

~Other Speakers M-R: Old Paths Magazine - Issue 18:

The Simple Profound Secret

ONE OF THE MOST TRAGIC scenes in the Bible and yet one of the most familiar to us is the scene of the strongest man who ever lived, a man by the name of Samson, finding out he had no strength. Judges chapter 16 records this. “When Delilah saw that he had told her all that was in his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines saying, ‘Come up once more, for he’s told me all that is in his heart.’ Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands and she made him sleep on her knees, called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him and his strength left him. And she said, ‘The Philistines are upon you, Samson,’ and he woke from his sleep and said, ‘I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.’” And here’s the telling line written by God the Holy Spirit. “But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. So the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes, brought him down to Gaza, bound him with bronze chains and he became a grinder in the prison.” Sad. He didn’t know that the Lord had departed from him. I can’t imagine anything worse than being abandoned by God.

To the sons of Israel earlier in the book of Judges in chapter 10, God said this, “You have forsaken me, you have served other gods, therefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen. Let them deliver you in the time of your distress.” This was God saying to Israel, “I’m done with you, abandoned by God. Proverbs chapter 1 records a similar sentiment. “Because I called and you refused, I stretched out My hands and no one paid attention. You neglected all my counsel, you did not want my reproof, I will even laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your dread comes, when your dread comes like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind. When distress and anguish come on you, then they will call on Me but I will not answer. They will seek Me diligently, they will not find Me because they hated knowledge, did not choose the fear of the Lord, they would not accept My counsel, they spurned all My reproof, so they will eat of the fruit of their own way and be satisfied with their own devices.” Again being abandoned by God, turned over to the inevitable consequences of sinful choices.

Prophecy Of Hosea

A haunting line is found tucked away in the little prophecy of Hosea chapter 4 and verse 17, and it refers to Israel by the name Ephraim and it says this, “Ephraim is joined to idols,” so says God. The next line, “Leave him alone.” Sounds out of character for God, doesn’t it? “Ephraim is joined to idols, bring him back,” might sound a little more like God. “Let him alone?”

People and nations, even the covenant nation Israel can come to a point where they are abandoned by God. Jesus reiterated this in Matthew 15 when He confronted the Pharisees and then described them to the disciples. He said this, “They’re blind leaders of the blind. Let them alone.” When God lets you go, it’s serious. When Jesus pronounces over you abandonment, it’s serious.

Now I’m going to say something, you’re going to have to hold on to your seat a little bit. I’m convinced beyond doubt that in this same sense, God has abandoned America. I know that’s a strong thing to say and I’m going to show you why I believe you can see that clearly in Scripture.

The Cycle Of History

Open your Bibles to Romans 1...Romans 1. Don’t be surprised, by the way, by that statement because while you’re turning there, Acts 14:16 says this, this is from the Apostle Paul, “In the generations gone by,” that’s past history, “God permitted all the nations to go their own way.” This is not the first nation God has abandoned, nor if Jesus tarries is it the last, or is it now the only. This is the cycle of history and it is this very cycle of history that Paul describes in Romans chapter 1. Here in Romans chapter 1, beginning in chapter 18 running to the end of the chapter, you have the most clear presentation of God abandoning a nation, what that looks like, what happens and why He does it. This is the most graphic and the most detailed and the most comprehensive discussion of what it means for a people, a society to be abandoned by God. And it perfectly describes the moral chaos in our own nation today.

It starts with very familiar words. Verse 18, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven.” Now let me stop you there for just a moment. We’re talking about the wrath of God and I need to just let you know that in the Scripture and in reality there are five different manifestations of God’s wrath. Okay? And you will recognize them. There is eternal wrath. That is that wrath which God unleashes on the unbelieving dead in hell...eternal

wrath, suffering forever eternal punishment. That's eternal wrath. There is also in the Bible eschatological wrath, that is the unfolding of divine wrath at the end of the age described in detail, for example, in Revelation 6 through 19, the pouring out of God's wrath in the breaking of seven seals, the blowing of seven trumpets, and the dumping of seven bowls of wrath...eschatological wrath, that wrath is yet to come as is eternal wrath for all society, yet right now there are many experiencing eternal wrath, all the unbelieving who have left this world are experiencing. The third kind of wrath is what I guess you could call calamitous wrath. That is that wrath of God which produces calamity in the world and the most notable illustration of that is the Flood which drowned the entire world, only eight people were saved. Massive wrath on the part of God against sinful man.

Fourthly, there is consequential wrath, that's sowing and reaping wrath. That's the natural end of patterns and choices of sin. Whatever a man sows, he...what?...he reaps...that's consequential wrath.

The first thing you look for in a society you're trying to discern whether God has abandoned that society is whether or not that society has gone through a sexual revolution so that illicit sex, adultery, every form of immorality is accepted as normal in that society. And we're there. The second step in the progression, verse 26, "God gave them over, not just to passions that are explicable because they're men and women, but to inexplicable degrading passions for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural." You know a society has been abandoned by God when it celebrates lesbian sex. God has given them over...gross affections, unnatural, unthinkable. So you follow a sexual revolution with a homosexual revolution, and homosexuality becomes normalized. Verse 27 adds the male part, "In the same way the men abandon the natural function of the women burned in their desire toward one another." And by the way, it is a burning that is just hard to comprehend. There was a man named Halpern(?) who was the coroner for the city of New York and he did, I think, 26 or 28 thousand autopsies in his day. He said we can look at a corpse that had been murdered and tell you whether a homosexual killed that person by the multiple wounds. He's not a Christian, he's a Jewish guy and he just said, "There's something about the passions of that kind of involvement that are not explicable."

But interestingly enough, the Holy Spirit puts the women first here and the men after. Why? The Holy Spirit refers first to the degradation of women because they're usually the last to be affected in the decay of morals because their hearts are so naturally inclined toward a husband and toward the responsibility of nurturing children. But when they lead the parade, God has removed His restraint. And the amazing thing of it is this, verse 27, "The man abandoning the natural function of the women, burning in their desire toward one another, men with men, committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error." Right into this wrath of abandonment comes the wrath, the consequential wrath and even though it generates venereal disease and AIDS, they keep doing it. This is what step two looks like and we know this has come like a flood. But it's not the final step. The final step comes in verse 28, the middle of verse 28, "God gave them over to a depraved mind."

And so we see what happens in a society when God turns them over and we see why He turns them over. And that was just a quick overview. So we look at our nation, our hearts are broken, the mind is depraved, they think they're smart, they're morons. They can't get to the truth, the mind is completely gone. They invent bizarre religions. They become religious. And today they like to talk about being spiritual, right? I'm very religious, I'm very spiritual. What in the world does that mean? What does that mean? As if you can invent your own worship and your own religion. That's man at his lowest. That's all the way at the bottom, total complete rejection of the true God and the true faith. That's where we are. Now the question is...how do we pray?

God Only Wants One Thing

God only wants one thing out of a nation. Listen and believe this book. I really get grieved even when I hear evangelical people in the media and the public eye kind of equivocating about the clarity of the gospel. It's all we've got. Or about the clarity of what Scripture says. Your prayer and mine has to be that God would raise up faithful preachers and people who would proclaim His Word across this land. Pray for this generation of young men that God will call and shape and send, pray for pastors everywhere. Pray for lay people, for Christians to be bold. There's only one solution and that's the truth...the truth by which God saves, by which God sanctifies, and if this nation will respond and listen to His truth, God will open the flood gates. We might be the greatest recovery story in history. But there's no other way than that people listen to Me and walk in My ways. It's not going to happen if there's a famine of the hearing of the Word of God. Pray that the Word, as Paul said, would have free course and that it would run with all its power across this land.

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