

**Articles and Sermons :: Breaking the Status Quo****Breaking the Status Quo - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/11/8 16:30**

Breaking the Status Quo

The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites; go to all the neighboring peoples in the Arabah, in the mountains, in the western foothills, in the Negev and along the coast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates. See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them." (Deuteronomy 1:6–8)

ISRAEL ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO SETTLE DOWN and became contented with circumstances that were all right, but which could and did break their spirit of adventure and cause them to accept the status quo as being final for them. Every once in a while through prophet, apostle or psalmist, God stretches out His hand and tries to arouse His people from their sleep. Somebody once said that man is made of dust and dust tends to settle. People tend to settle down and do the same things year in and year out, slowly going around in a circle. When this gets into religion, it is deadly and evil.

The majority of Christians are asleep and in a spiritual rut. Sometimes Christians who realize they are in a rut put pressure on others to adopt their viewpoint. But even if truth does not convince and persuade a man or woman, nobody has the right to set up a psychological squeeze on someone else. If people yield under pressure, it shows that they are too weak to resist. If they are too weak to resist, and if they take a religious position because they are too weak to resist, they will also be too weak to persist. When we follow Christ there must be persistence. We must go on.

To apply pressure, a person projects himself or herself into the minds and consciences of people made in the image of God and forces them psychologically to do something they have no particular reason for wanting to do. They are not basically interested in it and have no satisfactory reason for doing it, but they are under pressure. If they do not have a reason for doing what they are going to do, they will not know why they are involved. Then when they get out they will not be sure that they were in, and so the whole process makes for weak, spineless religion. This violates the law of human nature, which dictates that all valid acts must arise from a natural urge or from a convinced mind.

An example of a natural urge is when you are hungry. You may be very hungry, but your hunger does not have a high intellectual content in it. Nobody needs to stand up and say, "Now, all you who are hungry raise your hands." You know you are hungry, and you just go out to eat. Hunger is a natural urge.

Another legitimate reason for an act is a convinced mind. I am convinced that I ought to do something, and I do it because I have a conviction that it ought to be done.

Those are the only two reasons for doing anything. If I force people under psychological pressure and steamroll them into doing something because they are too weak to resist, I have violated their nature. Our approach to getting people out of the rut, then, must not be to pressure them to do something they don't want to do. Instead, we must present the truth and let the Holy Spirit prompt them to want to escape.

Re: Breaking the Status Quo - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/11/9 0:48

Must get out of rut

It is imperative not only that we Christians get out of our rut but that we get out now. You know if you are in. If you are not getting any prayers answered, or if your prayers are so vague you are not sure but what any answer might have been a non-accident, you are in the rut. If you are living far from God, yet hoping you are saved, you are in the rut. If you are not progressing, if you are where you were months or years ago, if you have settled down and learned to live with yourself and adjusted to your present spiritual state, you are in the rut.

There are some reasons why it is imperative that we as a church and as individuals get out, and get moving on our way to a better spiritual life. One is that you have not much time to do anything about it. Your own interest is going to flag before long. Change is absolutely imperative to getting out of the rut, but the older we get the less we feel the need to change. If people have an urge within their spirits based upon a belief and conviction that they ought to move—to begin to reassess their lives and adjust their living—then they ought to do it right now while they are thinking about it.

Another reason for getting out of the rut now is the danger of political developments that will make it less favorable to serve God. In human history there have never been two countries like the United States and Canada—*not even England*—where it was more favorable to become a Christian. But the political situation could easily shift around so the climate is not so favorable. There are many countries where the political and social climate is not favorable to becoming a Christian. Anybody who wants to become a Christian in some countries of the world has a rough time of it. But here the people help you along.

Could you afford to wait until the climate shifted so it were not so favorable, until the social situation shifted so it were not so favorable? If you have not taken advantage of this favorable climate to get right with God and to improve your spiritual life in this freedom, would you if you were forbidden?

Re: Breaking the Status Quo - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/11/9 9:33

The Lord may soon return

The next reason is that the Lord may soon return. I realize there is a lot that we do not know about prophecy, but most Christians are looking for the second coming of the Lord. They expect Him to come. They do not know when He will come, and the ones who claim they do, do not. Nevertheless, He may come in your lifetime. He said that He would come back in an hour when we think not. It could be that this present decline in expectation may have an ominous significance. It can easily be said that this would be the time when fewer people are expecting the Lord. Thirty years ago everybody was expecting the Lord and talking about it. Now few are thinking and less are talking about it. If you press people, they will admit that they believe in the second coming of Christ, but they are not looking for it expectantly.

The last thing that bears upon the imperativeness of doing something about our spiritual life now is that we have such a short time to prepare for such a long time. By that I mean we have now to prepare for then. We have an hour to prepare for eternity. To fail to prepare is an act of moral folly. For anyone to have a day given to prepare, it is an act of inexcusable folly to let anything hinder that preparation. If we find ourselves in a spiritual rut, nothing in the world should hinder us. Nothing in this world is worth it. If we believe in eternity, if we believe in God, if we believe in the eternal existence of the soul, then there is nothing important enough to cause us to commit such an act of moral folly.

Re: Breaking the Status Quo - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/11/9 11:29

Failing to get ready in time for eternity, and failing to get ready now for the great then that lies out yonder, is a trap in plain sight. There is an odd saying in the Old Testament, “How useless to spread a net in full view of all the birds” (Proverbs 1:17). When the man of God wrote that, he gave the birds a little credit. It would be silly for a bird watching me set the trap to conveniently fly down and get into it. Yet there are people doing that all the time. People who have to live for eternity fall into that trap set for them in plain sight.

It is folly to put off to a tomorrow because you may never see the things that you should do now. It is an act of inexcusable folly to count on help that will never come. It is foolish to ignore God’s help now offered us. Many are guilty of ignoring the help that is presently being extended to them, all the while waiting for help that will never come from others.

There is not much that can be said in favor of lazy or careless Christians. God never told anyone to do anything that he or she could not do. Jesus said to the man with the paralyzed arm that hung at his side like a limp piece of flesh, “Stretch out your hand” (Matthew 12:13a). And the man, believing that Jesus was the Christ, stretched out his hand and was healed instantly. God has never asked anyone yet to do anything that He was not enabling the person to do.

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