

2016: The Year of Remnant Uprising

We live in a wasteful society where remnants are generally thrown away or ignored. Yet, as every granny knows, the most beautiful quilts are often made from the leftover remnants. They form a beautiful mosaic of forgotten remembrances from the past that is treasured by generations to come.

There was once a time in America when people knew where Christians stood. Before the modern hypergrace movement and recent Christian-consumerism became the norm, Christians were considered respectable, honest, noble and generally someone to be emulated. They were people of integrity who stood for the cross—even in the face of opposition. Christians were the “good guys.” They wore the “white hat,” didn’t give in to their temptations and made an honest living. Christians were honored as the pillars of a strong society.

These days seem to have gone away ... If you ask the common person on the street the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian, their response will probably be that one goes to church and one doesn’t. Obviously, going to church doesn’t make you a Christian any more than going to McDonald’s makes you a hamburger.

This has happened because some “Christians” have abandoned the call to take up their cross and follow Christ. Far too many have settled for the superficial, shallow, consumeristic and ultimately heretical version of Christianity that now permeates American culture.

A few years ago, my wife, Ada, and I went to a Tampa Bay Buccaneers’ playoff game against the New York Giants. Remember *way back* when the Bucs used to make the playoffs? We sat among all Giant fans. They were belligerent, rude and constantly

taunted Bucs fans.

I kept thinking: *"This isn't right! I'm not supposed to feel like an outcast at our own stadium!"* I would expect it if I went to their stadium, but not our home stadium! In the same way, some might say "Isn't America a Christian nation, founded on godly values and principles! Why can't I root for my God on His home turf! Why am I being harassed when the majority of our nation still claim to be Christian?"

The answer is relatively simple. The Christianity practiced by many today has no allegiance to Christ. It is no longer a call to die, to take up your cross, and surrender your whole self to The Lord—it is now a counterfeit; take up your cross when convenient (or emotional), follow God if/when he blesses you ... and at all costs, only sacrifice when absolutely necessary. While most Americans still claim to be Christians, they actually despise Christ's teachings. So we find ourselves amidst a culture that's increasingly hostile toward Biblical Christianity and its views.

Depressed yet? This lack of genuine Christianity can make the true believer feel heartbroken and alone. Isolated. Like you're the only one left.

If you feel like this, the good news is that you're actually in good company. Elijah, arguably the greatest Old Testament prophet, felt the same way. He felt so alone that he even had a mental breakdown in I Kings 19 and prayed to die! Hopefully you haven't gotten that depressed. In Romans 11, the Apostle Paul is commentating on this account of Elijah and he writes this:

"I say then, has God rejected His people? God forbid! For I also am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah? How he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 'Lord, they have killed Your

prophets and destroyed Your altars. I alone am left, and they seek my life?' But what is the divine reply to him? 'I have kept for Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' **So then at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace**" (Rom. 11:1-5, emphasis mine).

Like today, many Israelites had accepted a polluted version of their faith. They may have claimed to be followers of Jehovah, but, in practice, they worshipped the false gods of Baal and completely dismissed the intrusive and inconvenient laws of God. In fact, they were hostile toward the things of God. Sound familiar?

Just as in Elijah's day, there is still a remnant of genuine believers who hold true to the countercultural teachings of Christ. Not all people have rejected God's message. You are not alone! There are others like you. There's still a remnant of saints who believe in the power of the cross, the blood, the Bible, the Holy Spirit and prayer! Like an echo from the past, this remnant is a leftover fragment from days past before Christianity became watered down, and the power of God became absent from lives. You are not alone! God has chosen a remnant for this present time in America. 2016 is a year for the remnant to arise.

It's been well-documented that God can do much with a little. Just ask the boy with five loaves of bread and two fish (John 6). Small numbers have never disqualified God from doing great things. Again, just ask Gideon (Judg. 6-7) or the 11 dysfunctional disciples that Jesus left the incredible responsibility of starting the church. A small remnant in the hands of God is more than enough!

Matthew 15:21-28 is a very awkward passage of Scripture. Awkward, because our sweet, loving, caring Jesus calls a Canaanite woman a dog. Yep.

"Then she came and worshipped Him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' But He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's bread and to throw it to dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'O woman, great is your faith. Let it be done for you as you desire.' And her daughter was healed instantly" (Matt. 15:25-28).

We can discuss the dog comment later, but for now I just want to bring your attention to the crumbs. Only twice does Jesus say someone has great faith, and this was one of them. This woman obviously understood something about the power of crumbs that we often miss. Crumbs ... a lot like a remnant, are usually swept away and put into the trash. They are a fragment of what used to be a whole.

But this woman knew something about crumbs. She knew that each crumb holds a small portion of the whole. The yeast, flour and honey that are stirred together to form the bread are also found in each crumb. She knew that if the faith of a mustard seed can move a mountain, then crumbs from the kingdom can heal a sick child! It's not about how much quantity you have, it's all about what's inside the portion that falls to you!

You are a remnant of something greater. Through the Holy Spirit, all of the potency of the kingdom of God is within you. You have within you the ability to do incredible exploits. You may have never thought of it like this before, but if all the Christians suddenly vanished, and you were the only one left, you have within you the apostolic ability to start a church, evangelize the community, pray for the sick and see them recover and disciple a great multitude of believers. The same way an acorn has within itself the ability to become a forest, you have the ability within you to become a movement of mass proportions!

These gifts lie dormant within believers because the hired

“professional” ministers do most of these things in the United States. But that dormant apostolic DNA is within you. It only takes an extreme situation to realize these abilities. Persecution often stirs this dormant DNA. That’s why the Chinese house church movement is 80 million strong. When you’re pressed, you’ll find you can do far greater things than you realize.

Most American Christians will now say, “I could do these things, but I wouldn’t be good at it,” or “I haven’t done it before,” or if you’re really honest, “I don’t want to do it.” But that’s why you’re not just an American Christian—you are a remnant! You know that you serve the Lord; the Lord doesn’t serve you. So when He calls, you answer. He’s not looking for perfection, he’s looking for obedience. He will call ... and as you are obedient, the church will once again become the movement it was originally intended to be!

You are a remnant of something powerful, and as long as there’s a crumb, everything you need is there to do everything God wants to perform through you. It’s time for a *remnant uprising*.

I AM REMNANT

I AM REMNANT is not just a shirt we give away or a theme for 2016. It’s an identity. It’s a realization that it’s time for every true believer to *arise* and begin living incarnationally within their sphere of influence. It’s a statement of who you are, what you believe and what you will do for Christ.

I AM REMNANT. I am faithful. I am made holy through the blood of Jesus Christ. I am able, ready, and willing to be obedient to God at all times. I am called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a missionary to my world. I am a carrier of the Kingdom of God everywhere my foot steps and I speak as His ambassador everywhere I enter.

I AM REMNANT. I still believe in the power of the Old Rugged Cross. I still believe His Blood is precious and one drop (crumb/remnant) can wash away my sin. I still believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the power of life and death within its pages. I still believe the Holy Spirit endues with power, guides, directs and also confronts my sin. I still believe that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and the only way to a relationship with God the Father (John 14:6).

I AM REMNANT. I will go, give and sacrifice when called upon. I will crucify my own flesh upon the altar of God's grace instead of crucifying my enemies on the altar of my own pride. I will walk humbly before God. I will pray with a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit that allows me to repent at the first sign of conviction. I will not just go to church, I will be the church. I will not compromise my convictions. I will stand between the living and the dead and stop the plague. I will live a life worthy of Christ's death for me.

I AM REMNANT and I WILL ARISE in 2016. {eoa}

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