

Revivals And Church History :: Where Are The Faithful Ones? by Rich Carmicheal

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"...The Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land. There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore the land mourns, and everyone who lives in it languishes..." (Hos. 4:1-3).

The conditions described by the Prophet Hosea are sadly too familiar in our day. Immorality, greed, violence, corruption, abuse of power, false teaching, ungodly leadership, oppression, dishonest gain, and so forth, are rampant in the world. With the Psalmist we have reason to cry, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceases to be, for the faithful disappear from among the sons of men" (Psa. 12:1).

This deeply grieves the Lord because He is completely faithful to us and desires that we respond in faithfulness to Him. He wants us to be devoted wholeheartedly to Him, to live in reverence and honor of Him and His ways, to be full of integrity and reliability, and to shun anything that displeases Him. Any breakdown in our relationship with Him is an act of unfaithfulness on our part toward the One who loves us perfectly.

Tragically, many people today, even within the church, do not really know Him or love Him. They neglect His Word, spend little time with Him in prayer, and do not faithfully carry out His will and His work. Some are even attempting to refashion and redefine Him and His Word according to their own desires. They no longer come to Him with reverence and on His terms, but have their own selfish interests at heart. They are lovers of self, lovers of money and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having only the form of godliness (2 Tim. 3:2-4).

Remedial Judgment

In response to sin and unfaithfulness, God sends judgment. As Moses declares, "You neglected the Rock who begot you, and forgot the God who gave you birth. And the Lord saw this, and spurned them because of the provocation of His sons and daughters. Then He said, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; for they are a perverse generation, sons in whom there is no faithfulness'" (Deut. 32:18-20).

Do we not see even now God's judgment upon the U.S. and other nations, judgment which includes the withdrawal of His presence and power, the withdrawal of moral and financial blessings, the lessening of the restraint on evil, and an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters? Thankfully, God's primary purpose for sending judgment is not to destroy, but to awaken us to the consequences of sin and bring us to repentance and restoration in our relationship with Him. To this end, even in the midst of judgment, He sends His Word and His Spirit to stir up His people to return to Him.

Revival Follows Repentance

For example, consider the revival that took place during the reign of Hezekiah. Ahaz, the king before him, "had brought about a lack of restraint in Judah and was very unfaithful to the Lord" (2 Chr. 28:19). He sacrificed to false gods causing the downfall of all Israel (28:23). When Hezekiah began to reign, he acknowledged the judgment that was upon God's people because of unfaithfulness, and he called the Levites and priests to consecrate themselves and the house of the Lord (29:5-11). Then he sent messengers throughout all Israel and Judah calling God's people to return to the Lord and to serve Him, so His anger might turn away from them and that He might return to them (30:6-9).

While some of the people mocked the messengers, others humbled themselves and responded to the call. They gathered in Jerusalem, removed pagan altars, and celebrated the Passover and worshiped the Lord (30:10-26). "Then the Levitical priests arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard and their prayer came to His holy dwelling place, to heaven" (30:27). When all this was finished, the people "went out to the cities of Judah, broke the pillars in pieces, cut down the Asherim, and pulled down the high places and the altars...until they had destroyed them all" (31:1). True worship was restored and God's blessings returned to the people (31:2-18).

Consider as well the revival in the days of Ezra. This man of God "had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel" (Ezra 7:10). The hand of God was upon him, and he led a group of God's people from Babylon to Jerusalem with silver, gold and utensils for the house of God. After arriving in Jerusalem, Ezra discovered that the people, including leaders, had sinned against the Lord by not separating themselves from the peoples around them, but intermarrying with them.

Ezra was deeply grieved by this news, and he tore his garment and robe, pulled some of the hair from his head and beard, and sat down appalled. "Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel on account of the unfaithfulness of the exiles gathered to " (9:4). At the evening offering, he arose and fell on his knees, stretched out his hands to the Lord, and poured out his heart to the Lord in prayer. He acknowledged God's mercy in delivering the people from the earlier judgment, but also acknowledged his concern over how the Lord might respond to the present unfaithfulness: "Wouldst Thou not be angry with us to the point of destruction, until there is no remnant nor any who escape? O Lord God of Israel, Thou art righteous, for we have been left an escaped remnant, as it is this day; behold, we are before Thee in our guilt, for no one can stand before Thee because of this" (9:14-15).

As Ezra was praying, a large assembly of men, women and children gathered with him, and they wept bitterly. Then Shecaniah made this pivotal declaration: "We have been unfaithful to our God, and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. So now let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Arise! For this matter is your responsibility, but we will be with you; be courageous and act" (10:2-4). After a proclamation was issued for all of the exiles to assemble at Jerusalem, Ezra led them to confession and repentance, and they pledged to take action until God's anger turned away from them (10:14).

Revival in Our Day?

As we consider the sin and unfaithfulness toward God in our day, where are the godly, Word-centered leaders like Ezra who will deeply grieve before God over sin and lead God's people to repentance? Where are those like Hezekiah who will do what is "good, right, and true before the Lord" (2 Chr. 31:20), those who will cling to the Lord and not depart from following Him (2 Kgs. 18:6), those who will recognize God's judgment on sin and call His people to return to Him?

Where are the leaders today who, like Daniel, will live holy and faithful lives, with no negligence or evidence of corruption? (Dan. 6:4). Where are those who can say with Micah, "I am filled with power— with the Spirit of the Lord— and with justice and courage to make known to Jacob his rebellious act, even to Israel his sin"? (Micah 3:8). Where are those who will devote themselves "to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4), and who will preach the Word, being ready in season and out of season, reproving, rebuking and exhorting with great patience and instruction? (2 Tim. 4:2). Where are those who, out of deep concern for God's people, will labor earnestly in prayer for them to "stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God"? (Col. 4:12).

And where are the people who, like Shecaniah, will take God's Word to heart, humble themselves, confess sin and rally God's people to return fully to Him? Where are the faithful intercessors, those who will "build up the wall and stand in the gap" before God on behalf of this generation so that further judgment might be averted? (Ezek. 22:30-31). Where are those who will prove themselves "to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation"? (Phil. 2:15).

Where are the good and faithful servants who will be faithful with anything and everything the Lord entrusts to them? (Matt. 25:23; Luke 16:10). Where are the "faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:1) and those who will "be faithful until death"? (Rev. 2:10).

If ever there was an hour for God's people to rise up, to live holy and faithful lives pleasing to God, to intercede on behalf of the church and the world, to administer the grace of God, and to clearly and boldly proclaim the truth of God, this is the hour.

Re: Where Are The Faithful Ones? by Rich Carmicheal - posted by Scott1969 (), on: 2011/11/27 1:26

Amen, Greg ! Thanks for posting !