

Denying, Resisting and Disdaining the Power of God

by Steve Gallagher

Steve Gallagher's sermon emphasizes the need for true believers to embrace the transformative power of God rather than settling for a superficial faith.

Scripture: Romans 12:2

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

Description

Steve Gallagher preaches about the danger of having 'a form of godliness' without true inward transformation, highlighting the resistance to the Holy Spirit's correction and the preference for outward religious appearances over allowing God to work deeply in the heart. Despite the outward success and growth of Christianity, there is a lack of true power in believers' lives, leading to a longing for a genuine experience of God's transformative power and sanctification. Gallagher emphasizes the need for Christians to be revitalized by the Holy Spirit's life-giving power, enabling them to overcome sinful habits and be transformed from the inside out.

Transcript

As Paul was laying out his description of the Church at the end of the age, he saw that there would be many with nothing more than "a form of godliness." In its barest sense, this must mean these people would have the outward trappings of a walk with God but lack the inward reality.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly what went through the old warrior's mind when he wrote about Last Days Christians who were content with "a form of godliness." It seems evident to me that as his mind became filled with thoughts of the Church at the end of the age that he envisioned a majority of churchgoers who would be content with a mere semblance of Christianity. The people he saw in his mind's eye would prefer to convey an image to those around them that they were walking with the Lord--although it really wasn't so. No matter how their particular "form of godliness" took shape, one common denominator among them all was that they would be unwilling to allow the Holy Spirit to bring correction into their lives. These people would live an outward expression of Christianity while resisting the power that came from a God who desired to do a deep, inward work in their hearts.

Transforming Power

In 2,000 years of history, the gospel has never seen the level of success it is enjoying today in America. There have never been so many conversions, so many churches and so much money to support the evangelical enterprise. Christianity permeates every facet of American life. Everywhere we turn in the field of ministry, we find bank accounts bulging, numbers increasing, organizations expanding and denominations flourishing. Surely, the gospel has never seen such outstanding results! Yet, with all the progress and outward signs of success, why is there such little power in the lives of believers?

I believe there is a longing in the hearts of true believers to experience God's power. They want to see something real from the Lord; they are tired of carnal messages that cater to their emotions or academic sermons aimed at their intellects. They want to hear a fresh word from the Lord. They long to be touched in the heart by words that have the unction of the Holy Spirit. They want to sense divine energy moving inside them, invigorating them, empowering them, kindling a new love for Jesus.

Scripture promises this kind of life experience to Christians--and it wasn't meant only for those who lived in a different era. God's power is available for us today!

One of the primary functions of God's power is the transformation of sinners into saints. It is a process the New Testament calls sanctification, whereby the common or unclean is made holy. True Christianity offers the sincere adherent a life that is becoming increasingly free from the poisonous touch of sin.

The truth is that even the most "together" believer must conquer stubborn, sinful habit patterns, overcome a demanding flesh, deal with a selfish nature and subdue an ever-surgingly pride. The poor man looks within himself for the strength to undertake this great battle and all he finds is spiritual inertia and a lack of resolve. Is there any hope for him? Can he ever be holy?

With marvelous audacity Christianity steps forward and claims to have the wherewithal to bring about change in the worst of characters. What, but the power of God, can flush the filth out of the heart of a sexual addict and leave innocence and purity in its wake? What else but the Indwelling Spirit can change a hopeless drunk or drug addict into a sober-minded man? Who else but God can transform a thief into a man of virtue, a liar into a lover of truth, a mocker into a serious-minded man or an arrogant braggart into a meek lamb? Only God can work such human miracles--but He does do it!

The great need for Christians today is for the invigorating life of God to flow through their beings, enlightening their minds with spiritual truth, purifying their motives, fortifying their convictions, molding their personalities, solidifying their vacillating wills, sweetening their natures, cleansing and renewing their hearts and subduing their flesh. We need to be revitalized and energized by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit.

Can God do this? My testimony is that I have seen it happen countless times in the most hopeless situations. Let the skeptics--both outside and within the Church--line up with their sneering cynicism and faithless denials of God's power. If they could but see within the walls of the celestial city, a hundred million saints would step forth with resounding testimonies to the fact that the Almighty converted them from virtual devils into loving saints. For two millennia Christ has been transforming people from the inside out.

Power Outage

God's quiet power working within people has been the hallmark of true believers from the very beginning. However, as the Lord opened the Apostle Paul's heart to see the Church during the final days of man, something quite different--something deformed and misshapen--emerged in his mind's eye. The vast majority of professing Christians he saw were actually doing their utmost to resist that power, preferring what was little more than an outward semblance of Christianity.

He saw a kind of religion where God is kept at bay; where His efforts to sanctify and purify the person are hindered. The people being described are resisting the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. Rather than submitting themselves to the lordship of Christ, they have taken Christianity on their own terms. They have remained lord of their own lives; Self has retained its position of authority in their hearts. Without the efficacious work of the Holy Ghost in a person's life, what is left but "a form of godliness?"

Most evangelicals have come into this system and do not realize that it has only come about in the past 30-40 years. They have entered this anemic religious lifestyle and do not understand that this is not the real thing. They have never come under the tremendous conviction of the Holy Spirit that leaves a person frantically searching for a way to unload the dreadful weight of sin. They haven't experienced the overwhelming sensation of being forcefully corrected by the Almighty because they have treated His holiness with a flippant attitude. They don't know what it is like to emerge from hours of communion with God, hearts ablaze with a holy passion for souls.

They are content with their weak "form of godliness" because it allows them to maintain control over their own lives and worship the idols which abound in our pagan culture. Their god is impotent and they are happy to have him so. He is NOT the Jehovah of the Bible.

This corporate mentality has become so embedded in the Evangelical Movement that one might wonder if the entire system will have to be overthrown before real Christianity will be free to emerge.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/steve-gallagher/denying-resisting-and-disdaining-the-power-of-god/>

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