

The Need of Our Churches

by Rolfe Barnard

The church must focus on preaching the Jesus of the Bible and seeking the Holy Spirit to experience true power and effectiveness.

Duration: 35:34

Scripture: Isaiah 40:9, Matthew 6:33, Mark 16:17, Acts 19:8-10, Acts 19:20

Topics: "Churches"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for Christians to get involved in reaching out to the lost generation. He highlights the lack of impact that the church is having on the world and calls for a change in approach. The preacher shares a personal conversation with a friend who reflects on their past aspirations to see a revival but laments the current state of society. He expresses frustration with a civilization that is falling apart while Christians focus on theological debates instead of actively reaching out to sinners. The preacher urges Christians to follow the example of Charles Finney and the Apostle Paul, who were filled with the Holy Spirit and actively ministered to people, resulting in powerful conversions. He challenges the church to come together in unity and prophesy, believing that when Christians are actively serving God in the world, there will be a manifestation of His power and conviction in the hearts of unbelievers.

Transcript

We just well face it, my dear friends, that the trouble of America is preacher trouble. Our churches are in such a shape that in five years we're not going to have any unless something happens to God's preaching. We just well face that.

That's not pessimism. That's soul. We're hanging on for dear life.

I don't care, you can call yourself fundamental, half of your outfit chasing everything on God's earth except God. You can call yourself independent or convention or Calvinist or Arminian, all those terms, not worth a dime. But we're having a hard time keeping our heads above water.

Of course, there are always exceptions to the rule, but the rule of the exceptions prove the rule. These dear men for many years have been getting my tape out all over America and blessings to me, and I told them about this little conference that we're going to have as a test if the Lord approves of this conference. We expect to have many of them all over this section, and we welcome your presence.

I want you to be dead certain that you have your pockets full of literature, at least whether you're buying the books or not. Every church needs a library. You can't preach the Bible and be on steward this generation of Bible star church members without getting your people to read good books.

That's right. That is the key to them have given an intelligent hearing to what you've got to say, and these brethren are not going, they're going to lose money. Brother Mike is employed, and another brother, and just some men that have now become exclusive agents, is that right, for the banners and everything else that's been handed right to England all these years.

Now, there are lots of other good books, but these books that you have before you here are the ABCs. The old Puritans were on about 99,000 things, but they were right on the gospel, and that's a place to start, isn't it? And you can be helped, and your people can be helped. We need to encourage our people about the fact that on other days God has intervened, and he's liable to do it now, and it builds up my faith, because I have to do like you.

I have to go back so far to when we've seen God work much, but it builds up my faith. Oh, God, if you did it once, you'll do it again. You'll do it again.

Now, be sure that you don't leave this conference without having all the necessary information how that you may buy books on the discount, and by all means, we wish to encourage you to start with these blessed, blessed books. Every preacher ought to have the Forgotten Spurgeon, Allain's Alarm to the Converter, just hundreds of them. They're so blessed, and I'm so glad that we're here under these auspices.

I want you to turn this morning, if you will, and I don't think the purpose of this conference is to preach. The purpose is to encourage one another in the Lord to challenge younger preachers, and I want to speak to you this morning from the book of Acts chapter 19, and begin reading at verse 8. Acts chapter 19, verse 8. In 1948, I came to the Piedmont section, became a center of controversy about what we call the sovereign grace of God. I'm happy to say that the question now, the controversy, is not over doctrine.

Why, you can hardly find a preacher now that isn't talking for or against the great foundational doctrines with the word of God. Well, as long as they used to, they ignored it, but now we must move and get our doctrinal foundation established, but for God's sake, don't stay there. The time you get your doctrine straightened, and then you build a fence around yourself and defend your doctrine, that's the time you are dead.

You're dead as a doornail. You'll find that the people, if you get them to first base, they'll want to camp there, as far as they want to go, but when you get to first base, that's just to go down a state and go on to second, and I feel that. I've had trouble all over the country with young men who have changed their doctrinal position, and that's dangerous.

I don't like all these terms we use. I'm branded everything, but I don't like any of them. A fellow asked me one time if I was a Calvinist.

I said, what sort of an animal is that? And I am talking about Armenians, but when you study what the priest, Wesley, was a good Calvinist, he was. In his head, he'd argue against some Bible terms, but in his heart, he preached that God takes the initiative, and that's all he is, what we're trying to say when we're talking about Calvinism, that men are shut up to God, and God's not shut up to men, and we ought not to

continue to fight forever over terms, because most of them take two hours and a half to explain what we do not mean by them, and what we do. But the issue of the hour now is having established a good doctrinal position, and it won't be perfect, because we're all unprofitable servants, and wouldn't do any good change from being an Armenian to a Calvinist.

You just change from a fellow that is dead to a fellow that's twice dead, unless you've got something else. I won't challenge young preachers as I can, Paul, Ellen, me, and others older than you, and we've made every mistake under God's shining sun, and that's the only way any of us ever learn, by butting our fool heads against the wall. People try to tell us something, but we just figure they're nice people, just ain't right quite, you know, and after a while, when we get all bloody, we'll say, well, maybe we're going in the wrong direction here, and the further you go in the wrong direction, if you're insincere, the worse shape you'll be, isn't that right? And some of us have to reverse ourselves.

Now, that's hard to do. That's hard to do to admit you're wrong, but oh, I'm so anxious that we quit arguing about terms, and we quit quibbling about things that none of us have perfect knowledge about, and just face one thing, that for some 40 or 50 years, our churches have more and more been wrapping their righteous rags and robes about them and withdrawing from the world of which we're called to be good ministers. The only difference between Baptist fundamental independence and Catholics is the way we spell our name.

We ought to just build us a monastery and count our bees and keep ourselves clean, for all we're good at is criticizing other people who are involved, but we're not involved ourselves. This is the time in scriptural language for us to get involved. I am talking about the ecumenical movement.

Oh, Carwell, he's popping off about a while ago, but before you criticize them, bless God, there's one thing they say, if we do not get together, we're all going to be swallowed up. That's right. Somebody said that King Louis was a great king, was a good man, and he made a good king, but he inherited a revolution, and he tried to stick to what had worked in the past, and that's our trouble.

God don't repeat himself that way. There's never been two movements of the spirit alike. And if God did send us revival, nine out of ten of us wouldn't recognize it till it was gone, because we've got it all fixed.

Now, it's got to come to pass, and it ain't coming to pass that way. It's just not going to do it. It's not going to do it.

I'm talking about getting involved, and there's a passage in scripture that I want to read and browse around a few minutes just to absorb a little bit. The Apostle Paul is ministering here in Acts 19, chapter 8. And he, as Paul, went into the synagogue and spoke faithfully for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened and believed not but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one tyrannous.

And this continued for the space of two years, so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. Bless God they didn't build little church members and go out, little church building, and go out and beg somebody to come to some place. Isn't it silly to go out and invite people to church, when the church is people? But deeply ingrained, that these churchmen have been listening to you guys preach, they think this building is a church.

And all on God's earth we do, as professing Christians once in a while, we get all excited a little bit, and suddenly we ought to serve God, and we go out and knock on the doorbell and invite somebody to go to a place. But that church and the Christianity, bless God, these folks must have done like the Quakers, and the old Quakers arrived, second chapter of Acts, where they got started on it. Had something happen in the upper room, the meeting ended and the service began, the people got out and went to spreading the good news.

But 99% of your church members wouldn't know what on God's earth to say to us, and if you met him right, smack him in the road. All he's ever been trained to do is invite him to come somewhere. But they ministered here in the school for two years in such a fashion, they must got involved, for the word of the Lord Jesus was heard by Jews and Greeks all over the country.

The apostle Paul will talk about in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, when the whole church, that's the people, come together in one place. Things will happen, if they're all prophesying, because they've been serving God out there where they are, filling the country with their propaganda. When they meet together, there's power, so if a man comes in the assembly, why, he's convinced of all things, and the secret things of his heart are made manifest, and his alibis go down the drain, and he falls on his face and worships God, and goes away and says, that's a bunch of fundamentalists.

No, they're pre-millenarian, no, God's back. You're glad you boys put up your signs announcing you're missionaries. Nobody found it out, they didn't see the sign.

Evangelistic and stuff like that, you know, we better advertise it, you know. Isn't that a shame, that put adjectives on with the church of God. Well, I won't charge anything extra for that.

They went after it. Oh, my soul. Somebody said the other day, my religion's going to play out in your day and mine.

They're just going to be committed Christians, and there ain't no other kind. And pagan civilization, and we're pretty close to that. And I hope for most of you, dear brethren, that about 85% of your church people take out on you before next Sunday.

They ain't got nothing but a little vaccination, a little dose. They don't know nothing about what it means to know the Lord. But you pat them on the back and give them a shot in the arm every Sunday morning, that helps them endure the next week, you know.

And you determine they ain't going to have no disturbance in your church. Old Caldwell down here in Kentucky, and I thought I wrote him up in the Western Reporter, said, Brother Caldwell's a blessed man. He graced our home, preached in our church, and he left no problems.

That meant the church was dead when Caldwell got there, stayed dead while he was there. That's right. No problem.

Just think if we had a little bit of the spirit, how many problems we'd have. And it'd all be live problems, and they'd be kicking it from one end button to another. That's right.

God give us some problems. Well, sir, God honored this, verse 11, and God brought special miracles by the hands of Paul. Now you Calvinists don't be afraid of this.

Read again the 11th chapter of Hebrews and see who gets the credit for the wonderful things that are brought to pass. God gives the credit to Abraham. By faith, Abraham.

By faith, Noah. By faith, by faith, they did. God gave them the credit.

Now God brought special miracles, but he did it by the hands of Paul. He always uses human means to display his glory, and those miracles were tremendous, so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. Then certain of the vagabond Jew, exorcist, they said, boy, that's it.

They took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus. Now this is orthodoxy. There was orthodox as all get out.

There's orthodox as the church was that got so dead that they changed the praying for the sick to the extreme function of Roman Catholicism. All the power went out. They still had the form and the name.

You see what I mean? That's right. And here's some men having these seven sons of Stephen, and they saw what God did by the hands of Paul, and they said, this is it, and they were orthodox. I think they were very orthodox, bless God to believe in the five points and any others, and they said, in the name of the Lord Jesus, you get out of that man.

Orthodoxy won't get the job done. I'll fight you for any doctrine that's an issue in the hour. No man's a friend of the gospel who doesn't stand up and let his voice be heard over that portion of God's blessed truth upon which Satan is centering his frontal attack in his day.

But once you've got your doctrine straight, there isn't anything this side of hell that kills as bad and as quickly as truth. It does so much more harm than error if it not be saturated in the Holy Ghost. God knows that, son.

That is so. Oh, everywhere I go, people say, you see that little church over there? See that preacher? Well, he went off into this sovereign grace business, and look at that. No, he didn't.

He just got a few hints in his head and thought he could pound truth in the people's hearts, not knowing that spiritual things are spiritually discerned and that the heart must be prepared before he's about to receive any kind of truth. And he's sitting over there bragging about he's got the truth, and the reason he hasn't got it is because he's standing for the truth. And so somebody says, well, now these great foundational truths that bound the proclamation of the gospel that is true of every interdiction of God since Pentecost without exception, well, that made punk, because they got a little fella over here, you know.

He's gone crazy, and he's got some truth. Just enough to make a fool out of him, but he hasn't got the power of God. Oh, but they demure, you say to me.

Brother Ralph, I believe I'll just show up my hands with trying to maintain the truth, just getting the three points and some stories, and get everybody converted, and let them go on to hell. I'm so tired of all these people not, not, not, not paying any attention to the truth. But there's never been a work of God's grace since the day of Pentecost that wasn't characterized by two things, all flesh and flesh, behold your God.

Now that's Calvinism. I don't like that term, go down this country, Calvinist, he believes in the last point, you can get saved today, live like hell tomorrow, and come back five, six, four years, I don't believe that

stuff. But we got these terms on us all.

That's how it starts, preparing your ways. Well, what do you want me to say? Well, ain't but two things to say, the lost generation, everything you've got will just wind up in a hole in the ground. Oh, Christ, anything man touches, he poisons and ruins.

When a man's been brought to that helplessness, then pointing to the God of glory that this generation knows nothing about, you say, behold your God, behold your God. This man, these seven sons of skeevers, they had the orthodoxy, that's God, yes sir, and they in the name of the Lord, you can't find anything wrong with that, they commanded these spirits to go out of that man. And there's a little more, listen, did you see that 13th verse again? And they said, we adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preached.

A fellow down in Kentucky the other day was telling about some preacher friend of his from school days, he thought he'd gone crazy. He called him up around this, he said, brother, so-and-so said, I want to have fellowship around the Lord Jesus Christ, and forget these other things. And my friend said, which Jesus? Which Jesus you want to have fellowship around? Oh, forget all doctrine, sound like I'm against doctrine, but no man can come to Christ except in the truth of him, and that's doctrine.

But which Jesus? The one who shall not fail, who was given a word by the Father. And bless God, he worked and he's still working and he will work and he shall not be defeated. Oh, this little God-blessed Jesus that the dear brethren got standing outside of your heart still hoping great big you will let a little bit of him come in.

Which Jesus? That's the issue there, which Jesus? Well, these were seven sons of one, that old Paul was the one Paul preached. That's a pretty good Jesus to latch on to, that'll do the ride of the river with, the one Paul preached. I wish instead of being fundamental and premillennial and independent and separating everything, yes, it'd get out on us that we preach the Jesus that Paul preached.

And there were seven sons of one, Sceva, a Jew and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered, and here's my text, and said, Jesus, I know, had some dealings with him. This word, know, I've been schooled, he knew experimentally, he knew something about Jesus.

You know, it's tremendous that the demons of Jesus, they made a greater confession of faith, 95% of your church members, that one thing they did, so they said, we know who thou art, thou art the holy. Yes, sir. And they did all that and still went to hell, but that's much better than we got in it.

They knew who Jesus was. They said, Jesus, I know, I'm Paul, I know. And this is what I wanted to exhort you with about 10 minutes, who are you? Oh, God help us, who are you? Why should we pay attention to you? We know Jesus, and we know Paul, he gives us more trouble than we've ever given him.

He is known in hell. He was a scourge. George Whitefield brought his first gospel message when he was 21 years old.

Fifteen people went crazy listening to him preach, just one son. As far as I know, I've been preaching there for 41 years, and I've never had any record but four people going crazy while they're listening to me preach. Over in Winston-Salem, I had to commit three different people to an asylum during the meeting.

They'd come to the meeting, God would strip them, all flesh and grass, and the next day they'd call for some preacher, and he'd come and heal the wounds slightly, and then they'd come back and hear him to

preach again that night, and I can't do nothing like that, but there's something going on, there's an evil power, a holy power, or something, and they'd get under conviction again, and the next day the preacher'd go, oh, you're all right now, Brother Barnes just got you all disturbed. I'm a hot shot, Brother, me disturb somebody, isn't that sinner? I couldn't disturb nobody, but something was sure to disturb you, and they finally went crazy healing the wound slightly, and I say it to my shame, under God, old Mordecai Ham's the last fellow to mock a preacher that we've had in the South, and he turned the city upside down. He did it, God did through him.

That old man knew God, and the power of God was upon him. Some of us older folk, and we're as young as you are, we didn't much need the power of God. We could make it ourselves, but something done happened, Brother.

Men like Caldwell and me, we'd give you a thaw and a half and a cow and a calf if we could live thirty minutes in the atmosphere of the fullness of the Holy Ghost. Oh, I'm so tired of the demons that are teeming. I'm so tired of living in a civilization that's busted at every end, coming apart at the seams, and you and I preaching our little sermon, and we wouldn't hurt a flea, Brother.

God help us. Oh, Charles Finney, when he got filled with the Holy Ghost, something happened to him, and everybody he talked to for three weeks seemed to get saved or something. But not us, God help us.

We're too busy arguing about whether it's baptism or filling or whether y'all speak in tongues or something, and you're just going to miss the whole thing. That's right. Who are you? One out of every six adults in America is a sodomite.

Who are you, preacher? We know Jesus and we know Paul. Who are you? You read that book, The Sixth Man, you ought to read it. You know what sodomy is.

That's as far down as you can go, Brother. Seventy thousand males sodomize prostitutes in New York City alone. Seven hundred thousand, either female or male, sodomizers in New York City alone.

Washington governor of Honeycomb, where the preacher, God knows how many of them, killed him. Read the Romans. When you've got there, Brother, there's no further to go.

In such a civilization, while we've been arguing and debating and spitting and fussing, and everybody's wrong with us, I'm going to come to the mourners bench. Oh, God. Everybody's getting involved except us.

The communists are involved. The beatniks are involved. The liberals are involved.

They've taken over the government, the press, the schools, and the churches. All of them are described in Acts chapter 2 as a conspiracy to get rid of the Son of God. You say, well, they're all going at it the wrong way.

Well, maybe so, but under God. We've got to get involved. Oh, I'm tired of preaching little corporate God to people and talking about how wicked the world is when we refuse to get dirty and help some old sinner to God.

Get involved. We actually thought that we were fundamental. The world would be tickled to hear about it, but it doesn't seem like it's fazed as much.

I asked Sam Morris, the Boar's Templar, the last time I saw him. We went to school together and on the debating team together. I hadn't seen him in several years, and I said, Sam, what happened? There were two young sprouts full of whim work and vitality as we were, and we just knew if we'd let this happen one year at this world, we'd have the whole outfit converted.

He said we zigged when we should have zagged or something. Things getting in a bigger mess than it ever was. Getting involved.

I'm tired of the modernists getting involved. I'm tired of the fact that the greatest evangelistic force in America is the Roman Catholic priest. That's so called.

Brother, there won't be a hospital in a big city in America that the halls won't be jammed next Sunday morning with a big prong of Catholic laymen passing out tracts of this from the sick. You see a Catholic priest now, he's counting his feet with one hand carrying a scuttle of coal to some poor fellow and saying, getting involved. Getting involved.

Martin Luther wouldn't have got the first base if he hadn't got involved in the issues of his day. Calvin wasn't trying to propound the system of doctrine with possible beating to it. He was fighting for the life of the gospel.

He wasn't putting on a mock show. We need to face it, and we can take the truths they preach and the forms they adhere to, but if we are not relating them to the issues of our day, we've just got some dead troops, and all we can do is argue theology. I'm just saying this, dear ones, we've got to begin as preachers and church people, and if it takes the firing of every pastor in North Carolina, I wish it would get fired for this, that under God and the spirit of Christ, trying to lead people who we've misled so long, we lead our people to get involved in the issues that even up this country.

Every demon says, who are you? Who are you? We can't stop a thing. Even isn't growing up around us while we hold a meeting. Jesus, I know.

Paul, I know. Who are you? That's all that's me. I've got it right there in my head now.

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