn the people of their sins (Isa. 58:1), many follow the lead of the false prophets who said "peace, peace" when there is no peace (Jer. 6:14).

We must pray diligently and ask for a mighty baptism of God's Spirit upon our pulpits again.

What Will It Take to Break Us?

Isaiah 66:2b reminds us that God will look on “him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My word.” As I recently wrote in *When Ministry Becomes Idolatry*: “God is not impressed by numbers but by nearness to Him ... If the blind beggar is unworthy of our attention, we need to check our hearts.”

We are waiting on God, but could it be that God is waiting on us? Gun safes are full, but prayer closets are empty—stock options soar, but hearts are not breaking. We are angry but not desperate, mad but not humble, and enraged but not broken. What will it take to break us? The red, white and blue cannot save us, but the crimson blood of Christ can: “Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity” (Joel 2:13b, NIV).

To get the ear of God and experience spiritual healing, we must return to brokenness, reverence, and the fear of the Lord.

The Cure Is Simple, but Not Easy

When one receives a cancer diagnosis, here is an urgency to make drastic lifestyle changes. When it comes to spiritual cancer, shouldn't we be just as aggressive and drastic, if not more so? Shouldn't there be a sense of urgency? Absolutely. But we are not desperate enough. Desperate people do desperate things and cry out like Isaiah, “Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence” (Isa. 64:1, NKJV).

When was the last time you spent half a day praying and fasting for God to rip the heavens open and come down? God listens to desperate, broken people who repent and focus on Him. We must begin here. It's simple, but not easy. Throughout Scripture, the call of God is not to Washington, Hollywood or Sacramento, but to us.

Hear the sermon, *The Cure for Spiritual Cancer*, here after Nov. 30. {eoa}

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