

The Desolation of Complacency

by Bryan Anthony

Bryan Anthony's sermon emphasizes the dangers of complacency and the necessity of relying on the Holy Spirit for true spiritual vitality and ministry effectiveness.

Scripture: Isaiah 32:1-18, Ezekiel 37:14, Joel 2:28

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening", "Gods Grace"

Description

Bryan Anthony preaches on the prophetic message in Isaiah 32, emphasizing the need for a righteous ruler to bring justice and peace to the earth. The chapter paints a picture of devastation and turmoil, urging the daughters of Israel to rise from complacency and recognize the spiritual condition of the nation. The prophet highlights the importance of the Spirit being poured out from on high to bring about righteousness, peace, and security. Anthony challenges believers to awaken to their radical need for God's grace, to be filled with the Spirit of life, and to engage with the realities of life and death.

Transcript

"Be troubled, you complacent ones....

Because the palace has been abandoned, the populated city forsaken.

Hill and watch-tower have become caves forever,

A delight for wild donkeys, a pasture for flocks;

Until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high....

.... And the work of righteousness will be peace,

And the service of righteousness, quietness and security forever." -Is. 32.11a, 14-17

Isaiah 32 is an infrequently cited chapter of Scripture, but its implications are vast, and it is worthy of our concentrated attention.

It starts out with a remarkable statement:

"Behold, a king will reign righteously and princes will rule justly. Each will be like a refuge from the wind and a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry country, like the shade of a huge rock in a

parched land." (vv.1-2)

To whatever degree these verses may have been touched in Isaiah's day and throughout history, we must assume that their total and literal fulfillment is still to be expected in the days to come; namely, in that time frame which the prophets have often called "the day of the Lord."

The prophet tells us that the princes of the earth will rule with justice. Their governing will be something like a refuge and a shelter, like water in the dry land, like an area of shade in the onslaught of the sun's heat. This is so to be desired, but it will not occur internationally until a king will reign righteously.

In light of this glorious expectation, the prophet charges the daughters of Israel to rise from complacency, to tremble and be troubled over the present moral and spiritual condition of their nation. The picture leading up to the return of the Lord is one of world-wide tumult and devastation, and the epicenter of turbulence is the land of Israel itself. The prophet gives us pictures of paradoxical tragedy and barrenness: An abandoned palace, a once flourishing city forsaken, hills and watch-towers converted into caves, only suitable for wild creatures.

The people of God are to beat their breasts over the conditions that will lead to this kind of devastation, and the prophet suffocates our humanistic and political hopes by a most crucial pivot point of description. Things will remain in this deplorable condition "until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high...."

I wonder if we recognize our self-dependent and self-absorbed days as desolate, something like an abandoned palace or a forsaken city. Are we aware of our radical need of God moment by moment, or are we coasting through life much like those who have received no light from heaven?

Are we complaining and moping on the 'bad' days and naively drifting through the 'good' days, unaware that God Himself means to demonstrate His glory through us? Are we dejected and depressed when men offend us, and elated and jolly when they esteem us? Are we abiding in Christ, or strolling through life, mostly detached from His active life? Are we that matter-of-fact and flat out as the prophet about our need of the grace of God? Are we convinced that no matter how well we preach, write, fellowship, or serve in the eyes of men, that it is a disfigured and deformed version of ministry "until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high?"

We need ever and always for the Spirit of life to be the breath of our breath, the mind of our mind, the heart of our heart, and the voice within our voice. In the day of His power, when Israel declares: "Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off," only a people upon whom the Spirit rests will be able to prophesy with new life unto the raising up of an army of true priests. Mere words cannot produce this life, no matter how accurate. Words may fill the air, but only the Spirit of life can fill the hearts of men. This is the true essence of the prophetic call.

If we are complacent and self-reliant in our lives and ministries, we need to tremble and be troubled until our hearts are awakened to our radical need of grace. When we cry out to Him for bread, He will not give us a stone. He will pour out His own Spirit upon us, and we will be fitted to engage the realities of life and death, both today, and in the day of greater shakings.

"Then my people will live in a peaceful habitation, and in secure dwellings and in undisturbed resting places." (v. 18)

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