

Lost Generation With One Foot In Hell

By E. A. Johnston

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Bible Text: Book of Judges

Preached On: Tuesday, October 1, 2013

Ambassadors For Christ Intl-USA

1335 Terrell Mill Road

Bldg 1462, Suite 100

Marietta, GA 30067

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/9225

Last week I preached during Chapel at a local Christian School. My audience was a group of teenagers and I fear I failed miserably in my task to reach them or move them. On my drive home, I was grieved at how greatly this generation of teenagers has been cheated. How this generation has never seen a true move of God in their midst or felt his power and presence in true revival. How this generation of teenagers has been abused by the culture in which they live, which is a godless culture and a pagan nation. How this generation of teenagers has been exposed to graphic sex as no other generation preceding them. How this generation of teenagers has been the target of Satan through the rise of suicides and self-harm. How this generation of teenagers has been neglected by the true gospel. And how this generation of teenagers has not heard the law thundered in their ears, awakening them to their lost condition and ruined estate. How they have not heard a Spirit-anointed message on the blood and the cross and sin and hell and the need for repentance and the necessity of regeneration. How this generation of teenagers is comprised of more atheists, more bisexuals, more drug users than any generation preceding them.

And as I thought of this time in Chapel with this group of church teenagers that I couldn't move with a bull-dozer, a verse of Scripture came to my mind. It is found in Judges 2, beginning in verse 10. Let me read it to you now,

“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim.”

I submit to you today, friends, that this generation of church members who are teenagers have grown up in the church but many, I fear, have not met the head of the church, Jesus Christ. They are the most gospel hardened generation of lost youth this earth has ever known.

The title of my message tonight is “Lost Generation With One Foot In Hell.” There are five main reasons why this generation is the lost generation. 1. The church in America is to blame by trying to reach the youth with the world rather than the Word of God. Youth groups have been one of the worst things to happen to the church in America. If you want

to lose your kid, place him in the youth group at your local church. That's how bad it's gotten. 2. Preachers are to blame for not preaching the true gospel of the Son of God. We live in a time of the no gospel preacher. Pastors teach and inform rather than preach and transform. 3. The third reason why this generation is a lost generation is: divine judgment in the form of the withdrawn presence of God in the land. 4. The death of the weekly prayer meeting which is the engine of the church. And 5. A poor example of parents who have not lived like they should have as the believers. No godly example in the home and no family altar, compromise everywhere, "do as I say" mentality rather than a "do as I do."

Listen friends, this is the lost generation with one foot in hell. They don't care about your Jesus or your God. They just don't see any need for him or even if he exists at all. And Brother Preacher, you can offer them Jesus until you're blue in the face and they might take him like they would an antibiotic, reluctantly.

I'm going to go over these five reasons to blame for this lost generation tonight. Let me address the first reason and that is this: the White House isn't to blame, the court house isn't to blame, the church house is to blame. We've dropped the ball as a church with this generation of young people. The culture we live in is a culture of the spoiled kid and the church has spoiled the kids by giving them what they want instead of giving them what they need. They wanted more of the world in the worship time and we handed it to them. They wanted more entertainments in the church and we provided it for them. They wanted this and they wanted that and we handed it to them on a silver platter and they are still disinterested in spiritual things and discontent with their lives and disconnected socially. Oh, they have 300 or 500 friends they text but they don't know how to handle a real-live relationship. They are disenchanted, disengaged and depressed and although they've grown up in the church and accepted Jesus into their hearts when they were four or five, they know not the living God of the Bible, nor have they ever seen a revelation of the Son of God in their lives. They are lost. They are lost. They are lost.

And much of their lost spiritual condition is our fault as poor shepherds. The church in America created a program for the youth instead of giving them the living Word of God. There is no church discipline from the pulpit on down in the church today. The church in America is spinning out of control. The church in America is like a spoiled and pampered child crying for more candy, more amusements, more attention and more gratification. It has become self-focused, self-absorbed and self-destructing and we wonder why our kids hate going to church. We invited the world into our congregations and pushed God right out the back door. If I was a teenager today, I wouldn't go near the average church in America. Why would I want to?

Point #2: the second blame for this lost generation is the no gospel preacher. The no gospel preacher is a minister who does not preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, he is a nice man who likes to keep everybody in his congregation happy while he will teach Bible truths enwrapped with morals and do a great deal of fill-in-the-blank teaching where you write the next obvious word in your church bulletin where the blank is. This keeps the congregation occupied during the service and teaches them some spiritual truths and they

leave the service with a little more information than when they came in, but they also leave the same way they came in. There is no transformation. There is no spiritual activity. Teaching informs, preaching transforms and the no gospel preacher will say anything he can to keep your attention and not upset you. But you will not hear about your duty to repent from your sins. You will not hear about a bloody cross nor a crucified Lord. You will not hear about a terrible place called “hell,” nor will you hear about the necessity for regeneration which is an act only God can perform. The no gospel preacher will never preach the terrors of the law to awaken you to your sins, rather he will be a soothing, encouraging fellow who likes to talk about heaven but is quite unable to get you savingly there.

This generation of young people have been victimized by the easy-believe gospel of our day. They have accepted a Jesus they’ve never seen. They made a decision to be a Christian without ever being awakened, convicted and converted by the Holy Spirit of God. The no gospel preacher has ruined this generation of young people and has gospel hardened them to the reality of what true saving faith really is.

The next reason. The next blame why this is a lost generation of hell-bound sinners with their young is the fact that we are living in a day, in a time of divine judgment in the land. The church in America is experiencing the withdrawn presence of God. There was a time not too long ago in the early 1950s and even in the early 1970s when God was afoot in the land; God was moving in seasons of revival. If you were a young person back then and you were in a meeting at church, you felt the presence and power of the Almighty in your midst. You could not wait to get into a prayer meeting. You could not wait to get back to church because God was there. Now it’s death all around us. Deadness everywhere. Teenagers today have never felt the power of God in a meeting. They just don’t know what it’s like to be bowed under his presence in a service.

The blame lies at the door of the church. We have cheapened the gospel message. We’ve removed the duty of repentance. We’ve omitted the blood and we’ve pushed God out of the back door of the church and replaced him with worldly entertainment and God has left us to our own devices. He has withdrawn his presence from among us. Why should a teenager want to attend church today? Our preaching is void of the Holy Spirit. Our sanctuaries are absent of the presence of God. Why should the teenagers even listen to any of us any longer? Somewhere the church in American forsook the great God of the Bible and the passage in Judges applies to us today. “And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.”

The fourth reason we have a lost generation on our hands today is the very fact that we as a church have killed the weekly prayer meeting and buried it in obscurity. We replaced it with classes on social reform and exercise. You won’t have any trouble finding a divorce recovery class in your church or a yoga class but you’ll be hard pressed to stumble into a room with people lying on their faces, broken over their sins and crying out to God. Where are the church members weeping over the lost in our churches today? The weekly

prayer meeting is the engine of the church and this is why so many churches are out of gas and stalled out. What a difference it would make in the life of our teenagers if they could witness the reality of prevailing prayer by brokenhearted believers crying out to God, interceding for the sins of this nation, humbling themselves before the Almighty, crying out for mercy through nights of desperation and travailing prayer. No, we give the kids movie night. We give them football night. We give them pizza night. But we don't give them the opportunity to learn about corporate prayer in the life of the church. Perhaps the greatest failure of the church in America over the last 40 years has been the death of the weekly prayer meeting.

Listen friends, when I was a boy many years ago, it impacted me to see grown men and women on their faces crying out to God and moaning and groaning over their sins, begging God for mercy, begging God for a fresh move of his presence. Where is that in our churches today? I know there are a few faithful churches still in the land and they still have a weekly prayer meeting but the majority of churches in America have killed the weekly prayer meeting and cut off the only access to the living God that they had. When the church in America became a self-reliant church, that's when it replaced the prayer meeting because who needs God when money and man-power can get the job done a lot quicker.

The last point, the fifth blame for this generation of lost teenagers is the actual parents themselves. The parent who said, "Do as I say and not as I do." And the kid saw a double standard and Pharisees in the home, an adult who was a Christian at church but a hypocrite when back at the house.

I witnessed revival in a church years ago whereby I was merely an observer at what God was doing in a local body of believers in the South. I heard about a church where a true move of grace was occurring and it was worth the drive out of town to get there and get in on what God was doing. When I arrived there at that church, it was well into the service on a Saturday night and there was silence in the sanctuary as I took my seat. I was mystified by the non-activity: no pastor was in the pulpit and the choir sat silent and weeping, handing the Kleenex box back and forth between them. Suddenly I felt like crying. I felt an overpowering presence of the Almighty. It was as if God had sat down on that congregation with his awful presence and all one could do was to be still and soak up that majesty.

I later learned what was the cause of that move of God in that local church. You see, the men of the church had attended a retreat some weeks earlier and God had moved in on them, in their midst while these men were at this retreat holed up with God and God began to change the hearts of these men. They began to live for the Lord and when they went back home from this retreat, they started being the spiritual leader of the home as they were intended to be. The wives were so taken aback by their husbands' new demeanor and gentleness toward them and godliness that the wives gave themselves to God in a fresh way and their lives were transformed and they began to live in the home as godly women should do.

Well, when the teenagers in these families saw what it was like to have genuine Christian parents, the teenagers went forward in a church service and gave their lives to Christ in surrender and that was the night I had arrived at that church. I missed the first part of the service where the teenagers had come forward in submission to the Lord. God had sat down on that group of people and transformed them one by one. As each one surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives, the teenagers in that church could not wait to get back to church and they stayed there all odd hours of the night crying out to God in the sanctuary.

Listen friends, when the people of God get right with God and humble themselves and confess their sins and turn from their wickedness and seek the Lord of glory, great things are done. God promises us, "Return to me and I will return to you." Revival hangs in the balance in regard to our duty to follow the requirements set out in 2 Chronicles 7:14 which declare,

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Let me ask you, friends: does our land need healing? Do our teenagers need saving? Are their souls worth you stopping all you're doing right now, getting on your faces before a holy God and crying out to him to forgive you for not living for him as you should? Or are the souls of our teenagers today, the young girls who are self-harming themselves, the young boys who are drugging themselves and all the young people who are perverting themselves, are not their souls precious in the eyes of the Lord? Are we willing to cease the nonsense in our churches and forsake our man-made programs and turn out of our churches everything that is an abomination to the Lord? Are you willing, Brother Pastor, to reinstate the weekly prayer meeting even if it upsets your deacons? Are you willing to start preaching up the blood and the cross and call sin "black" and hell "hot" for the sake of our teenagers and their precious souls? Will you call them to their duty of repentance and warn them to flee from the wrath to come? Are we willing as a church to forsake our ways, get back to the old paths once again and seek the Lord of glory and beg him and invite him to once again be pleased to dwell in our midst?

Let me pray.

Great God, forgive us for ruining this generation of teenagers. Forgive us for not living for you as we should. In lies the surrender and holiness. Forgive us, Great God, for replacing you with things of this world and bowing down to these idols rather than humbling ourselves before your face and seeking mercy and forgiveness from you, O Lord. Give us the grace, I pray, the grace of repentance. Wake us up, O Lord, to our great responsibility for the souls of this generation that does not know you.

O Lord of Glory, look down, come down, flow down, by your Spirit upon this vine once again. Breathe fresh fire into your churches by your Holy Spirit. Cleanse us, O Lord, of our great wickedness and, O Lord, may you say to your church in America today as you

spoke to King Solomon whereby you declared, "I have heard thy prayer and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice." O Great God, O Ancient of Days, be pleased to visit your church in America once again with your presence. Come in revival, O Lord. Come rain righteousness upon this dry and forsaken land. Do what you've done in former times for your great glory and Great Names' sake, I pray. Amen.