

Seize the Banner

by Gene Edwards

Gene Edwards emphasizes the importance of relying solely on Christ for unity and guidance, rather than using fear or past grievances as tools for manipulation.

Scripture: Matthew 5:44, Ephesians 4:31, Philippians 2:5, Colossians 3:14, 1 John 4:18

Topics: "Christian Unity", "Christ's Love"

Description

Gene Edwards emphasizes the power of using past experiences to unify and mobilize people, cautioning against the temptation to manipulate others through common prejudices and fears. He highlights the danger of building movements based on hatred or fear of enemies rather than on Christ's unifying love. Edwards challenges listeners to rely solely on Christ, even in the face of crises or threats, and to resist the urge to use tools that are less than Christ to achieve their goals.

Transcript

Let me tell you a secret, a secret you will learn someday. Once you discover this secret, you'll be tempted, as most of us are, to use it. Here it is: you can use your past as a tool for your own advantage. What do I mean by such a statement? You can use your past to unify the work (your work). All those grizzly experiences you went through. Remember? You can use them to warn people against OTHER folk. In so doing you will unify them around a common prejudice. This is one of the great secrets of launching and sustaining a movement! Someone once said if you want to start a movement then get a group of people together and teach them how to hate a common enemy. And it is true.

Let me illustrate. Perhaps your work is being threatened by someone in your group. Okay. You have a problem.

You begin looking around for a tool to save the hour. Actually, all you need is one good illustration. Make it one that will cause everyone's hair to stand on their necks. The more terrifying, the better. Many Christian workers built their whole life's work on the basis of telling stories about their enemies. By prejudicing their followers they rally everyone around a common enemy, or a common fear. Look around you. Much Christian work today is held together by being taught either to hate or to fear someone or something. It is not Christ who unifies many groups. Will you use your past as such a tool? At times you will feel you absolutely cannot perform the task God has called you to unless you pick up one of these tools.

You know full well that unless you pick them up all your work will be lost. Some of the tools are perfect to get you through a crisis. With that one tool you could step forward and unify. . . you could step forward and banish. . . the impending threat. The longer you live the more tools there will be. Some of them look very noble. Look again. Every one of them is LESS than Christ! Listen, dear saint of the Lord. YOU DO NOT HAVE ANY ENEMIES. Remember that! All the Lord's people need is Christ. If Jesus Christ will not suffice, if Christ cannot deliver you out of the situation you are in, then let everything go to destruction. . . yes, let your work be lost. But will this not open us to error, always giving in to the wrong?

And also, if things go wrong in the church and all the fine people yield, who will stop the wrong element? These are good questions. Men have asked them for centuries. But I want you to know that throughout history men have come up with one predominant answer! We must be "defenders of the faith." Today, the Lord is looking for a group of people who will instead say, "We will know nothing but the Lord." In that hour you may choose to do something very self-sacrificing, and maybe something even very noble. Yet ask yourself, "Is it less than Christ?" Lift your face toward the highlands. Look above you. Catch a glimpse of your Lord's ways. See a soil where no footprints are found. See heights that have not been trod for nearly two millenia. Seize. . . the banner.

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