

Return!

Change is good. How often have we heard that phrase stressed in today's churches? While it is true that methods and polity can and should be changed, there are some things that should never be changed. Today we are reminded of the Bible cry of revival often given in one word...RETURN! God said in Malachi 3:7, *"Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts...."*

Again in Isaiah 55:7, *"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."*

Jeremiah 3:22 says, *"Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God."*

The attitude of the one standing in the need of revival should be: *"Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up"* (Hosea 6:1).

The promised result of returning is found in Isaiah 44:22, *"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."*

Let us then:

I. Return to our foundations.

Psalms 11:3 says, *"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"*

The Supreme Court of The United States banned voluntary prayer in our public schools in 1962 and in 1963 the court banned Bible reading. In 1973 in the now infamous Roe vs. Wade decision the Supreme Court opened the door for legal abortion, which has brought the onslaught of the innocents at a rate of 1.5 million per annum. John Jay, the first Chief Justice of The Supreme Court believed it was the responsibility and duty of American voters to elect Christian people to office. He believed we would do great harm if we did not vote true Christians in office.

It is incredibly sad that many outspoken liberal interpreters of what the founding fathers wrote have been either very ignorant or viciously negligent to report what the fathers believed. We cannot separate what the founding fathers wrote from what they believed. Herein is the key to understanding what they meant!

Thomas Jefferson authored the idea of the separation of powers and the church from the state, never to negate the influence of God upon our country, but rather to assure any individual the right to worship God in the freedom of his conscience without the interference from the state. This is in writing and fell from his own lips.

We need to return to the foundations of our forefathers.

We also need to:

II. Return to our roots.

Proverbs 12:3 says, *"A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved."*

Coming to the end of ourselves is the beginning of revival. The secret to the Christian life is Christ's righteous life being lived out through our present life. Colossians 3:4 says, *"Christ, who is our life...."*

Christ is not an addendum to our life; He is our very life.

Paul said, Galatians 3:3 *"Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect"*

by the flesh?"

The only way we can bear righteous fruit is by the spirit, not our self efforts without the out-working of the inward man. *"...the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit"* (Proverbs 12:12).

Finally, we need to:

III. Return to the old paths.

Jeremiah 6:16 *"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein."*

In Africa a missionary said he could always tell when his people were backsliding. When his people were right with the Lord there were some worn trails that cut through the jungle to their place of private prayer. The missionary said, "Whenever the grass begins to grow on their "prayer trail" I know that they are getting away from God."

Is there grass growing on your path that leads to your prayer spot? Is there dust accumulating on your Bible? It's time to return to the old paths.

May we all return with one heart to the Lord!

- Pastor Pope -

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