

Restoration of the Church

by T.Job Anbalagan

The sermon emphasizes the need for the Church to be restored to its original New Testament pattern and become a strong, rock-like Church that is holy and without blemish.

Scripture: Acts 5:1

Topics: "Church Revival", "Spiritual Restoration"

Description

T. Job Anbalagan preaches about the current condition of the Church, highlighting the perilous state of the world with wars, violence, and moral decay, and how the Church, meant to be a light, is flickering instead of shining brightly. He contrasts this with the early Church, born on Pentecost, which was vibrant, prayerful, loving, and sacrificial. Anbalagan addresses the division, worldliness, false doctrines, and lack of vision plaguing the present Church, urging believers to take responsibility and follow Nehemiah's example of restoration and prayer for revival.

Transcript

Condition of the present Church

These are perilous days in a turbulent world. Just call to mind the recent days and envision how many thousands of precious lives were lost in wars and violence and in natural calamities. Your nation or rather our world is passing through a never-ending crisis with violence and turmoil soaring, with morality and spirituality touching the lowest ebb, with sins and iniquities abounding in gigantic proportions.

At this juncture, sad to say, the Church, which is ordained of God as the light of the world, is not shining brightly and steadily but flickeringly. If the Church, the salt of the earth, loses its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men (Matt.5: 13-14).

Where art thou? God called Adam when he and Eve transgressed the commandment of God and fell (Ge.3: 9). This is the ever-first question found in the Bible and put by God to the first man of the human race. God repeatedly puts this question to every human being who has gone away from Him. This reveals the profound grief and the unfathomable love in the heart of God towards the lost. Where art thou? God now asks the present Church which has slipped away from Christ.

Condition of the early Church

Born on the day of Pentecost, the Church in its primitive stage was superb. It was a living Church aglow with the fire of God. It was a praying and witnessing Church. It was a loving and giving Church, taking care of its widows and poor saints. It was a sacrificing Church as many of its members died as martyrs singing praises unto God in the flames of furnaces, in the animals dens, in the gallows. It was holy and powerful enough to judge its sinning members (Acts 5:1-11). It was separate from the world and was wholly dedicated to its Bridegroom.

Friendship with the world

The Church, the Bride of Christ, betrothed to her Bridegroom, is in the world but not of the world (Jn.17: 11, 14). God is now appalled at the betrothed bride who is progressively slipping into the corruption that is in the world through lust (II Pet.1: 4). Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God, warns the word of God (James 4:4). Woe to us if we love the world, or the things that are in the world! If we do so, the love of the Father is not in us (I Jn.2: 15).

A divided house

But the Church of today is a divided house and has backslidden. It is laden with lukewarmness, worldliness, prayerlessness, unfaithfulness, heresy, rivalry, hatred, etc. To rub salt into the injury, the false prophets and false teachers are throttling the Church from within. Though it has a name that it lives, it is indeed dead (Rev.3: 1).

Is Christ divided? (I Cor.1: 13). No, Christ, the Head of the Church is not divided. But, the Church, the body of Christ is divided by man divided mainly on account of some doctrines, some of which are but minor. There is one body, and one Spirit. (Eph.4: 4). By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body (I Cor.12: 13). God is not to blame for the division of the Church because He has never intended any such division.

In darkness

Those belonging to one denominational church look down upon or even hate those belonging to another denominational church. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. Darkness hath blinded his eyes (I Jn.2: 9-11). He that loveth not his brother abideth in death (I Jn.3: 14). Nobody can claim salvation through the Blood of Jesus if he hates his brother and thus abides in death. Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer and no murderer has eternal life abiding in him (I Jn.3: 15). The disciples of Christ Jesus write or preach in a derogatory manner against one another, thereby persecuting the very body of Christ, of which they are themselves, members. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Church: For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones (Eph.5: 29-30). The Church has thus become a divided house.

False doctrines

Oh, the devil is treading on the vineyards of God, the churches, so as to prevent the buds from blossoming, to retard the growth of the young vines and to make the vine fruit (fruit of the Spirit) clean bare by his teeth which are of a lion (Joel 1:6-7). The churches have a name that they live but are dead (Rev.3: 1). The children of God are being taught false and pernicious doctrines inspired by the devil with the result that they are tempted to depart from the faith and to receive blessings from God through the sense of seeing or feeling or any other sense (I Tim.4: 1).

Churches without vision

The churches have no vision about lost souls, evangelism and revival. Saved souls or redeemed sheep are slipping back gradually into the old valley of sin because they have not been properly tended and taken care of individually by the shepherds concerned (Acts 20:28). The ministers, once mightily used of God, are no more aglow with the fire of the Holy Ghost. They are like fishes found dead in polluted, stagnant water with no fresh inflow of the Spirit power.

Responsibility on our shoulders

Having seen the present condition of the world and of the Church, what is your reaction? Caught in the spiral of all such bad news, what is your reaction? Can we blame the national rulers for the anarchy and the ever-increasing lawlessness and violence? God forbid. Can we blame our church ministers and evangelists for the deteriorating condition of the churches? God forbid. We, the individual Christians, ought to take the blame upon ourselves. Neither should we absolve ourselves nor should we abdicate our Christian responsibilities in this darkest hour of the human history.

Like Nehemiah

Let us now read the book of Nehemiah and see how Nehemiah reacted to the bad news concerning the great affliction and the reproach of the remnant that were left of the captivity following the destruction of the wall of Jerusalem and the burning of the gates thereof (Ch.1 of Nehemiah). Today, the condition of the spiritual Jerusalem, the body of Christ is no better than that of the Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah. No doubt, the righteous God judged righteously the backsliding children of Israel. But, Nehemiah held not his peace and gave God no rest in that he sat down, wept, mourned, fasted and prayed to God. Notwithstanding the fierce and irresistible opposition from his enemies whose sarcasm surpassed its limit as they taunted him, will they revive the stones out of the heaps which are burned? Nehemiah did go ahead boldly with his restoration work and ultimately succeeded in reviving the stones out of the heaps burnt. God is calling you to do a similar work for His Church.

Dear disciples of Jesus, you have to gird yourselves and lament. howl. come, lie all night in sackcloth Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord (Joel 1:13-14).

Let us restore

Like Nehemiah, let us restore our desolate churches to the original New Testament pattern. We can definitely revive the stones out of the heaps burnt. Like Nehemiah, on hearing such bad news, let us sit down, weep with tears, and mourn, fast and pray to God. Oh, let us plead before God for divine mercy in place of divine judgment, for blessing in place of curse, for restoration in place of extinction, for revival in place of eternal death.

God wants a strong, rock-like Church being ministered by the five kinds of New Testament ministers (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) in these last days so powerful that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt.16: 18). God also wants a glorious Church in these last days not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph.5: 27).

Vision of Glorified Christ and His body

Dearly beloved, while reading this message, may God enable you to see through the prophetic eyes of Apostle John a vision of the glorified Christ and His body! John had this vision when he was on the isle of Patmos, gripped by fear and frustration (Rev.1: 9-20). He saw our Lord clothed with a long robe. It is the robe of His righteousness (Is.61: 10). He is covering His body, the Church, with His righteousness. John saw His feet likened to bronze glowing in a furnace. The feet are a part of His body, the glorified Church. It is under these feet which, in other words, mean your and my feet, that the God of peace bruises Satan (Rom.16: 20). These feet, made of burnished bronze, are full of vigour so as to tread on serpents and scorpions (Luke 10:19).

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