

A Prophetic Warning for the Church's Spiritual Crisis

After I woke up from a significant dream about Ellen DeGeneres, I read my verse of the day... here it is:

Colossians 4:5 Be wise when you engage with those outside the faith community; make the most of every moment and every encounter.

I felt God had a message of love for Ellen that I should try to get to her.

I decided to email Ellen. I have no idea if she will ever get it, but I pray she does.

Here's what I sent to Ellen DeGeneres:

Here's a strange story for ya! I'm a pastor & author, and I had a dream about you last night. It was crazy long and detailed and the first two-part dream I've had (I got up to go to the bathroom in the middle, and the dream continued after I went back to sleep).

You aren't someone I think about often at all (sorry!), so I have a feeling God may have dropped that dream on me. It started with you at the Academy Awards (or something similar) and you called me on stage from the audience. I was overwhelmed with grief and whispered to you, "Please forgive me for judging you."

Later, you went on to share with me from your heart about some pain and you talked about your mom. Later on I met your mom and your brother at their home. (I didn't realize you had a brother until I googled it just a moment ago.)

There were other pieces to the dream, but I thought I'd leave

it at that for now.

A little about me; I may appear to fit the stereotype as I do believe any lifestyle that embraces activities that God, in his wisdom, deems unhealthy must be avoided. Homosexuality included. However, what's also included is pride, which the Christian church is often steeped in. So is selfish ambition and having cold love. All deadly, all have hit the church at large. Again, please forgive me.

After the dream I decided to preach tonight on a crazy controversial message calling the church to repentance titled, "Almost Homosexual: The Church in Crisis."

God likes you, he loves you. Me too.

I'd **strongly encourage you** to listen to this powerful teaching and intercession for Ellen from a **Revival Church** service here:

As I begin this urgent and troubling prophetic message, I must do my best to make several points extremely clear.

- God is passionately jealous and zealous for his beautiful bride, the church. His emotions are extreme and deep as he yearns for love fueled by intimacy with those he laid down his life for. His affection cannot be described by even the most romantic or poetic language.
- When I mention *the church* in this message, I am referring to the global body of Christ. The global bride of Christ. I'm fully aware and thankful that there are many local expressions of the church that are radically surrendered and given to the lover of their souls—Jesus Christ.
- The primary points I will expound on have little to do with sexuality, or sexual sin. You will have to intentionally keep this in mind so as to ensure you understand the issues when I deal with the spirits

behind homosexuality and how these spirits are being embraced in the church (again, the global church; or, the church in general).

Massive Repentance

Jer 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? 10 I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings."

This is a powerful verse, and the more time we spend on our face in the presence of God, the more we realize how true it is.

Before we can go any further, we have to all agree on the above point that is found in Jeremiah 17: Our hearts are both deceitful and wicked. What does this mean? Very simply, it's possible and common for impure motives to be rooted deeply in us even though we may be devoted followers of Christ.

The more time I spend in prayer the easier it is for the Lord to dig deep and bring to the surface issues that wouldn't normally be evident. My heart has harbored pride at times though at the surface I felt meek. Other times I've verbally forgiven people, but then the Holy Spirit revealed to me a deeper reality—that I hadn't truly done so.

This is why we must not only be OK with messages like this one, but we have to eagerly invite God to shine his burning light into every part of our lives.

Is 6:5, And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

When God is in our midst, a revelation of our own sin and issues are made known. A key problem today is that God's manifest presence isn't with us as He should be! Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy. He is the Revelation. He is the Word. Where God is, revelation is. You can't separate the two.

As God, in his burning love for us, reveals our hearts to us, we will find ourselves falling to our knees.

God is calling the church to massive repentance.

Almost Homosexual?

God has suddenly revisited me with a prophetic word that shocked me and those I shared it with a few years ago—and he's added to the revelation.

Trust me, I've waited several days before deciding to write this (I usually write prophetic words the moment I receive them). I've considered the trouble it may bring. I've also considered God's thoughts about the matter and I've chosen to trust His wisdom that this will free many more people than it will disturb. God's Word and His wisdom must return to the pulpits again.

"If Jesus had preached the same message that ministers preach today, He would never have been crucified." – Leonard Ravenhill

Deuteronomy 4:23-24 (ESV) 23 *"Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. 24 For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."*

God is jealous of His church—and the spirits that have not only invaded the church, but that have been embraced by the

church, have made Him jealous indeed.

As I was on the airplane flying into Colorado a few years ago, the Lord surprised me with a strong and striking word for the church. I was shaking.

The church is almost homosexual.

This is a word that I'm confident is tearing at the heart of God... he's watching his bride become bewitched.

Question—Is it possible that we in the church are close to embracing the same spirits that fuel the homosexual agenda?

As I was watching the mountains of Colorado draw closer during the final approach to the airport that day, the Lord revealed three drivers of the homosexual agenda:

1. Pride
2. Identity
3. Lust

Understand—the driver of the homosexual agenda is not same-sex attraction, but rather there are strong deceiving spirits of pride, self-promotion and identity, and lust.

I was on a train where two homosexual girls were very visibly hanging on each other, making it very clear that they were together. Their actions were not a result of raging hormones, but rather, they were making a bold declaration, a prideful pronouncement of their chosen identity as lesbians.

They wanted to force affirmation, be noticed and demand acceptance and equality.

*“All of the acceptable sins in church are keeping us sick.”
—Steve Gray*

“Be careful about what you think is innocent. It may come back and choke you.” —Steve Gray

The church has been bewitched by the same spirits that give fuel to the homosexual agenda—and this is a primary reason we have not had success in winning homosexuals to Jesus. We can't cast out the same demonic spirits we embrace.

Pride

We've all heard of gay pride. Pride is a hallmark of the homosexual movement, and, all too often, it's a driver of the church as well.

I hear continually that it's rare to find a church where the tangible, manifest presence of God can be experienced. I believe, sadly, there are more Ichabod churches than we realize. An Ichabod church is simply a church that is devoid of God's glory. The ark of God's presence has been captured. It doesn't mean God hates that church. Quite the opposite—He is grieved that He must be removed from His lover, His bride.

1 Samuel 4:21-22 (ESV) 21 *And she named the child Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel!" because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. 22* *And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."*

1 Peter 5:5 (ESV) 5...*Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

You may not have thought about it this way, but God, though he loves so deeply, actually opposes, or resists, those who are proud. God's glory departs.

We live in a culture where we fight for success, we jockey for position and we can't imagine being hidden or failing. Compromise has consumed the church as it seeks success, a

larger building, more people, more influence, more money and other demands. Pride has resulted in worship of images made of gold where humility demands the gold is given as worship to God. Pride has resulted in worshiping a packed house where humility calls for laying down our lives for even one.

We wonder why the church isn't having more success in the culture.

I believe a key reason is that we are attempting to attack worldly pride with religious pride. We are actually retaining the services of the *very same demons* that we are attempting to battle! A spirit of pride! God resists the proud! Is it possible that we are attempting to change culture from a position of religious pride all while God is not standing with us?

When humility reigns, the church will have the grace that God promises in 1 Peter 5.

Identity

This point is the most burning issue in my spirit right now.

I am fully given to seeing people step into their destinies, discover their true identity in Christ and finding freedom from lies and emotional scars that the enemy has given them. It's a significant focus of my own ministry.

However, we have a growing problem.

- Focus is on self more often than it is on God.
- Focus is on living more than it is on dying daily.

1 Corinthians 4:10-13 (ESV) **10** *We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute.* **11** *To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless,* **12** *and we labor, working with our own*

*hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; **13** when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.*

Please understand, I believe we are seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. We are kings and priests. We have great authority. We have overcome. We are the head and not the tail, above and not beneath.

But, our identities, when rightfully understood, don't lead us to focusing mostly on personal benefit. When we embrace the cross of Christ, which is where our identities originate, we are now focused on going low, humbling ourselves, serving with passion and identifying with the scum of the world—so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

A focus on our own benefits, our own healings, our own identities as it relates to personal gain has actually resulted in us aligning with a key spirit that drives the homosexual movement.

Just as with homosexuals, God loves them and us too deeply to affirm a false identity—no matter how desirable and convincing that identity may be! God's wisdom is much higher than ours, and it takes humility to admit that.

This is a huge, huge point!

When we fight for a false identity that feels so overwhelmingly a part of us, and when our focus is on acceptance, affirmation and human rights, we give up the call to die to our own desires. Suddenly securing our own identity is more important than serving the masses.

The goal is not to be affirmed, accepted, liked or honored. We aren't to look for equality. We don't compare ourselves with others. We can't make demands when life is unfair. The church

is to die so that others may live. Our identity is to be fully and entirely in Christ.

An improper attention given to the pursuit of identity (acceptance, affirmation, etc.) causes us to forsake the call to focus on our mission for the sake of devotion to narcissism. This is where the temptation to disobey God and submit to the demands of man can happen.

“For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.” –James 3:16

Lust

Lust is oozing through the church today. Yes, it's true that sexual lust is rampant as pornography has been viewed by as many as 50% of Christian men recently.

However, lust is not limited to the sexual variety.

Simply ask the question, *“What causes you to get excited, to come alive?”*

Many honest Christians would admit that everything from money to fame to popularity to sex could be the answers.

James 1:14-15 (ESV) **14** But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. **15** Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Lust results in death. It really is that simple. The life is sucked right out of people. Suicide is on the rise. Eternal death is another threat as well.

This is a tragic reality in the church today—we've lost our first love! False intimacy in the form of lust has take the place of a deep, satisfying, truly intimate and never-ending

encounter with Jesus! He yearns for us while His beautiful bride is yearning for other lovers!

The church has lost its desire for intimacy with Jesus. Many Christians don't even know what it is to be overwhelmed by his deep, burning love. Jesus is more of a principle or a foreign character in a book than he is a real, tangible, literal Person you can feel.

This lack of revelation and encounter in a very intimate, life-giving way with Jesus has resulted in one more comparison with the homosexual movement:

The bride is becoming intimate with the bride.

What does that mean?

We have become more interested in reproducing after our own kind than in receiving a fresh impartation directly from God Himself. How does this play out? Several ways:

- We become enthralled with a certain stream in the body (Word of Faith, house of prayer, etc.) and want to have a relationship with that stream hoping that it produces life.
- We turn to other people in the church instead of to God through prayer and study of the Word in the hopes that the union can result in the outcome we are looking for.
- We are more connected socially to people than we are spiritually to God.
- We believe our church growth comes through people, so we compromise the mission, cancel prayer, water down the message and get intimate with the body!

An intimate union with God will result in a fresh stream birthing through your ministry!

A deep encounter with Jesus will bring the results that a million human counselors never could!

"You can have all of your doctrines right—yet still not have the presence of God." –Leonard Ravenhill

The Solution

Intimacy. Repentance. Falling in love with Jesus. Humility.

"A sinning man stops praying, a praying man stops sinning" –Leonard Ravenhill

Yes, fervent, zealous prayer must return to our churches again!

2 Chronicles 7:14-16 (NKJV) 14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 15 Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. 16 For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

We cannot anymore develop systems that enhance our own identities, stroke our pride or fuel our lust for power, recognition or anything else.

It's time again to declare the cross, holiness, humility and passion from our pulpits and on our faces!

The core call is for a movement of humility and holiness.

It's a call to become broken and undone, desperate and deeply intimate with Jesus.

It's a call to a fasted lifestyle, to full surrender and complete saturation in the advance of the Kingdom.

It's a call to the deeply humble, yet powerfully bold life of John the Baptist.

Are we ready to let the Lover of our souls invade the deepest parts of our inner man? He is wooing His glorious bride back to we respond?

Song of Songs 1:4 (ESV) 4 Draw me after you; let us run. The king has brought me into his chambers.

John Burton has been developing and leading ministries for over 20 years and is a sought-after teacher, prophetic messenger and revivalist. He has authored nine books, has appeared on Christian television and radio and directed one of the primary internships at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City. Additionally, he planted two churches, has initiated two city prayer movements and is currently directing a prayer- and revival-focused ministry school in Detroit called theLab University. John also has a web- and graphic-design business and is continually developing new and exciting ventures. He and his beautiful wife, Amy, have five children and live in the Detroit area. He can be reached via his website at .