

Setting Our Goals

by George Warnock

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and walking with God in setting our goals, and that God's ways are higher than our ways.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 2:6, Isaiah 55:8, John 14:6, Ephesians 3:9, Philippians 3:8

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Gods Will"

Description

George Warnock preaches about the spiritual journey of seeking fulfillment and finality, emphasizing that in the spiritual realm, achieving goals only leads to new horizons, territories, and depths in God. He highlights the humility and smallness of the instruments God uses for His great works, contrasting it with the prevailing thought of thinking big in the Church. Warnock points out the importance of identifying with God's ways and being willing to lay down our own goals and pursuits to fully walk in His will, even if it means forsaking what we have already attained.

Transcript

Being a finite people we would like to seek out for ourselves a way of life that is fulfilling, and which in the end will bring us into a sense of finality; because the finite mind cannot comprehend unceasing progression. We would like to come to that place where our goals have been achieved and we have arrived. But in the spiritual realm we must learn that goals once attained only open up before us new horizons to seek, new territory in God to explore, new ways of the Lord to understand, new heights to attain unto, and new depths in which to be lost. It is like climbing some rugged mountain peak only to discover when we have reached the top that there are new valleys of testing and humiliation into which we must descend, and new mountain peaks that we did not know existed. It is unsettling to us by God's own design; for there is a certain restlessness that prevails in His own heart to have a people in whom He can dwell in all His fulness, and through whom He may exhibit the majesty and glory of His Being throughout all realms, the earthly and the physical as well as the heavenly and celestial. (See Ephesians 3:9, 10). His plan, therefore, is to identify us with Himself; and to do this He will consistently, yet with great patience and mercy, frustrate all our attempts to achieve goals and to pursue purposes which may not only fall short of His own, but which in themselves are so often extremely selfish and self-centered.

The prevailing thought in the Church is: God is doing big things. So we must think big... talk big... preach big... get into the action... see great things accomplished for God. The only problem, of course, is that usually those who are planning to do big things do not understand that the greater the work that God will

perform, the weaker... and the smaller... and the more humble will be the instruments that God will use. And while religious people were building synagogues throughout the land, and sending missionaries far and wide to make proselytes among the Gentiles, God was preparing a "Body" in which He would reveal Himself, and forever do away with temple sacrifice and offering. And this One would come on the scene, not with trumpet blast from the temple, but in an atmosphere prepared of the Lord and so designed that only the humble would be able to breathe the fresh air of God's revelation. Humble shepherds would hear from heaven, and would come and worship the Messiah in a stable. He would be born into a humble peasant family of no particular esteem in the religious world. Simeon, a strange old man who walked with God, and who cherished God's promise that he would live to see the Lord's Christ--because he walked with God he came into the temple one day at God's appointed time and saw the Christ that others about him saw but did not recognize--and then went out, content that his purpose in life was accomplished. (And we cannot help but hear the reports of his friends and neighbors as they conversed with one another, and lamented over the delusion of this old man who talked all his life about living to see the Messiah... and now he's gone.) Then there were Zacharias and Elisabeth --both "stricken in years." He was a faithful priest in the temple--but he would be retiring shortly, or pass off the scene in death. But God uses them to bring forth the prophet that would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers--and prepare the ground for the revelation of the Messiah. And John spent his days in isolation in the wilderness, recognized by the people as a prophet of God, but held in very low esteem by the leaders of the religious system of that day. Nor did he go about organizing crusades to reach the masses, but they came to him... drawn by the magnetism of the prophetic word that was in his mouth... He gave them some very simple instructions which if they followed would prepare their hearts for the Christ that was about to be revealed.

O how God Most High must lament over His people today as He did over that first generation of redeemed Israelites, "THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN MY WAYS!" And how He longs for that people who will take everything that they have ever received from God, yes everything: their doctrines, their fellowships, their churches--large or small; their gifts and ministries; their plans and schemes for enlargement; their programs for world evangelism and world outreach; and lay them all like Isaac on the Altar of Burnt Offering, on one of the mountains that God would show them.

But God hasn't shown me any such mountain, I hear someone say. Nor will He do so, until you walk with God from altar to altar... until you fervently desire to do God's will... until you learn His way and earnestly desire to walk in His way... until the will of God becomes to you your highest prize and your daily bread... and until you are prepared to recognize that as the heavens are high above the earth, so are God's ways higher than your ways, and God's thoughts higher than your thoughts. Perhaps we will not find too much conflict in our own hearts or with others, as we talk about "goals" and "unceasing progression"... as long as this means bigger and bigger... and more and more of God's blessing and enlargement. But when God begins to reveal that the enlarging of our goals may well mean the forsaking and laying down of what we have already attained to, there could be cause for a little wonderment in our own hearts and in the eyes of those about us. And we will discover that in measure as we are walking with God, in like measure shall we become as strangers and foreigners in the eyes of those who see an end in gift and ministry and the blessing of God.

You mean God told me to start this big church and get involved in this extensive outreach, and now I am supposed to drop it all? You mean God called me into the ministry, and now asks me to lay it down and go to work in a factory or sawmill, or get involved in some monotonous routine job on an assembly line? God

called me to higher things than that. You mean God called the apostle Paul to the high and holy calling of apostleship to the Gentiles, and then shut him up in prison to waste away his days in a prison cell?

And so the call of God to higher heights in Him is not heard because we have not identified with His Ways, and therefore we do not really appreciate the thoughts and the intents of His heart. We do not understand the prayer of Hannah, how God is the One who kills and makes alive; who brings down to the grave and brings up again. We do not understand that it is only in dying that we shall truly live; and it is only in going down to the grave that we shall know the power of His resurrection life. Nor shall we ever know this by taking a course in Theology. The actual knowing of it can only come in that life that has earnestly sought identification with the Lord who is the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE.

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