

Articles and Sermons :: Lessons On Spiritual Decline (Series 4) -poonen**Lessons On Spiritual Decline (Series 4) -poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/2/12 21:10****Lessons On Spiritual Decline (Series 4)***by Zac Poonen*

God has a passion to have a pure testimony for His Name in every part of the world, in every generation. For this purpose, he raises up a godly man in a country, in a particular generation, to restore to the church in that country, the truth that the apostles preached, and thus to lead people to a godly life. A movement gradually starts around that man and a few wholehearted believers who are fed up with the unreality and hypocrisy of the Christendom of their generation gather around him. Very soon a pure testimony is established for the Lord. Such a group is always small in size at the beginning and intensely hated and persecuted by the older churches. The founder is hated most of all. And the hatred is usually most intense from the group that God had raised up in the previous generation - for the current leaders of that group, not realising that the Lord has left them, are jealous of the new group!! Satan too joins in the attack against this new group - and he does his work of accusation mostly through other "believers" - especially those from the older group.

All the persecution and the schemings of men and demons however, do not hinder God from establishing a pure testimony for His Name in the new generation through the man He raised up. But what happens when this man dies? Then the movement begins to decline. Personal devotion to Christ disappears and is replaced by emphasis on the doctrines that the founder preached. Those doctrines become more important to the second generation than the Person of the Lord Himself. And a cloud comes between them and God - as it did between the disciples and the Lord on the mount of transfiguration (Matt.17:5).

No doctrine, however important or good, can ever take the place of devotion to Jesus Himself. The founder knows the Lord. The second generation knows only the doctrine. Chaos results and by the time the movement reaches the third generation, there is open division and strife.

One of the commonest things that happens to every movement is that by the time it reaches the second and third generation, it becomes rich and wealthy, with the members owning plenty of money, houses, lands and properties etc., And wealth has a way of being accompanied invariably by pride, self-sufficiency and complacency - for very few believers know how to handle wealth.

The first generation of a movement usually struggles in poverty and is close to God. The second and third generations are usually closer to the world, with all their wealth - and lose out spiritually. God then withdraws from that group, which has by then become a part of Babylon - and He raises up another man and starts a totally new work through him. But alas, the same story is repeated all over again - for no-one ever seems to learn from the mistakes of those who went before them!!

Those who are wise will therefore look around them to see where the anointing of God is resting currently - in their own generation - and associate fully with such a church. They will not care to see where the anointing had rested in previous generations. They will look to see where God is moving NOW and not where God moved a generation or two ago.

Scripture tells us very clearly that we must AVOID those who have the mere form of godliness (2 Tim.3:5) and seek to fellowship with "those who call on the Lord from a pure heart" (2 Tim.2:22). Those who have a pure heart are those who love the Lord with ALL their heart. Such believers have no place in their heart for money, for property, for anything of this world, for themselves, for their family members, or for their jobs. They love the Lord supremely and thus love their family members in a deeper way than they would have done otherwise. They are devoted to the Lord and not to any doctrine. We are told to seek fellowship with such believers at all times.

Thus God's work proceeds from generation to generation, without ever failing - for all the machinations of men and Satan cannot hinder any of God's purposes. Hallelujah!!

Re: Lessons On Spiritual Decline (Series 4) -poonen - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2008/2/13 10:58

Quote:
-----No doctrine, however important or good, can ever take the place of devotion to Jesus Himself. The founder knows the Lord. The second generation knows only the doctrine. Chaos results and by the time the movement reaches the third generation, there is open division and strife.

This reminds me of this sermon:

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid38&commentViewItemComments>) Dangers of Third Generation Religion by Paris Reidhead