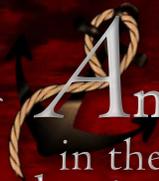


Which hope we have as an anchor to the soul,



**Anchored
in the Cross**

, both sure and steadfast...

Hebrews 6:19

- Pulpit Article -

Not Regarding the Time of Our Visitation

As sad as this is to admit, America is now a “Post-Christian Nation.” In other words, our country is in a state of rebellion and rejection of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is a different condition altogether from those who are in a spiritual darkness having never heard the gospel. The saddest part is that it began in the house of God; the church. There has never been a greater need for an awakening in our country, but the awakening will not take place in the country until it begins in the house of God.

The lost and unbelieving world is now mocking a vast number in the body of Christ. Mostly it's because we do not possess what we claim to possess. The church of this generation is no different than a baldheaded man selling a cure for baldness and representing the company as a client. With sex scandals among pastors, preachers, deacons and laity, why wouldn't they mock? We who claim to know the way, preach the way, walk in the way, and claim to be changed by the way cannot even realize the true liberty in Christ. There are many exceptions but the truth remains. Unbelievers mock our God and make fun of God's ministers without fear.

There is a very sad commentary in the American church world today. While there is definitely no shortage of religious activity, there is an indictment on the church with regards to the presence, moving and operation of the Holy Spirit. What has happened to us? Have we become used to roaring silence; i.e., Ichabod? Have we become accustomed to no moving of the Holy Spirit? When the church ceases to be alive in spirit and moved by the spirit, then she ceases to lose her standing in the world. Satan knows this full well. This is why every church in every community is constantly under attack by spiritual Trojan horses attempting to penetrate through her walls and tear her down from the inside. Satan will always attack our fellowship with God first and foremost. When God is in the midst of His people, we are solid, steadfast and unmovable.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. Psalm 46:5

The church has been continually warned about men creeping in unawares and bringing in doctrines of devils; the doctrine of Balaam which brought a severing between God and Israel, thus causing defeat in Israel. The only way to defeat the strongest, most powerful army in the world is to separate it from its power. Satan's ultimate goal is to remove the church from fellowship with God so he can fight a people void of the power

of the Holy Spirit. If he can get God out of the equation then he can seize on the world. Satan could do nothing with the early church because she was moving in the power of the Holy Spirit. Today, we seem to believe we can go on without His power. We are seeing the results of a powerless church in our country. As the sun going down leaves behind a world of darkness, so will it be in the spiritual. Where there is no power in the church, the power of sin will dominate the world.

Notice what Jesus spoke to his disciples concerning Israel and the times God had visited, desiring the repentance of His people. Just to return to Him; to follow Him with their whole heart. But sadly, the people would not.

Luke 19

19:41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

19:42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

19:43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

19:44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; ***because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.***

19:45 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

19:46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

19:47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

19:48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

Jesus came to Israel in a time when there had been 400 years of spiritual silence. Israel was as a dying body waiting for someone to come along and resuscitate. There was 400 years of no word from God. Time after time, in generation after generation, God plead with His people. Why did God wait 400 years and Israel experienced no word, no vision, no moving; nothing. First of all, we must understand that God does not force Himself. When people pray, God moves, but He also knows how to get our attention. Do you realize friend that sometimes the Lord pulls away from dealing with us? Why does God do this? It's not a matter of God's choosing, but a matter of our rejection of Him. If someone does not want you in their life, would you continue to hang around? It's as if the Lord says to us *Okay if you don't want me, then you do not have to have me.* But sadly, we have to live with the tragic consequences of our choices. The results of turning God away is nothing short of misery.

To those who've been genuinely born again and know the wonderful presence of God and fellowship in the spirit, there is such an intense reality of God through the forgiveness of sins by the blood of Calvary's cross. This reality of fellowship draws us to separation. This wonderful love for God that comes from abiding in His presence keeps

our hearts in commitment and consecration. If there are times when that fellowship is broken through sin or times when that fellowship weakens, then the raging *void* inside us calls us to search our hearts, our lives to determine where we have erred, so that we get back to the place we need to be in the Lord. The unbelieving world knows nothing about this fellowship. They do not realize the intensity of true fellowship, but they do recognize our lives from the outside. They see the zeal when God fills you and empowers you. They also see when your out of fellowship with God.

Jesus said, as He wept over the city, that utter devastation would be the result of Israel because she did not know the time of her visitation. What did he mean by this? Friend, this is nothing shy of what happens when God's dealings with us end in our rejection and rebellion. Contrary to popular teaching, God has given each of us freewill. That freedom to make our own choices leaves us *reaping what we have sown*. It happened continually with Israel and happens with each of us. Jesus would go immediately afterward into the temple and overthrow the moneychangers tables once again. According to my studies, this happened at least twice. Once in the beginning of His ministry (John 2:13-17), and once toward the end of His ministry (Luke 19:45-48)

Are we any different today? When God attempts to bring revival to our own individual lives, how do we regard it? Do we pass off God's moving on us and in us as just no big deal, or do we esteem these times of visitation as precious? Do you know why God does not pour out His Spirit on us when we are in a compromised or complacent condition? If God poured out His spirit on us in those conditions, then it would cause us to think that our compromised state is acceptable. How often do we find ourselves content when the Spirit of God comes into our service? Does the blessing of the presence of God seem to cause us to feel as though we are doing what we should and we look at His presence as a seal of approval?

The Necessity of Silence

Is it possible for the Lord to not deal with us for a season? The tragic truth is yes! Why is this the case with us so many times? Sometimes, God's absence is for discipline. When we feel the deadness and depravity it prompts us to examine and survey our lives. When you dwell amongst the tombs constantly; it causes us to recognize there has been a change in our condition. How long will we abide in that condition? We cannot, we must not continue walking in rejection or rebellion to God. It is at these times the Lord gets our attention and lets us know we cannot continue down this road with His blessing and power on us.

How often have you experienced times of great closeness to the Lord? How often have you experienced times of great distance from Him? There's a point in which we must realize that God is trying to shake or dislodge certain things out of our lives that we absolutely refuse to turn loose of. Have you experienced times of wonder and times of silence and the Lord has let you know about certain things you need to deal with in your life? Certain activities you cannot continue in and have His blessing? Friend, sometimes there's nothing except repentance that will help your walk with God. Spiritual death sometimes is the only thing that will wake us up. Losing out, missing out

or total destruction sometimes is the only thing that will bring lasting change in our life. (This is not in reference to physical deaths, tragedies or calamities, but to spiritual things.) Sometimes we have to go way beyond hope before we see our need to totally surrender everything to God. If God kept on breathing and reviving us only to know that we would drift away again? Sometimes God allows things to go all the way to death and sometimes it has to be utterly hopeless before revival can stick in our lives!

Do you realize what happens to us when we experience hard times? It leaves a permanent mark on us. Usually a mild storm produces a mild panic, resulting a mild commitment. Long periods of darkness make us appreciate the light. We end up basking in the light because we are tragically changed; permanently impacted. Abraham and Sarah had to get to complete and total deadness before Isaac would be born. Israel had to get to complete hopelessness before God delivered. In Egypt, Israel had to experience the oppression of Pharaoh's taskmasters before the prayer of deliverance was made by the people to God.

The Return to God

After a season of spiritual silence, when you finally experience God in His glory, then you hold on firmly and refuse to take for granted the visitation from the Lord.

In this generation, we have become a people who refuse to be corrected. If God cannot correct you; chasten you or discipline you when you err, then your salvation is in question. He declared in Hebrews 12 that he chastens.

Hebrews 12

12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

12:9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

12:10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

I'm very thankful to have grown up in a God fearing home. I grew up in a home where my father did not *spare the rod*. He dealt with us sternly when we had done wrong. He

loved us the best he could. He taught us that obedience brought forth blessing, while disobedience brought forth severe pain to the lower section of my backside. Sadly, our generation is raising children who do not have a simple knowledge concerning discipline. When mom and dad fail to discipline their children and correct them when they do wrong, they are setting their children up for failure on every level; raising a generation who has no knowledge of right and wrong and who will live in constant confusion because they've never been taught that their actions have no consequences. However, God deals with us in the same sense as my father dealt with me growing up. I had no problem transitioning from dad's discipline program to God's.

Friend, God means us now harm. He means no ill toward us in the same way as our father and/or mother meant us no harm by their discipline. We are chastened because we are loved. The love our parents have/had toward us drove them to teach us right from wrong so that we stay out of trouble and destruction. Do you realize that many unruly in our country today who do untold amounts of illegal activities is contributed by their lack of discipline growing up? But the Lord chastens us so that it bring forth not just a temporary fix, but a lasting fruit of righteousness. There are some things that just aren't worth it to me to partake in any more. There are some places I absolutely refuse to go anymore. There are some activities I refuse to do anymore. Why? Because I have been chastened to obedience. Not only that, but I enjoy the fellowship with the Lord because of the obedience that chastening brought forth in my life. This chastening is hard, but the result is wonderful. It yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness. When the Holy Spirit deals with us and we turn from the sin that devastates our fellowship with God, then comes a return of incomparable fellowship with God in the Spirit, there will be no returning to the muck and mire of that lifestyle. You will have branded in your heart the consequences of what that sin brought forth and the reality of returning in all back to God has brought.

Are you tired of the raging silence in your soul? Have you been born again but are now in a condition of total spiritual weakness? You need revival. You need to bring some things unto the Lord. Will you allow the Lord to work out of you those things you've held on to that cannot remain and have fellowship with Him? Let the Lord perform that lasting work in your life.