

SHOULD NOT, COULD NOT, WOULD NOT

A MESSAGE TO EVER HEARING AND NEVER BELIEVING BELIEVERS

God is speaking, we are not hearing. God is pleading we are not believing. This generation is without excuse, never has the word of God gone out in such measure yet so little response has occurred from its proclamation. We are ever hearing and never believing. God has given warnings, pleadings, to His Church not just in New Testament Scripture but alas in the entire Old Testament Scriptures. - Greg Gordon

EVER HEARING...

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"Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions of Judah., and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked."

SHOULD NOT

“They have despised the law of the Lord” - What a terrible time in Israel’s history when they began to disdain, scorn and loathe the very laws of God! Does this surprise you that the people of God can begin to inwardly despise the words of God Himself by whom they are called? Jesus Christ spoke these words which share this same principle: “And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” There will be a crowd of “many” in the last day that will confess to know God yet deny Him by their works. The word iniquity in the greek is lawlessness, therefore they have a show of godliness but inwardly they have a heart that is lawless, apart from and hating the law of God.

John Calvin spoke on this passage with clear vision and insight: “I come now to the words: ‘For they have despised, he says, the law of Jehovah.’ Here he charges the Jews with apostasy; for they had cast aside the worship of God, and the pure doctrine of religion. This was a crime the most grievous. We hence see, that the Prophet condemns here freely and honestly as it became him, the vices of his own people, so that there was no room for calumny, when he afterwards became a severe censor and reprover of the Israelites; for he does not lightly touch on something wrong in the tribe of Judah, but says that they were apostates and perfidious, having cast aside the law of God. But it may be asked, why the Prophet charges the Jews with a crime so atrocious, since religions as we have seen in the Prophecies of Hosea, still existed among them? But to this there is a ready answer: the worship of God was become corrupt among them, though they had not so openly departed from it as the Israelites. There remained, indeed, circumcision among the Israelites; but their sacrifices were pollution, their temples were brothels: they thought that they worshipped God; but as a temple had been built at Bethel contrary to God’s command, the whole worship was a profanation.” What a terrible time in the life of God’s people when religion that was God-ordained becomes man centered and man honoring. Cannot we see how much of evangelical Christianity in our day has a form of godliness and is apostate and apart from the ‘pure doctrine of religion’? It is time to repent and follow God’s ways that are best. The Church needs to stop striving after what is second best or what we think it best, only God’s best will do in these days.

A.W. Pink expounds on this point of lawlessness: “In His Olivet discourse the Lord Jesus prophesied that, “Because iniquity (Greek, lawlessness) shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12). Surely no anointed eye can fail to see that this prediction is now” being fulfilled. Lawlessness abounds on every side. Men are bent on pleasing themselves. Authority is openly flouted. Discipline is becoming a thing of the past. Parental control is rarely exercised. Marriage has, for the most part, degenerated into a thing of convenience. Nations regard their solemn treaties as ‘scraps of paper.’ In the U.S.A. the 18th Amendment is despised on every side. Yes, “lawlessness” is abounding. And God’s own people have not escaped the chilling effects of this; the love of many of them has waxed cold.”

Church we “should not” despise the law of the Lord. Let us not move ourselves into a place where we despise the commandments of God and the life abiding by the principles of the Word of God. J.C. Ryle stated many years ago: “For another thing, let us beware of despising the law of the Ten Commandments. Let us not suppose for a moment that it is set aside by the Gospel, or that Christians have nothing to do with it. The coming of Christ did not alter the position of the Ten Commandments one hairs breadth. If anything, it exalted and raised their authority. (Romans 3:31.) The law of the Ten Commandments is God's eternal measure of right and wrong. By it is the knowledge of sin; by it the Spirit shows men their need of Christ, and drives them to Him: to it Christ refers His people as their rule and guide for holy living. In its right place it is just as important as ‘the glorious Gospel.’ - It cannot save us: we cannot be justified by it; but never, never let us despise it. It is a symptom of an ignorant ministry, and an unhealthy state of religion, when the law is lightly esteemed. The true Christian ‘delights in the law of God.’ (Romans 7:22).” May we say with David “I love thy law!” Church! We “should not” despise the law of God.

COULD NOT

“Have not kept his commandments” - What is not but the chief characteristic of one who is called of God is but those who follow the commandments of God. Jesus Christ said “if you love me keep my commandments.” And also it says in Scripture: “For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

Calvin accurately expounds on this warning from God: “But we must notice the explanation which immediately follows, - that ‘they kept not his statutes’. The way then by which Amos proves that the Jews were covenant-breakers, and that having repudiated God's law, they had fallen into wicked superstitions, is by saying, that they kept not the precepts of God. It may, however, appear that he treats them here with too much severity; for one might not altogether keep God's commands either through ignorance or carelessness, or some other fault, and yet be not a covenant-breaker or an apostate. I answer, - That in these words of the Prophet, not mere negligence is blamed in the Jews; but they are condemned for designedly, that is, knowingly and willfully departing from the commandments of God, and devising for themselves various modes of worship. It is not then to keep the precepts of God, when men continue not under his law, but audaciously contrive for themselves new forms of worship; they regard not what God commands, but lay hold on anything pleasing that comes to their minds.”

J.C. Ryle speaks on keeping the commandments of God: “In the last place, let us beware of supposing that the Gospel has lowered the standard of personal holiness, and that the Christian is not intended to be as strict and particular about his daily life as the Jew. This is an immense mistake, but one that is unhappily very common. So far from this being the case, the sanctification of the New Testament saint

ought to exceed that of him who has nothing but the Old Testament for his guide. The more light we have, the more we ought to love God: the more clearly we see our own complete and full forgiveness in Christ, the more heartily ought we to work for His glory. We know what it cost to redeem us far better than the Old Testament saints did. We have read what happened in Gethsemane and on Calvary, and they only saw it dimly and indistinctly as a thing yet to come. May we never forget our obligations! The Christian who is content with a low standard of personal holiness has got much to learn.” May we be of those that keep “the commandments of God” Church! Israel “could not” keep the commands of God but we “can” keep the commands through the power of God.

WOULD NOT

“their lies caused them to err” - Oh, how often we are led astray by false idols and gods that we exalt in our life's. How deceived we can become being “believers” yet walking in “unbelief” and carnality.

John Calvin again shows how Israel erred in walking in deception with pretense that they were walking with God: “But he also adds, that ‘their own lies deceived or caused them to go astray’. He here confirms his preceding doctrine; for the Jews had ever a defense ready at hand, that they did with good intent what the Prophet condemned in them. They, forsooth! sedulously worshipped God, though they mixed their own leaven, by which their sacrifices were corrupted: it was not their purpose to spend their substance in vain, to undergo great expenses in sacrifices, and to undertake much labour, had they not thought that it was service acceptable to God! As then the pretense of good intention, (as they say,) ever deceives the unbelieving, the Prophet condemns this pretense, and shows it to be wholly fallacious, and of no avail. ‘It is nothing,’ he says, ‘that they pretend before God some good intention; their own lies deceive them.’”

Israel in it's day “would not” walk in the ways of God and the Church in our day is following that path of deception. Israel believed they were following God but it was a farce and deception. They would not walk in the ways there were right and found the lack of power to do so. God desires His Church to walk worthy of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. May we not as Israel of old did: “But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not.” What a terrible day it is when the “voice of God” is being dampened by the voices of mere men. We need to take off the veil of “pretense” before God and be honest before Him of our need to hear from Him in these perilous hours of the Church age. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.”