

Why Spirit-Filled Pastors Need to Preach on Holiness Again

Years ago, pastors used to preach a lot of sermons on holiness. But times and attitudes have since changed, and we don't often hear people talking about holiness anymore. Unfortunately, that includes charismatic Christians. Yet Christian historian David Barton says we could win this nation back if the church would simply revive its passion for holiness and discipleship once again. If we don't, the results could be disastrous.

Barton says when charismatic pastors ignore crucial biblical teachings on holiness and discipleship, it affects the entire body of Christ in America. He told me his son attended a Pentecostal university. During the 2016 election, his son asked his conservative classmates if they preached about marriage, life or abortion. They said, "Absolutely not. That's not to be covered in the church."

This, Barton says, is where many Pentecostal and charismatic preachers are today—and even conservative pastors too. Many know the truth but don't preach about it.

"We don't have the fear of God anymore," Barton says. "There's no sense of having to give an account to God for our behavior or our beliefs and our thoughts—all the things we should teach. So now we've become a user-friendly kind of church."

Sadly, it's not just Christians in general who are to blame. Much of the problem, Barton explains, lies in pastors' priorities for their churches. Barton and George Barna teamed up to survey theologically conservative pastors. They asked them how they knew whether their churches were successful or not. The top five answers evangelical pastors gave were the

offerings, the number of people who attend the church, the number of staff meetings, the number of programs they offered and the square footage they had. None of these answers is based on Scripture. And Barton says that is a major red flag indicating where the American church is today.

"If your No. 1 issue is offerings, then you are not going to say anything that will jeopardize offerings, which means you're not going to say a whole lot of stuff," he says. "You're not going to do anything to jeopardize attendance. So that's why they will not talk about these things. I grew up in that [Holiness] background ... and we're not finding holiness taught anymore. We're not finding people confronting the lifestyle saying this is morally right or morally wrong."

But what caused the church to get to this place of seeker-sensitive preaching? Barton says it's because the church—especially charismatics—is overly focused on crusades and revivals.

"We have guys going to Africa [with] crusades of 10,000 people or 100,000 people," he says. "Right now, it's all about converts and getting people to say the sinner's prayer."

Of course, Jesus had His moments of preaching to thousands. But Barton points out that it wasn't the large crowds who changed the world. It was the handful of disciples Jesus poured into on a regular basis.

"That's where we've failed as charismatics," Barton says. "We're measuring the wrong things, and we're using the wrong behavior. ... No American church today is being accused of teaching hard stuff and driving people away with disciples staying behind to be taught more. ... In the Pentecostal world, there's no holiness teaching anymore."

If the American church refuses to focus once again on discipleship and holiness, Christianity could face a worldwide crisis, Barton says. After all, in the last 300 years, 85% of

all evangelistic resources have come out of the U.S. Because of that, 32% of the world today professes to be Christian. (For comparison, 21% are Muslim, 14% are Hindu and 7% are Buddhist.)

That's a great number, he says, but the only way to truly increase the percentage of Christians in the world is if each believer decides to reach just one person this year—minister the gospel and teach them how to follow Jesus. If every Christian did that, then by this time next year, Christians would make up 64% of the global population.

“If we got back to that local focus of ‘I’m going to take care of my town’—if Christians did that all across the United States, we would have America back in a heartbeat,” Barton says.

Listen to my exclusive interview with Barton at . I hope every Christian reading this article takes these words to heart today. The charismatic church needs to revive our passion for holiness out of love for Christ. The stakes are too high to stay as we are.

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