

SermonIndex Announcements :: WORLDLY SAINTS by brother Greg**WORLDLY SAINTS by brother Greg - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/11/7 0:36**[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/worldlysaints.gif>]

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Worldly Saints*by brother Greg*

A Message to the church that is not counting the cost

We are living with an epidemic of cheap grace in the Church. Flippant confession, shallow consecration, superficial surrender, discipleship that does not follow are just some of the sure signs. We revel in a Christianity that is costless! We need a generation of those that are willing to "count the cost" with wholehearted devotion to God. With absolute obedience to Christ. - Greg Gordon

CHEAP GRACE

Since the inception of the Church, the Gospel of Christ preached with the requirements of repentance and discipleship. Presently, the "High-Calling in Christ Jesus," has never been offered at such a low level. Forgiveness without repentance, discipleship without obedience, salvation without sanctity, confession without consecration. Such terms as: Inspection, counting the cost, godly sorrow over sin, repentance from dead works, are all foreign to this church age of cheap grace. Dietrich Bonhoeffer states the problem with this startling phrase: "cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner." This statement brings with it the gravity of the situation we find ourselves in. An unholy church is of no use to the world or to God.

Let us recognize, as Bonhoeffer did, that "cheap grace is the deadly enemy of the Church." We are living with an epidemic of cheap grace in the Church. Flippant confession, shallow consecration, superficial surrender, and discipleship that does not follow are just some of the sure signs. This is a Christianity that is costless! We need a generation of those that are willing to "count the cost" with wholehearted devotion to God with absolute obedience to Christ. Duncan Campbell said: "A baptism of holiness, a demonstration of godly living is the crying need of our day." But alas! today thousands of pulpits are pounding out the message upon their hearers "forgiveness" yet without the exhortation "walk ye in it." Most in the Church are utterly confused about the practical godliness, obedience, and good works which the scriptures mentions readily. The plain fact is that the Scripture speaks of those that are wicked and righteous, ungodly and godly, sinners and saints. And the distinction of those groups are based solely on their actions; not their intellectual assent to truths about God. Christians are saved by faith but if that faith does not result in a changed life it is not saving faith but clearly shown in Scripture as the "faith of devils." Bonhoeffer, echoing the worldly churches cry, said: "he must not strive against this indispensable grace. Therefore -let him live like the rest of the world!" God forbid! Christ did not die on the cross for a worldly Church or for worldly Saints but for a "glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

HOLY SINNERS

Holy Sinners! is the plea that is heard to cover up the prevalent sin and ungodliness in the Church. Christ does not come into our unregenerate, sickly, impure hearts as many contemporary theologians say. He gives us a new heart to dwell in wherein is found holiness and righteousness. Sinners saved by grace? Yes, surely that is our position from whence we have been saved. But now Saints perfected by grace should be our present day standing. Nowhere in the New Testament did the Apostle Paul call the Church sinners, but rather granted them the title "Saints." A Holy Church is God's blessing to the world; an unholy Church is God's judgement upon the world. Christian obedience is not legalism but rather a suitable response to true grace and true religion that is from above. David Smithers speaks to the condition of the church steeped in cheap grace and a lack of holiness: "Many within the Church today feel as if they are drowning in a river of empty words and hollow promises. Demoralized by superficial religion, their hungry hearts are crying out: Where is the real Church, mighty in truth and power? There are many who can give us a moving definition of revival, but

where are the men who can move the Church with a demonstration of revival? Proverbs 27:7 tells us that, "To the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet." Sadly, multitudes of hungry and disillusioned souls are seeking the bitter bread of a godliness that denies power, or a form of power that denies godliness. Oh, how we need the reality of revival, a revival that will restore the Church to Her former apostolic beauty of purity and power. Nothing less than this reality will prepare us to face a dying world and the coming King.â€

In a day and age that needs desperately to see true Christianity and costly grace we must look back to those that have gone before us and see their examples. David Smithers gives us illustrations through these three men: Brainerd, Wesley, and Vassar, clear pictures of those that have "accounted the cost":

â€David Brainerd consistently and fervently interceded for the lost souls of the American Indians. Often he would travel with such earnestness that when he rose from his knees he was covered in sweat and could hardly walk straight. Like the persistent widow in Luke 18, David Brainerd's prayers were finally answered. Entire camps of Indians were converted by the power of God as he proclaimed a message of repentance and grace. "Old men and women who had been drunken wretches for years, and little children not more than six or seven years of age appeared in distress for their souls. There was almost universal praying and crying for mercy. Many could neither go nor stand.â€ The countless hours spent in prayer and fasting, his faithfulness in spite of physical weakness and having to endure the most terrible hardships, were now rewarded openly. The fire of the Lord fell. The remarkable thing was that all this happened at a time when he confessed that his hopes were at their very lowest. He had seriously entertained thoughts of giving up while on the very brink of glory and blessing. Brainerd now saw a remarkable change in the lives of the Indians. He recorded in his diary, "I know of no assembly of Christians where there seems to be so much of the presence of God, where brotherly love so much prevails." David Brainerd poured a lifetime of holy passion, prayer and preaching into four short years. He ministered from 1743-1747, dying of tuberculosis at the age of 29, "Brainerd once wrote in his diary, I longed to be a flame of fire continually glowing in the divine service and building up of Christ's kingdom to my last and dying breath." That prayer was abundantly answered.â€

â€John Wesley pleaded with men to repent and by faith make peace with God or suffer in an everlasting hell. People who had entertained false hopes of salvation had their religious masks torn away by his plain preaching. Wesley believed that those who failed to warn the sinner and backslider, themselves stood under the judgement of Christ. He was determined to declare the whole counsel of God, offering the love of God in Christ and giving warning of the dreadful consequences of rejecting the gospel. Wesley wrote, "Before I can preach love and grace, I must preach sin, law and judgement." Wesley, as well as the other early Methodist preachers, was both a bold advocate and a living example of sanctification. Wesley preached with unceasing zeal that complete holiness was the primary fruit of a vibrant faith in Christ. Counseling another minister, Wesley wrote, "...till you press believers to expect full salvation from sin, you must not look for any revival." If John Wesley were to make an anonymous visit to the Methodists of today, it is doubtful whether many of its churches would welcome him. They would most likely resent his fervent zeal and enthusiasm. When he was eighty-three he made a note that he was regretful that he could not write more than fifteen hours a day without hurting his eyes. Wesley faithfully preached almost up to the very day he died. Truly his vigor and zeal in old age were the reward of his faithful stewardship of time. He seemed to consider every thought, word and deed in light of eternity. "Amid all his arduous labors, his innumerable engagements, his coming and going, Wesley lived a hidden life of intimacy with God. When worn out with overwork he often found new strength in answer to prayer." It was Wesley's strict habit to daily spend one hour in prayer in the morning, and then another hour in the evening. John Wesley shook the world by his preaching because he first shook heaven and hell with his praying. His preaching had a sense of eternal urgency because he had touched eternity on his knees.â€

â€John Vassar's prayer habits made him a man of great faith. "He did not believe simply in the God of ages ago. He believed in the God of today. He could not be persuaded that the wonder working Spirit finished His operations at Pentecost. He could not be convinced that the supernatural was no longer to be looked for. He would get a church or a schoolhouse open, and then invite people out. Almost invariably a revival would commence. Often God would triumph gloriously. Converts would be multiplied. There would be apostolic work because it was underlain and pushed with apostolic faith." John Vassar's zeal and consecration were so intense that it often astonished and offended those who called themselves "Christians". "Despised, rebuffed, and persecuted he held right on meekly and joyfully, in his simple and faithful way with his little worn New Testament in hand and his single eye fixed on Jesus. Coldness and insults were nothing to him, save that they made him sad for other's sake. No harshness could quench the ardor of his affection." Uncle John Vassar's life displays for us the balance of zeal mixed with mercy and passion mixed with patience. Many within the modern Church have strayed, believing that they can choose between such things, pursuing one virtue while neglecting others. If our churches are to meet the needs at hand, we must, like John Vassar, first be lovers of Jesus given to constant prayer. Second, we must receive joyfully ALL that the Master has laid before us, absolute holiness and joy, purity and patient love. Th

e Church must become one with Christ, balanced with both His goodness and severity.â€

UNBELIEVING BELIEVERS

We hold a belief that changes nothing, but claims everything. â€œIf Christianity is to make any headway in the present time, it must be proved to be more than a theoryâ€¸, stated the late Hannah Whitall Smith. What can bring death to this pattern of unbelief in this generation? What can relieve us of our sickly condition? Unbelief has us captive in chains; the church is gagged and bound as risen Lazarus, it needs release in this final hour! We serve unbelief; our minds passive to its rule and reign over us. Can you hear Jesus saying â€œO ye of little faith.â€¸ Faith is the enemy of unbelief. By the way we are living we show forth our unbelief unashamedly. â€œHelp thou mine unbeliefâ€¸ needs to be our desperate cry. We are in captivity in our lukewarm, unbelieving, content, faithless age. And each age is marked by the testimony and witness of those that are righteous and serve God. Will God look through the annals of time and see our current generation as one that was characterized as â€œunbelieving?â€¸ God pleads with this generation in the words of the prophet Jeremiah: â€œO generation, see ye the word of the Lord.â€¸ We need to come back to apostolic belief in the word of God and the working of God by the Spirit of God. This is an hour of urgency and the church as never been so complacent.

This is a crisis hour. Will you count the cost today? The Apostle Paul urgently pleaded with the Church two thousand years ago: â€œIt is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent...â€¸ If the night was â€œfar spentâ€¸ two thousand years ago, dear brethren, surely it is nearer than we can imagine. If we knew the time and the hour, if we were awakened to the nearness of the end of time, if we realized how time is being devoured from us, then we would repent. Christ reproved his followers of the nearness of the hour and time of visitation. Shall He have to repeat Himself again to this unbelieving generation of believers? Revival is not an option, its our only hope. But with the way we are living we are saying that we are content to live without revival. Surely only a revival of religion will sweep away this heresy of cheap grace and lack of holiness in the Church. ?

Re: WORLDLY SAINTS by Greg Gordon - posted by davidt, on: 2006/11/7 3:21

timely word.

Re: WORLDLY SAINTS by Greg Gordon - posted by enid, on: 2006/11/7 5:35

Have printed and read the article.

The title says it all, even though there is no such thing in God's eyes as a worldly saint.

Revelation warns us to be hot or cold. To be lukewarm means rejection from God.

We can't honestly go on playing the same old game and expect God to just ignore it.

Fact is, the Christian life is not a game, but a war. Which is why we are to put on the whole armour of God as it tells us in Ephesians 6.

I doubt 90% of people that attend church are saved in God's eyes.

If we, who are mere flesh and blood, can see the unholiness and depravity in the church, then what does God see?

If we really desired revival we would have it right now, but the price is higher than it used to be.

Want proof from scripture?

Matthew 17v21 tells us this kind does not go out except through prayer and fasting.

How much fasting do we do collectively, let alone individually?

As we know, we live in the last days. We are told perilous times shall come.

Also, in Matthew 24 Jesus says the love of many will wax/grow cold.

If Jesus, the son of God, would spend nights in prayer, how come we seldom do? I wouldn't say never, but seldom.

If we can't see the horror around us, that makes God angry every day (Psalm 7v11), then we must be so dangerously blind, that the only thing that matters to us, is our own selfish lifestyle and God's glory doesn't matter one iota to us.

Judgement begins at the house of God. We might forget that, but God doesn't.

Repent, or we will see God's judgment escalate.

God bless.

Re: - posted by Christisking (), on: 2006/11/7 10:08

Quote:
-----This is a crisis hour. Will you count the cost today? The Apostle Paul urgently pleaded with the Church two thousand years ago: "it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent..." If the night was "far spent" two thousand years ago, dear brethren, surely it is nearer than we can imagine. If we knew the time and the hour, if we were awakened to the nearness of the end of time, if we realized how time is being devoured from us, then we would repent. Christ reproved his followers of the nearness of the hour and time of visitation. Shall He have to repeat Himself again to this unbelieving generation of believers? Revival is not an option, it's our only hope. But with the way we are living we are saying that we are content to live without revival. Surely only a revival of religion will sweep away this heresy of cheap grace and lack of holiness in the Church. ?

This is a much needed article! This would be good to pass out church or at small group or to post on blogs or other message boards. Thanks Greg.

Re: What is the cost dear Brother? - posted by jewelz (), on: 2006/11/7 11:02

What will it take to put us over the edge?

There is only so much talking and reading that can be done. It has to run its course and then it must happen. It is like standing at the foot of a mountain and discussing all of the great climbers who have climbed great mountains, discussing all of the possibilities of the climb, all of the dangers, all of the challenges and all of the joys that will come when one reaches the top. But there comes a time when the researching is done, when the talking is done, when the preparation is done when the heart revs up with gitters as it had reached a place where there are no more words to be said. A silence follows as the door opens, the threshold of no return comes upon us and now the time has come. It is time to put our feet to the mountain and begin the climb, now is the time!

It might mean shutting down this site for six months with the demand that the time we spend here and online needs to be given to God in prayer? When folks log on all they would find is "it is time to pray, no more surfing!" Maybe for a month at a time and when you reopen it folks can share how much they have pressed in and have begun the process necessary for God to hear our prayers?

Too much of a good thing can in the end deceive us and distract us from the very purpose we came here for.

REVIVAL and nothing less. I myself am counting down my days here. I have to shut myself in with God again, and then it will happen!

Thank you,
Julian Raven

Re: - posted by Eli_Barnabas (), on: 2006/11/7 11:17

Amen brother, excellent article.

Re: WORLDLY SAINTS by Greg Gordon - posted by Andrew_Strom, on: 2006/11/7 11:42

Excellent words and I quite agree, Greg.

-Andrew.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/7 11:47

Great Article Greg! I thought of the hymn:

REVIVE US AGAIN!

William MacKay (1863)

We praise Thee, O God!
For the Son of Thy love,
For Jesus Who died,
And is now gone above.

Refrain

Hallelujah! Thine the glory.
Hallelujah! Amen.
Hallelujah! Thine the glory.
Revive us again.

We praise Thee, O God!
For Thy Spirit of light,
Who hath shown us our Savior,
And scattered our night.

Refrain

All glory and praise
To the Lamb that was slain,
Who hath borne all our sins,
And hath cleansed every stain.

Refrain

All glory and praise
To the God of all grace,
Who hast brought us, and sought us,
And guided our ways.

Refrain

Revive us again;
Fill each heart with Thy love;
May each soul be rekindled
With fire from above.

Refrain

Re: WORLDLY SAINTS by Greg Gordon - posted by AWA40-2, on: 2006/11/7 15:01

Worldly Saints
by Greg Gordon

A Message to the church that is not counting the cost

Brother Greg, it has been awhile since I've read something that has broken me and caused me to repent, where I have literally and truly felt a pain in my heart. I know what it is to count the cost; I know and have recently departed from it. Forgive me but I felt that I had to confess this publicly.

I have become a Worldly Saint and deserve to go to hell! What once filled me with such joy and passion is now dead. There is no other way to describe it.

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We are living with an epidemic of cheap grace in the Church. Flippant confession, shallow consecration, superficial surrender, discipleship that does not follow are just some of the sure signs. We revel in a Christianity that is costless! We need a generation of those that are willing to "count the cost" with wholehearted devotion to God. With absolute obedience to Christ. - Greg Gordon

Whole heartedly, Brother Greg Whole heartedly, before we can get to this place there has to be or there has to come the Fear of the Lord is what my Spirit Hears, the Fear of the Lord.

As I have been meditating on these words and reflecting on times past, there has to be the Fear of the Lord, the reverence if you will of the Holy Presence of the Lord, the Holy Presence of the Lord. The type of reverence where Worldly Saints would not dare to walk out of a prayer meeting and if he or she did and bumped into God (elder, deacon, pastor, bishop) the conviction that would fall or come upon them would cause them to repent and turn back back into the prayer meeting because it had not yet ended, SERVICE WAS NOT OVER HIS PRESENCE WAS STILL THERE, HIS SPIRIT WAS STILL THERE, HE HAD NOT FINISHED IT WAS NOT OVER!

With absolute obedience to CHRIST, yes Brother Greg with no hesitations. Brother Greg the scripture speaks about going to your brother or to your sister and making it right before partaking of the Lord Supper, this type of fear/reverence this type of obedience making it right before bringing your offering to the altar, so that it would in essence be accepted by our Most Holy and Almighty all-powerful living God. This type of obedience the Fear of the Lord, the reverence of the Lord I remember this from times past.

Forgive me, I believe this is where we need to be, this should be one of our primary priorities, beginning with me. Maybe I'm old school and I've been around too long, but I believe. (.)

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/11/8 1:18

Quote:
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Quote:
-----This is a much needed article! This would be good to pass out church or at small group or to post on blogs or other message boards. Thanks Greg.

Amen Brother, I really encourage people to make copies of these articles and share them with others via email, blogs, websites etc.

Quote:
-----It might mean shutting down this site for six months with the demand that the time we spend here and online needs to be given to God in prayer? When folks log on all they would find is "it is time to pray, no more surfing!"

Maybe for a month at a time and when you reopen it folks can share how much they have pressed in and have begun the process necessary for God to hear our prayers?

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Quote:
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Praise God. Thank you for your honest sharing of your heart. I pray that God meets you at this point of humility and that he will raise you up in due time. God hears the contrite in heart.

Your stating the fact of the need of the "**fear of God**" is very needed in the churches. I have been praying for this to be worked into my Christian life and before God is going to do mighty things I know this strong foundation of the "fear of God" needs to be in place.

Let him do his **full** work in you. Our tendency is to draw back, but God says that those that "draw back my soul is not pleased with." in the Psalms. Oh brother "go through" with God!

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/11/8 15:59

Here is some feedback on the article:

Quote:
-----What am I willing to give up for Christ? Some have given their lives as martyrs, am I willing to lay down my life to serve those around me?

“An unholy church is of no use to the world or to God” – Worldly Saints

If we are lacking power in our lives and churches we should consider whether we're living holy lives.

“There are many of us who can give us a moving definition of revival, but where are the men who can move the Church with a demonstration of revival?”

Is my life a moving demonstration of revival?

Moving quotes:

“The remarkable thing was that all this happened at a time when he confessed that his hopes were at their very lowest. He had seriously entertained thoughts of giving up while on the very brink of glory and blessing.”

“I longed to be a flame of fire continually glowing in the divine service and building up of Christ's kingdom to my last and dying breath.” David Brainerd

“His preaching had a sense of eternal urgency because he had touched eternity on his knees.”

“But with the way we are living we are saying that we are content to live without revival.”
