

Exhortation to Become Involved

by Rolfe Barnard

Rolfe Barnard's sermon urges Christians to actively engage in their faith and address the pressing issues of today's world through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 44:29

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:1

Topics: "Exhortation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the profound statement that God has made both Lord and Messiah. He highlights the importance of surrendering to the Lord Jesus Christ and not just admiring Him. The speaker emphasizes the need for the Holy Spirit to press the person, purity, and power of Jesus Christ in order to prosper His cause. He also mentions the challenge to Christ's sovereignty and power in the world today and the need for believers to focus on the message of Jesus Christ crucified.

Transcript

I have the honor to be the evangelist for this church, have been for many years. It's interesting that much emphasis is being placed these days on what a church is, and one characteristic of a New Testament church would be that it would have an evangelist. But most of us don't, and so I'm glad that every month I get a check from this church, just like by a missionary in Africa or somewhere, and it helps me, and it helps them, and it would help your church if you would just quit picking your texts that you like, and begin to pay a little attention to the book.

We've had to be in this book, we've seen lots of this is the 14th or 5th, basically around the initial and foundational truth. This is a life-giving. Will you turn to the book of 1 Corinthians, chapter 2, and I am not to teach this morning.

One of the most profound teachers under God's earth, or under God's sky, would send me that little paper. I get a lot of that stuff and work it over and fix it up. Here's papers and preach a year from it.

I've done this last week, made a pre-millionaire out of it. Texts from 1 Corinthians, I said. Texts with Brother Jackson, Coats, and these Brethren here, Larry McDonald, he preached here last year, and he had three messages in the morning and three at night.

I never got so religious in all of my life. I'll tell you what's fact, be shocked, you know. I came with my message all prepared.

I'm going to preach on why Christ died, and I had, of course, just three points. That's all you can have. You're going to go and get me another message, and I call him a thief publicly, and I fix him a consultation.

This will be a conference. I don't know whether we've had any like it. One thing is to get it right and believed in our hearts and translate from public profession to practice.

That'd be a conference that God Almighty would be greatly pleased with. So I want to exhort a little bit with this tremendous Bible message. When I came to you, came not with excellence of speech or of wisdom, declaring, not explaining, but declaring, not debating, but declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I deterred not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and fear and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

In order that your faith should not stand in the wisdom, the best or the poorest, any kind, in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. This is a day, perhaps signally a day, when our Lord Christ is challenged concerning his sovereignty and power. Three-fourths of this world have struck tense, and humanity is dead sure on the march today.

And this lawless spirit of challenging this Christ of whom we heard from Brother Johnson, is being felt and breaking out. And you can't cover it up anymore in every realm of life, social. The bottoms fall out of all decency, social-wise now, political, religious.

This is the time, if we shall speak to our day. If we shall not seek to prove doctrine for doctrine's sake. If our doctrine shall be borne out of the issues that are threatening to dethrone Christ in a given day.

If the bone of our bone and blood of our blood are not something to be argued or proved. This is the time to reaffirm and to proclaim the sole authority and the absolute sufficiency of the Son of God. I am not altogether happy that the most prophetic voices on the face of the earth today are coming from Catholic bishops.

It seems that the only people professing the name of Christ that God's able to get in on a word in edgewise. If you think I'm crazy, it's because you do not read what's being written today. If you think I'm crazy, it's because you do not visit the hospitals in the back alleys of our cities while we are putting a little more pepper on our pet doctrines and see the priest and millionaire layman of Catholicism today putting the gospel into practice and meeting the questions that people are asking today.

Brother, it's on the mark. Bishop Sheen, you'd do well to listen to him sometimes. God sometimes speaks through him, speaks through Balaam's jackass while he might could speak through a Catholic priest.

Bishop Sheen has made the prophetic statement, Antichrist is here. Some of us believe that Antichrist would be a personified, but brother, his presence and power has sure arrived on the scene. I want to exhort a little while this morning on a question that raises so many questions that I'll not have time to answer because I can't answer them.

I speak as an evangelist. I recognize that a man's gift shall make room for him. I recognize the tremendous need for all of the gifted ministries of the risen Lord, and so I'm not going to be able to answer much of what I suggest this morning.

God help us. I am so deathly afraid that we're fighting battles that have already been fought, that we're raising questions that nobody's interested in, that especially we of the grace persuasion as was voiced in the preceding message are terribly in danger of being cultists, meeting together to congratulate ourselves is, and how terrible the other fellows is, a cult you know. We meet on Sunday morning and congratulate ourselves on our marvelous belief.

I teach history and I'm always interested in history. I have made it my business to try to find out if this statement I'm going to make is not so. It was suggested of course by Johnson Edwards and who he got it from that the task of every generation of God's people is to determine the direction in which the sovereign redeemer is going in his day, not Calvin's day, not the day of the Puritans, but in his day, and then go in that direction.

I believe that every man and every movement that God has ever used, he has been able to use it because he got them to focus their attention on those issues and relate their gospel and their doctrine to the enemies that were crossing the path of the gospel in their day. I think I've made every mistake that can be made doctrinally and methodically in trying to get to this foundation E.W. talked about. It hadn't been an easy battle.

I don't want to be asleep in this awful day. I want to be a witness. I want to challenge God's church to a 20th century weapon empowered by the Holy Ghost to this Lord of life.

I believe that we must engage in bloody battle. Every enemy that is tearing down that foundation almost got every enemy that crosses the path of the gospel in our day, not those enemies that were pertinent yesterday, but the ones today. Preachers in San Antonio said in Miami the other day, and I got a little hope, he said, if the pastor's heirs and 15,000 go home, quit being mama's little enemy boys, and with the voice of the sundering call this generation of non-involved so-called Christians, get their hands dirty in the battle of this hour.

Because I understand that in public gatherings such as this we preach, they wouldn't have nerve enough to preach in our own churches. That's true largely at the convention, but I like to hear that. This preacher said that one of his big businessmen members came to him not long ago and said, Pastor, I'm so tired of being inspired.

I'd love to get my hands dirty in the war that's going on. How in the name of God could we get involved in this hour? I've already been to the kitchen and told two or three of the women that last year they had too much salt on the beans, and if they had it this year, I'm going to start a protest, a picket line. I'm going to get involved in something.

I'm so tired. I'm going to protest something. I read where the editor of one of the Southern Baptist, state Southern Baptist papers, writing in the paper said the other day that Southern Baptist preachers and churches were guilty of sleeping through the revolution of our hour, and they were refusing to get involved in the issues of this day because they were afraid it would hurt our cooperative program.

But you say amen to that and we bowed as guilty. Sleeping through a revolution. I say that we need to shift our stance to face the issues of this hour.

In the 16th century, Martin Luther and Calvin and those men, in their beginnings, those beginnings were made within a corrupted Christian society called Christendom. And for more than a century, Protestants after Calvin and those men and the Puritans were forced to be on the defensive, preserving the purity of their faith and worship against relentless adversaries. Thus the Puritans and their predecessors focused attention on the word and that what they call the sacrament, but you do not get the missionary note in the Puritans.

We honor them for their defense of the gospel. But today we're in a missionary situation. I don't care where you live, for there's no such thing as Christendom anymore.

There is no culture, there is no spot of earth anywhere that can be labeled as Christian, either corrupt or good. Everywhere in the world today, Christians find themselves in the middle of secular and pagan cultures and Christians are called upon to rub elbows in the schools and church and place a business with people who are utterly indifferent to or downright hostile to every claim of Jesus Christ. Every ethic of Christianity is under fire now and they're not using slingshots.

This is the day of revival, the revival of every ism that has ever spewed out of hate, communism, paganism, hatred between the Arabs and the Jews and the Russians and the United States. You could taste it and cut it with a knife in the last few days. Now the great section of the world's geographic territory has now been called to the gospel of the Lord of life.

Every ism, institutionalism, nationalism, materialism, every ism is on the march today. There are no absolutes, no law that Johnson talked about. That's the relic of an absent monarch that we could do without.

Nobody and no living Lord and God kept us very little involved. Arthur Compton, the Nobel prize winner in physics, has coined this phrase, science has created the world in which Christianity is imperative. Science has created the world in which Christianity is imperative.

But a look at us in America would reveal that we are a bare religious people, but that our religious life is largely a matter of gratification, seldom a sacrifice. Somebody said religion in America is an umbrella to protect us from the rain and that the safest place to hide from God now is within the membership of any of our churches. People turn to religion today as a remedy for sleeplessness, for worry, for ineffectiveness, to be free from frustrations and tensions, to become resourceful and successful.

And the presumption is that God exists to serve us, whereas our chief end in life is to serve him. And once we think of God as existing to serve us, our religion becomes very comforting and comfortable. Passivity is the word that best describes us.

It is amazing how well we think of ourselves because we've learned a little doctrine. Our flabbiness is apparent in our apathy, our complacency. You know, it takes a whole lot to rouse us, and then we're not roused for very long.

We had much rather meditate on the Psalms and get our hands dirty in the front trenches. Who'd ever charge this generation of Calvinists and anybody else of turning the world upside down? We are not noted for crusading or for performing zeal. Bad men don't fear us and evil can go on unchecked.

We shoulder no cross, carry no banners, shun commitments and causes, conform to the world. Professor Mills of one of our universities makes this indicative statement, neither preachers nor laity matter. What they do and what they say can be readily agreed to and safely ignored.

I want you to indulge me as I read a parody that they use out in the First Presbyterian Church in San Rafael, California. A parody. This afternoon you read the 149th and 150th Psalm, great Psalms of praise.

And this parody of these two Psalms was put in the bulletin of this church, and it's to be chanted after the solemn reading of the budget. And it speaks of our non-involvement. Here's how it reads.

Oh, sing unto the Lord an old song, one that he hears over and over again, the song of the mighty with power and wealth, who live in fatness in the abundance of possessions, whose tents have thick carpets and host of electronic servants, and who say, Behold, we cannot give more. We must feed our overfed children and buy overpowered cars and maintain our fantastic standards, though we don't care to reason why. Oh, give praise unto a God who lets us get away with it, who answers our cries of empty self-pity, not with some judging his own, who think they can live in a world of suffering and loneliness and lostness and hostility and horrible, devastating war, and not care enough to love and give ourselves, who give thanks unto him whose only rebuke, oh, give thanks unto him whose only rebuke is the silence in our own conscience, great and mighty as our God, and greatly to be praised, for he watches us decrease our giving, withdraw our involvement, lessen our pain, crawl into our beautiful stone shell, through the wide tearful eyes of a hundred thousand hungry children, through the narrow, hostile faces of the craftsmen of international conspiracies, through the nodding sarcasm of disillusion using, he says, our God says nothing.

Praise ye the Lord, praise him upon the high sounding instruments, for even as we lost after the enchantments of much goods of possessions and pledged no echelons to our faith, even so does he permit us, but though he be silent, yes, that he follow after us, and an old scene is repeated, there is the sound of nails in the flesh, and a sigh in the dark, and grace, non-involvement, the apostle Paul goes to write a letter of correction, reestablishment, reaffirmation, where he labored in the city of Corinth, and he says three things that I mentioned very quickly, there's a little word, know, that I want to look at, I determine not to know, there's the word determined, and there's the word demonstration, forces come from every direction, and this preacher stands here, I'm older I guess than any preacher here, and under God I don't know, there's so many forces today, but when you get a little older, you'll wonder under God, if there's ever been the least bit of, I've seen so much of what I looked like was of God, and the devil tore it up in 15 minutes, so I just don't know, oh, to be shooting in the right direction today, and for young preachers they make 10 million mistakes, but God bless you, how would the apostle Paul come to us that are eating at the very vitals of everything, of all the faiths of the earth, and the evangelical country, until nobody feels the need of being seized upon by a power greater than themselves, that can do in them what they cannot do for them, and when all of it feels no need, I think first of all in the word know, Paul said when I down and just know, that refers to his stance, 40 years ago, I read from G. Carmel Morgan, statement I've never got over, and he showed how even the emphasis in the days of Puritanism could have been improved upon, and however young preacher listen to me now, we better take a man like Paul as a sample and a guide, and the apostle Paul thought that the issues were so that to waste time on anything else than standing and proclaiming a living Lord, not starting with the virgin birth and working up to where when everybody's gone home we mentioned the resurrection, but the apostle Paul started there and worked backward. I get so sick of fundamentalism I want to vomit. He's arguing about the virgin birth, the apostle Paul never paid any attention to it, he didn't have to, because if you believe in a living Lord, the

rest of it's easy, and the rest of it's impossible.

A man's a fool to believe that they'd be born without a human father, if that's all there is to it. I'll not accept Jesus Christ, a person who, he's the same one who's reigning from a throne, he got there by way of a bloody cross, but no, not by a person is the only answer for the condition in Corinth and the condition today. Samuel Rutherford wrote a friend from prison and he said, Jesus Christ came into my cell last night and every stone flashed like a ruby.

He knew a living Lord, 62 years old. This has become the quest of my soul, oh my God, to know a living Lord, eternally present, to set our hearts on fire, to love us in the beloved fire. When the church quits debating its doctrine and we learn to believe and see and experience a risen living Lord, we can't do it without the person at each other.

We already know so much without the bust. If we could believe in this Jesus Christ who came in a man's cell and the glory of God, so be it Lord. Thy throne shall never like earth away, thy throne, thy kingdom stands and grows forever, till all thy creatures on thy sway.

If we could quit believing in the doctrine of the risen Lord, live in the glory of the Lord of the doctrine, oh, this is our only hope now, I guess. When I was a young preacher, like every young preacher, I thought I could make folks do things I found out I can't. Oh God, who you know for, I know a living Christ.

He's the one that is crucified and the Greek I think stands there to say that there never was a time in the experience when there wasn't a cross and a man hanging on it and that that man is alive, to love us and wash our feet. What we need my dear brethren, all of our little improvements, we don't need some improvement now, we need revitalization. Paul said, I'm not going to know anything except this person.

And then that word determined, I just mentioned it in the past, the uniqueness. He said, this is a matter of settled conviction. And are you sure of anything else? If we don't start here and camp here, if we begin anywhere else, no hope.

Nothing, nothing, nothing. I had the time and I made up my mind. I thought about this business to present without any addition or subtraction, without any substitutes.

I had to present, God thanks, this enthroned Lord. What you doing around here? I said, John 18, 2. This end was I born. Therefore, Peter will say, let all the house of this same Jesus whom ye have, God hath made both Lord and Messiah.

That's the profoundest statement I ever read in my life. When I start to preach, I could preach all it was in the Bible, 15 minutes and a half, 10 minutes, just to wander. Now unto God, this profound truth as I get older, yes, we've already heard this.

This is it. This must be the determined presentation of God's voice through men. God demands that men not admire, but absolutely surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ.

My time's up and I mentioned the word demonstration. This is not piocity. This is not fatalism.

This is not laziness. This is the desperate need of my heart and yours that we shall become desperate. That only the Holy Ghost, using such means as shall please him or not, can press the person, the purity and power of the person, the absoluteness of the claims, and prosper the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We honor the name of John Calvin at these conferences. We can pick him to pieces as you can any man. God knows the one contribution he made to this whole business was in the realm of the Holy Spirit.

He added no doctrine, he corrected no doctrine. He himself wasn't half as clear on the atonement as the blue, but he did emphasize over and over again and in that sense was used of God to recover what was altogether lost. The fact that spiritual things are spiritually deserved, that the natural man receiveth not the things of, that no man can say Jesus is Lord except his was the ministry of the utter necessity of the work person of the Holy Ghost.

I'm so hungry for this latter-day glory that I'm biting at everything that smells like it might be of the Holy Ghost. The world's being torn to pieces. I can't cram it down the mouth of nations or churches.

I can't turn this world into finding out, learning of me taking my yoke upon you. How to be related to the awful totalitarian claims that Christ being Lord entails. Oh for the glory of the Holy Spirit.

I used to get crowds and I can't get a corporate. You can't either. Oh God with love.

I can't command the Holy Ghost, but you're looking at one person. We can't deal with this situation. We can't even deal with the deadness of our souls.

Only through your presence, your work, shall we see things not caused. Only men listen to with heeding ears. The one thing, he's a life-giving spirit.

They'll have to use the morning as being transformative unless we have the Holy Ghost. I can see illogically one thing I've got left and that is that I can get up every morning and say maybe this is the day men shall see once again the thing on their knees.

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