

The Curse of Liberalism

by W.A. Criswell

This sermon addresses the impact of liberalism on Christianity, highlighting the shift towards secularism and the loss of Christian influence in society. It emphasizes the need for a spiritual resurgence, recommitment, and regeneration to combat the decline in faith and outreach. The speaker shares a powerful story of redemption and the transformative power of Jesus' love and forgiveness, contrasting it with the moral relativism and permissiveness of modern liberalism.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:3, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 5:11, 1 Peter 5:8, John 3:16, Psalm 51:10, 1 John 1:9, Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8, Isaiah 1:18

Topics: "Spiritual Resurgence", "Transformative Power of Jesus"

Description

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Transcript

We have a full program tonight, so we begin. May I speak on the curse of liberalism. Because of the opprobrious empathetic liberal, today they call themselves moderates.

A skunk by any other name still stinks. To my great Sarah and yours, we have lost our nation to the liberal and the secularist and the humanist. Which finally means to the atheist and the infidel.

America used to be known as a Christian nation. It is no longer. America is a secular nation.

Our forefathers who came on the Mayflower founded here a new republic, a new nation, and it was Christian. Our Baptist forefathers founded a state and it was Christian. When I was a youth growing up, the name of God and the Christian faith was a part of the civic and national life of our people.

It is not anymore. By law and by legislation and by court decision, we bow at no altar and we call on the name of no God. The forefathers who placed in our Constitution the First Amendment did so for the sole purpose of interdicting a state-established church.

But we have taken that First Amendment to read out of our national life and out of our public life the presence of Almighty God. No longer can we pray in our public schools. No longer can we read God's Word in our public schools.

No longer can we have chapel services in our public schools. No longer are we permitted to place a nativity scene on a courthouse lawn. No longer can we place a star in a public building.

We have become a secular nation. I was invited to speak at a great high school. And the administration of the school came to me and said, The American Civil Liberties Union has announced to us that when that preacher speaks, if he names the name of Jesus, we'll close down the school.

That is modern America. We have not only lost our nation to the liberal and to the secularist and to the humanist, but in great areas of our Baptist life we have lost our denominations and our Christian institutions, our colleges and our universities. All of the Christian schools called Baptist in the North, all of them have been lost, all of them.

Brown University, McMaster's University, Chicago University, there's not one that remains. And because of the inroads of liberalism and secularism, the Baptist witness in the North is small and increasingly anemic. It is the boast of the Roman Catholic Church that the most Catholic state in the Union is Rhode Island.

It is the boast of the Catholic Church that the most Catholic city in America is Providence. This is the state founded by our Baptist forefathers. And this is the capital city founded by Roger Williams.

What we have done, we have taken the great, sanctified Baptist doctrine of the priesthood of the believer and made it to cover every damnable heresy that man could imagine. It's a tragedy. It's a tragedy.

The British Broadcasting Company in Great Britain, television is under their surveillance. The British Broadcasting Company sent a crew over here under a very gifted Britisher in order to make a two-hour documentary to present to the people of the British Isles. The first hour was concerning things that are shameful to name in the religious life of America.

And the second hour was on our dear church in Dallas. Presented as a fundamental Bible-believing church in the most offensive kind of a way. One of the stations in Dallas, one of the television stations in Dallas, gave us 30 minutes in rebuttal.

And when I went to the station, there were four of us seated there for the interview. Two of them were for them, anti-everything that we believe. Two of them were for us.

Dr. Patterson and I sat there, two of the four. To my amazement, the man who presided over the documentaries was there to my right. And to my left was a woman.

She had on a clerical collar turned around in the back. She had on priestly robes and a gold chain and a golden cross. And she introduced herself to me as a priest and as a professor in the Southern Methodist School of Theology, Perkins School of Theology, where the Methodist preachers are taught.

And in that interview, that woman said, that woman said, the bastard heresy of the 20th century is the teaching that the Bible is the Word of God. The man who presided over the session said, Pastor, what do you think about that? You talk to her. What do you think about that? And after it was over, a thousand of

my people said, why didn't you answer her? I said, for two reasons.

One, my mother taught me to respect a woman. And second, my brethren say I'm not supposed to curse in the pulpit. She is a professor in the theological school that teaches Methodist preachers.

And that is a reason why, in the last few years, the Methodist denomination has lost two million members. And not only has that liberalism overwhelmed the Methodist denomination, I hold in my hand a tear out of a national magazine. We have lost in America, in these last few years, millions and millions and millions in the old mainline denominations of our nation.

The United Methodist Church has lost the most. The United Presbyterian Church, second. Then follows the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church of the United States, the Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the Christian Church, the Disciples Church, the American Lutheran Church.

All of them. Downward, downward, downward. And these, in the liberal press, say to us, the reason we're facing a decline in the growth of our Southern Baptist people is because of the confrontation in the denomination.

Then why the years and years of decline in these other denominations? Why, why, why? It is very apparent why the decline in all of the old mainline denominations of America, the curse of liberalism has sapped their strength and their message and their witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why when we speak of the decline, of the growth in our Southern Baptist communion, they point their fingers at us and say, you funny damn mentalists, you're the reason why we're losing in this appeal for the lost and the conversion of America. Listen to me.

Let me pinpoint the exact reason why we are beginning to decline in our Southern Baptist Zion like all of the other old mainline denominations. It is not in our conservative fundamental fellowship, in those Bible-believing, Christ-honoring, soul-saving churches. I have in my hand here the bulletin of the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida.

It came to my desk a few days ago. Here in the month of June. I looked at those that were baptized that Sunday.

I counted them. There were 152. 152 by baptism.

I counted those who came by letter. They were 29. There were three by statement.

But this is one Sunday in the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida where Jerry Fines is co-pastor in one Sunday. Now, now, where is the decline in our baptisms and in our outreach ministry for Christ? I'll tell you exactly where it is. In one of the great cities of our nation.

In a beautiful, beautiful building. I visited the people and the pastor and looked at the baptistry and the baptistry was full of dirt, dust, and debris. What I would like for the press to do is take a picture of that beautiful Baptist church.

By the side of it, print a picture of that half-infidel liberal pastor and by his picture, print a picture of the baptistry full of dust and dirt and debris. In our Bible-like, conservative, Christ-honoring, soul-saving churches, you will still see people come down that aisle. You'll see the baptismal waters troubled.

You'll still see people saved. It's the cursed, the fetid breath of liberalism that is destroying us as it has all the other old mainline denominations. That's why we're going down.

We need a resurgence. We need a renaissance. We need a recommitment.

We need a regeneration. We can do it! We can! In the name of Christ, we can take our rural churches. In the name of Christ, we can take our city churches.

In the name of Christ, we can take our village churches. We can take this country for Christ if we will be true to the faith, if we will be true. O Lord, that there was in us the spirit of victory and triumph and conquest in the name of our blessed Savior.

When Alexander the Great died, his generals gathered round and they asked him, Whose is the kingdom? And Alexander the Great replied, It's for him who can take it. And Cassander took Macedon. Lysimachus took Asia Minor.

Seleucus and Antiochus' sons took Syria. Ptolemy took Egypt. And they kept it in the Greek orbit for generations and for centuries.

We can do the same for Christ if there is in us the spirit of devotion and soul winning and preaching and outreach, visitation, love for the lost, invitation baptizing our converts the spirit of genuine, enthusiastic, victorious triumph. I went to see Oklahoma and Texas play football in the Cotton Bowl. Seated right there squared in front of me was an Oklahoma fan in all of that whole side of Texas fanatics.

There he was. There he was in the days of Bud Wilkinson. He stood up right there in front of me and held up a hundred dollar bill and he said, Oh, you Texans! I'll give you seven points and bet you this hundred dollar bill would beat you.

He didn't have any tickers. Sat down and after a little while stood up again and said, Oh, you Texans! I'll give you fourteen points and bet this hundred dollar bill would beat you. Nobody took him.

After a little while he stood up again and said, Oh, you Texans! I'll give you twenty-one points and bet you this hundred dollar bill that would beat you. Didn't have any tickers. He sat right down there in front of me and I said, Man, I'd like to have you in my church.

You believe in your team and you put your money where your mouth is. Boy, I'd like to have you in my church. I'd like to have you in my church.

That's what we need. That spirit of conquest and victory, we can do it. I think of that old codger who married at the tender age of eighty-seven and immediately began to look for a bigger house close to an elementary school.

That's the spirit. May I conclude. To my great indescribable sorrow, we are losing our message of salvation to the liberal, to the secularist, to the hypocrite, to the humanist, and finally to the atheist and the infidel.

Long time ago, I'm talking about over forty years ago, I built a lower platform in our church and at the top one I preached the gospel, preached that book word for word, syllable by syllable, every syllable in it, inspired by God, the inerrant word of the Holy Spirit of God. Do it. Do it.

Then in those days I would go down to the lower pulpit and I'd exhort like an old-time exhorter pleading for people to come to Jesus. On that Sunday, down the aisle came a young woman. She looked to me to be sixteen or seventeen years old.

She gave me her hand and said, Today I'm taking Jesus as my Savior and I want to be baptized and be a member of this church. Then she was seated there on the front row. As we sang the song of appeal and I pressed the invitation, that girl began to cry and finally to sob.

I turned to my minister of music and I said, You keep the service going, you sing. I'm going to sit down by that girl. I sat down by her side and I said, Dear, what you crying for? What you crying for? She took the card that she'd filled out and she said, You see my name? Yes.

You see that Mrs. in front of my name? I said, Yes. She said, I'm no Mrs. I've never been married. I write Mrs. in front of my name on account of my little baby boy.

When he was born, I said in my heart, I'm going to raise him in that wonderful First Baptist Church in Dallas. So I began bringing him into the nursery and I began attending the services and I've been listening to you preach. Today I felt I want to give my heart to Jesus and be a member of the congregation.

But she said, Since I have come and since I've been seated here, I've been thinking about me and my life, a prostitute. I've been thinking about me and what I've done and if you knew me and these people knew me, you would not want the likes of me in this church. I said to her, Dear, is that why you're crying? She said, Yes.

I have made a mistake. I should not have come. You would not want the likes of me in this church.

Now sweet people, somebody sits there by her side, as I did, these liberals and he says to her, Why, it's a peccadilla? It is nothing. One half of the girls live just like that promiscuously and two-thirds of the boys. You've done nothing amiss.

Forget it! Forget it. Forget it. It's a peccadilla.

Or another sits there and says, You know, did you ever hear of abortion? Right up the street, there's a clinic and in three minutes or four at the most, you can murder your baby. The abortion clinic is right up there. I represent now as I speak to her, the pastor of a church that I know.

Dear, have you become acquainted with condoms, rubbers? Our church dispenses them and we have classes in our church on the use of condoms. You protect yourself, syphilis, gonorrhea, herpes and AIDS. You come to the class and we'll teach you how to protect yourself with condoms in the church.

And another one will say it's your lifestyle that you can make money easier in promiscuity. That's your choice. That is modern liberalism.

And it's everywhere. Well, preacher, what did you say? What did you tell the girl? This is what I said. I said, dear girl, the Holy Spirit has convicted you of sin and that's why you cry.

That's why you cry. The Holy Spirit of God has spoken to your heart. And dear girl, the Holy Spirit of God has done another thing.

He's brought you to Him who can wash you clean and white. Clean and white. There's a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's face and sinners plunged beneath the flood lose all their guilty states.

The dying thief rejoiced to see the fountain in his day and there may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away. E'er since by faith I saw the stream thy flowing wounds supply, redeeming love, redeeming grace has been my theme and shall be, tell it I, the gospel of the Son of God. Sweet people, you could stand with me at the head of the stairway that leads up from Patterson Street side of Archer's and see a young woman still riding, Mrs., in front of her name.

I said, you do it. Leading a little boy drawing up. Leading that little boy by the hand.

Taking him to Sunday school. The beginner division. The primer division.

The junior division. And now, he's in our youth division. And when I see it, I see the greatest privilege God ever gave to me was to preach the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ, my Lord.

Nothing like it in the earth. I'm so glad I belong to the family of God. Wise in the atoning grace cleansed by the blood of hell aware with Jesus.

As I travel this sought, I'm so glad I belong to the family of God. Preacher, we have a great message in the earth. Let's deliver it with power from God in heaven.

Amen. Amen.

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