

The Diabolical Silence on Holiness

A few years ago, the Spirit of God quickened my wife to pray concerning the importance of a dream she was given. In the dream she was walking with a pastor on church property where many were gathered in a picnic-like fellowship. As they were walking, she noticed a small cookhouse where the pastor took her in. All kinds of meals were being prepared there, including several dishes of which she was familiar with from her years as a missionary in Africa. As my wife's eyes looked upward in that cookhouse she saw shelf after shelf of warm cooked food that had been stored, but not served. She asked the pastor why he wasn't serving that food to the people.

My wife was shocked when he replied, "This is strange food to them."

"But it's being wasted here," she said.

Then she and the pastor walked back out onto the church property as he continued to show her more of the facilities. When they crossed over a small garden bridge she saw weeds and tares sprouting up from under the bridge. As she looked around she noticed these same weeds and tares growing up all over the property, so much so that their feet became entangled, making it difficult to walk.

When she woke up from this dream she was distressed in her heart, and inquired of the Lord as to the dream's meaning. He showed her that the weeds and tares represented festering sin, complacency and compromise resulting from a neglect of certain messages and truths that His body was not receiving.

"For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

"If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed" (1 Tim. 4:6).

"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Tim 4:2-4).

These verses speak of "the whole counsel of God", "words of nourishment", and "sound doctrine" that are necessary for a holy, fruitful, Spirit-filled walk for every believer.

This dream is very significant to the times we are living in and the overall condition of the Church today. The wisdom from the Lord contained in my wife's dream is this: The absence or the dilution of certain spiritual truths in the Church today is breeding sin, complacency and compromise. Deception has been the result, creating a large gap between the profession and the practice of true Christianity. Evil and wickedness are actually strengthened when preachers fail to stand in the full counsel of the Lord and speak His words.

"They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness... But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings" (Jer. 23:14, 22)

I heard a well-known preacher say that in one megachurch he spoke at he discovered that approximately 60 couples were living together out of wedlock. Not one of them was legally married. The reason given was that none of them thought it was wrong. How shocking! Here's the question I have: What kind of

message were the pastors of that church preaching? Obviously a very defective one.

Thank God for all the earnest and sincere Christians and ministers in the Church today. But, personally, I believe the Church is also full of backsliders, false converts and false ministers who have never been searched out and convicted of their own sins. Many professing Christians go to church meetings, sing their church songs, talk their church language and hear church sermons, but they live like the world. Their lifestyles are in contradiction to the Word of God, often even justifying things they know are wrong.

One man said, "I know I shouldn't be shacking up with my girlfriend, but I believe in Jesus and He knows my heart." Is that kind of faith enough to save a person? The Bible says that the demons also believe and tremble (James 2:19). In other words, the demons believe and tremble before God more than those like this man, who say they believe, but whose contradictory lifestyle belies their own profession. This type of scenario has become all too common in the Church today.

When ministers leave certain components of the gospel and important scriptural truths out of their preaching it opens a large door for the sinner and the halfhearted to feel comfortable in their sins and in their worldly lifestyle. And when that becomes the norm or status quo in a church, it cultivates an atmosphere of deception. When it comes to even the basic message of salvation, many are being errantly taught that all you need to do is to acknowledge your belief in Jesus, pray a little prayer, and you're in. Nothing is ever said before or after salvation about true heart-repentance, surrendering your life—losing it to gain it, following Jesus in wholehearted obedience and loving Him above all others.

Several years ago the Lord dealt with me, and I'm sure many others, about writing and speaking on lost themes—truths in the body of Christ that have been understated or discarded

that need to be restored. Some examples would include the end times and the coming of the Lord, heaven, hell and holiness, the judgment seat of Christ, etc. He said there has to be more preaching on these themes because they are emphasized in the scriptures. He also said that there has been a diabolical silence on holiness that has greatly weakened the character of the Church and opened a door to doctrines of demons.

Do you realize that our loving and merciful Savior gave more actual descriptions of hell than He did heaven? He also spoke much concerning death and future judgment. And the frequency by which He spoke these things agrees with the entire pattern of the New Testament. Actually, there are 234 references to death, hell, and judgment in 260 total chapters of the New Testament. Isn't it disturbing that so few preachers today preach on these vitally important themes? We've practically taken them out of the gospel. So much of our preaching today is self-centered and lacks substance.

When someone is used to a light diet or an unhealthy stream of junk food, it will take a little while to adjust to solid nutritious food again. But that's what the Lord wants for His people in this hour so they can be healed and strengthened, and then bear fruit that remains.

Remember also that God never makes demands of you without empowering you to respond to those demands. It would be unjust for God to ask us to do something we could not do. It's the marvelous power of His grace in our lives that works in us to *will* and to *do* of His good pleasure (Phil 2:13).

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