

ADDRESSING SPIRITUAL DECLINE-PART 2
RESTORING REVERENCE FOR THE WORD OF GOD
JEREMIAH 6:16-19; 2 CHRONICLES 7:14

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INTRODUCTION

We saw last week here how that the LORD's people, specifically the nation of Judah, had been in a state of continual spiritual decline for a long period of time and the LORD had been longsuffering with them, but the time finally came that the LORD had enough of it!

The LORD's judgment had already begun to fall in Judah, but she denied the hand of the LORD in it! So, the LORD sent the prophet Jeremiah to tell them what was going to happen to them! And it happened as the LORD said!

It happened in spite of the fact that the LORD had given them the remedy to get back to Him and bring healing to the nation in the days of King Solomon!

2 Chronicles 7:14 – "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."

They refused the LORD's remedy, hardened their hearts, and wound up with that further judgment of the LORD that Jeremiah said was coming!

We talked about where we are as a nation. And how Churches today, by-and-large are mirroring the Church in Laodicea that the Lord Jesus Christ addressed in Revelation 3:14-22.

THE PROBLEM OF THAT CHURCH...It Was Lukewarm!

- Compromising (not wanting to be controversial)
- Ecumenical (tossing aside doctrine for unity),
- Not really caring about the things that are important to Christ
- Satisfied with just being average, (not the worst, but not the best either! Satisfied with the status quo!)

THE PRESCRIPTION FOR THAT CHURCH...

In A Nutshell, It Was The Same Remedy That The LORD gave Judah!
Humility, Prayer, Seek God's Face, And Repent!

Today, I want to begin to look at some things that are involved in **ADDRESSING THE SPIRITUAL DECLINE** in our lives and our nation!

We must understand first that **A REVERENCE FOR THE WORD OF GOD MUST BE RESTORED!** And so that is what we will begin with today: *"RESTORING REVERENCE FOR THE WORD OF GOD!"*

I want to ask a question, but don't be too quick to respond in your own mind: **DO YOU HAVE A PROPER REVERENCE FOR THE WORD OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE? BE HONEST!** What would God say?

Some might say, *"Of course we reverence the Word of God pastor, that's why we attend a fundamental, Bible believing, Baptist Church!"*
And I would respond by saying, *that's good, but NOT good enough!*

A big problem in our day is many want to sit under sound teaching and preaching, but they don't live it in their lives!

How do you respond to the Word of God when it is taught and preached? Are you like the ones that Jesus addressed: Luke 6:46 – "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

Or are you like the ones that the Apostle Paul addressed:

1 Thessalonians 2:13–For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Did you know that how we RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD, says a lot about how we VIEW it? (Let me give you a few things to consider...)

1) **If you have an attitude of receiving the parts of the Word that you agree with and rejecting the parts of the Word that you don't agree with, you are NOT reverencing the Word of God!**

That is what Judah was doing in Jeremiah's day!

Judah **HAD** the Word of God but they **DID NOT REVERENCE IT** as the Word of God, therefore it did **NOT** effectually work in them!

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They didn't want to turn from their wicked ways, so they just didn't listen to the portion that dealt with that!

2) **If you are a hearer of the Word but not a doer, don't fool yourself, you are NOT reverencing the Word of God!**

James 1:22-25— "22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

3) **If you are living your life according to your own reasoning or pleasure or according to the world's expectations, you are NOT reverencing the Word of God!**

Psalms 1:1-3— "1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Make no doubt about it, the Word of God is FUNDAMENTAL to a proper relationship with God and continuing fellowship with God!

One of the prevailing philosophies of our day is something that HAS been taught and continues to be taught in our government run public schools called **Moral Relativism**. I personally believe that it is one of the main reasons that we see the **SPIRITUAL DECLINE** that we are seeing in our country! The Bible was removed from our schools and was replaced with a **humanistic philosophy** that teaches **Moral Relativism!**

Moral Relativism says that **there are no absolute truths!**

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Moral Relativism says that **all philosophies, all religions, and all opinions, are EQUALLY VALID, with no way to distinguish one as being morally superior to others.** It's the philosophy that says **"there is nothing that is true everywhere, and that everything is true somewhere."**

But listen, contrary to this increasingly popular philosophy, **the Word of God stands as ABSOLUTE TRUTH whether it is believed to be such or not!**

This world would have us to believe that there are no absolutes, but God says there are! And...Truth is truth regardless of whether it is believed or not! There is no such thing as, "well that may be truth for you, but it's not truth for me!"

Whenever we use terms like **"all," "always," "never," "none," "whosoever"** or any other absolute terms, there is most always an exception to the rule! However, this is not the case with Scripture!

When God says **"all,"** He means **all!**

When God says **"always,"** He means **always!**

When God says **"never,"** He means **never!**

When God says **"none,"** He means **none!**

When God says **"whosoever,"** He means **whosoever!**

When God uses any other absolute terminology, He means exactly what He says!

There are many folks today who do NOT believe in absolutes!

They may call the Bible **"The Good Book,"**

They may believe that the Bible **contains some** truths,

They may even **believe** certain portions of the Word of God to a point, **But,** it is evident that they do not believe in the absolute Authority of the Word of God!

Many of these folks believe that every person should be guided by their conscience in all matters. They believe that a person's conscience should override Scripture.

The problem with that is that each person's conscience is different!

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We are all born with a conscience, but our conscience is molded by many different influences of the environment we are raised in!

Not only that, but the Bible says that our **conscience** may be **seared**.
1 Timothy 4:2–“ . . .having their conscience seared with a hot iron;”

*Ephesians 4:19–“Who **being past feeling** have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”*

We know that there are some criminals who are locked away in prison who should never be let out **because their consciences are seared! They are past feeling!** They have no qualms about being wicked in their thoughts and actions! They would just as soon kill you as to look at you if you stand in their way of what they want!

The Bible not only says that the conscience may be **seared**, but it says that a conscience may be **defiled!**

*Titus 1:15–“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; **but even their mind and conscience is defiled.**”*

And also, the Bible says that **a conscience may be evil!**
(i.e. A person’s sense of what is right and what is wrong can be very wrong!)

*Hebrews 10:22–“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, **having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.**”*

Suppose you were captured by head-hunters in the bush, would you want them to be guided by their consciences? They have no conscience in that area so they have no problem cutting your head off! It’s what they do!

So, we see that there are those who believe that the conscience is a reliable guide! But, the Word of God as well, as real life experience, tells us different!

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Then there are those who believe that a particular Church should be the authority of our faith and practice.

The problem is that some Churches have changed their positions on some important things over the years! Most every major denomination in the world has changed their position on some of the dogmatic beliefs they have had from their beginning!

What a particular Church or denomination held to as being wrong in the past may not be viewed as wrong today! I’m appalled at the some of the changes that we see today in some so-called Churches!

But listen, **God has not changed and will not change His position on what is right and what is wrong! Only the Word of God is unchanging as a source of Authority! What God has said still stands and will stand throughout all eternity!**

I. UNDERSTAND THAT THE BIBLE IS THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD!

*2 Timothy 3:16–“**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:**”*

The words “*inspiration of God*” means “*God-breathed*”!
Some say that there was no supernatural element involved in inspiration. *(i.e. They believe that the writers of Scripture wrote what they wanted to write.)*

Some say that the Biblical writers were only Spirit-filled like Believers of today. *(i.e. They put the writings of the Bible on the same plain as present day spiritual books.)*

Some say the “concepts” or “thoughts” of Scripture are inspired, but not the “words.”

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Some say that only parts of the Bible were supernaturally inspired, but not all of it.

Some say that the Bible is only a “*witness*” to the Word of God.

Some say that the Bible is inspired, but it still contains errors in such areas as science and history.

2 Peter 1:21–“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

If the Bible is the Word of God (AND INDEED IT IS NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE THINKS!), then to NOT treat it as such is to both invite and invoke God’s hand of judgment (for the unbeliever) or chastening (for the believer) when we ignore it!

An attitude of, “*Well I can take what I want and forget about what I don’t want,*” may be acceptable with man, but it is NOT acceptable with God!

Matthew 5:18–“For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, **one jot** or **one tittle** shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

A “**jot**” is the smallest letter. A “**tittle**” is the smallest part of a letter.

2 Timothy 3:16–“All scripture is given by inspiration...”

From the first verse in **Genesis 1:1** to the last verse in **Revelation 22:21** and all verses in between!

I’m not going to give you the many evidences for inspiration today, but I could and I can assure you they are many and I will share them with you if you sincerely want to know and ask me to! (*I’ll just say that there is both internal testimony and external testimony to show that the Bible is indeed the very God-breathed Word of God!*)

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UNDERSTAND THAT THE BIBLE IS THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD!

II. UNDERSTAND THAT THE BIBLE IS TRUE IN ITS ENTIRETY!

(i.e. *The Bible Is God’s Truth without ANY admixture of error!*)
Jesus said in John 17:17 as He was praying to His Heavenly Father: “*Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.*”

Psalm 12:6–“**The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.**”

Psalm 119:160–“**Thy word is true from the beginning...**”

III. UNDERSTAND THAT THE BIBLE IS ETERNAL IN ITS TRUTH!

(i.e. The Bible is just as true today as it was when it was given! Its truth does not change with human ideologies or anything else because TRUTH CANNOT BE CHANGED!)

Isaiah 40:8–“**The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.**”

Psalm 119:60–“...every one of thy righteous judgments **endureth forever.**”

Psalm 12:7–“**Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.**”

John 10:35–“**The scripture cannot be broken.**”

Matthew 24:35–“**Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.**”

1 Peter 1:25–“...**the word of the Lord endureth for ever...**”

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IV. UNDERSTAND THAT THE BIBLE IS ABSOLUTE IN ITS PROFITABILITY! (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

4-fold profitability!

A. It Is Profitable For Doctrine!

Knowledge of God, His plan, His purpose. Knowledge of self.

B. It Is Profitable For Reproof!

(i.e. It shows us what is wrong in our lives!)

The world says, “*Just be yourself! You be you!*”

But listen, that can get you in a whole lot of trouble with God!

C. It Is Profitable For Correction!

(i.e. It shows us how to correct what is wrong in our lives!)

D. It Is Profitable For Instruction In Righteousness!

(i.e. It shows us how to replace our old ways with God’s ways!)

Conclusion

The Bible is God’s absolute Authority! We all will be judged by this Absolute Authoritative Word of God!

If we are going to ***ADDRESS SPIRITUAL DECLINE*** in our nation, our Church, our family, or our own personal lives, it must begin with our ***RESTORING REVERENCE FOR THE WORD OF GOD!***

If we don’t give God’s Word its proper place in our lives, we do so to our own peril! Just as Judah and Israel both did!