

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

INDEPENDENT • MISSIONARY • ESTABLISHED 1786

"Preaching the same truth we preached before Kentucky was a state."

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Our 16th Mission Conference is history. We had the largest crowds we have ever had--double parking and even parking across the road. There was a total of 80 Baptist preachers who attended; we accommodated over 60 guests in our homes.

The preaching was great and people were edified and encouraged by the messages that were preached. The love for one another was manifested in a great way. The Lord was exalted and every one of us was rebuked in one way or another and encouraged to keep on keeping on in the Lord's work. The daytime services were well attended and the auditorium was full until Wednesday afternoon when some had to leave to get back to their churches. People came from the east to the west coasts, from Florida to Michigan. Some of the comments we received were: "Great! Thank You! God Bless!;" "I love it, coming back next year;" "Pastors are preaching their hearts out--pray we will take heed!;" "God's richest blessing to so great a church, your love and care of the saints is beyond words! Thank you;" "A tremendous blessing and encouragement to our souls!;" "I appreciated Brother Gormley's mini-messages!;" and "I love everyone of you. God bless Bryan Station Baptist Church!" Thanks to all who attended. You were a great encouragement to all of us.

Looking forward to next year, if the Lord doesn't come back before then.

Al Gormley, Pastor

RETURN TO YOUR FIRST LOVE

By: Glen Berry

Would it shake you up if you were to receive a revelation that most church members or most professing Christians will not be received by the Lord when He comes again to take His children to Himself? Would it shake you if you could see all the professing church as one body, and yet only a portion of those taken to live with the Lord, while the rest go from judgment to Hell?

Well, we have such a revelation by Jesus Christ Himself in the Bible. Many are on the broad way of religious profession. Few are on the strait and narrow way of possession and discipleship. More in number are born of the bondwoman (works of the natural will) than they that are born of the freewoman (by the will of God). *"Nevertheless what saith*

the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." Galatians 4:30-31. The Lord Jesus says, *"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity,"* Matthew 7:22-23.

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming again for those who love His appearing. The Scriptures do not say He is coming for those who had rather watch TV and love worldliness more than they love to learn of Christ! *Our daily actions indicate what we love.* What are we doing with our "talents," our time and affections? Are we stirred to the depths of our souls to love Him?

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith..." II Corinthians 13:5. Are we willing to "draw nigh to God" and really have Him "draw nigh" to us? Are we willing to "watch and pray" and to "redeem the time?" Are we willing to do what He says for us to do? Are we willing to pay the price of true discipleship? *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed,"* John 8:31. *"And he that taketh*

not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it," Matthew 10:38-39.

As Christians, one of our greatest needs and greatest sins revolves around the matter of diligence, desperation and spiritual violence. Our need is that we need these things to be experienced in our lives continually: And our sin is that our lives see so little of these things. We are too content with the world in us. We are too satisfied with the natural elements of everyday living. We allow the mundane duties in life to choke out eternal and spiritual values. Life is hard, responsibilities are great, the bare necessities of living drain our vitality so that when it comes to things of God, to the matter of caring for our souls and putting the kingdom of God first, we do not put it first but are satisfied to relax our guard and to rest in complacency.

How much time do we spend in prayer? How much thought is applied to God's Word and His will for us? How faithful are we in having a time each day devoted and set aside only for the Lord? Oh, I know we want every moment filled with Him no matter what we are doing, but how diligent and how willing are we to give Him our FULL attention in study and prayer each day? I believe it was Martin Luther who said that he had so much to do that he had to spend three hours a day in prayer in order to get it done. How many of us spend over three minutes upon bended knees before the Lord? And then we expect the peace and power of God to rest upon our lives!

The Lord God tells His living children: *"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you,"* James 4:8. *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,"* Hebrews 11:6. *"...the kingdom of heaven suffereth [or is gotten by or possessed by] violence [by diligent force], and the violent take it by force,"* Matthew 11:12.

We are weak and sickly because we are LAZY. We lack violence, spiritual violence. We lack diligence. And we will

continue to lack until we despair of our lack--until we become desperate before the Lord. As long as we are satisfied with less, then we will continue as we are, weak and anemic. We are never more spiritual than we truly want to be.

We see somewhat our problem, BUT WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT? Until we despair over it, it will not be solved. The kingdom of God and the blessings of the kingdom come to those violent, diligent ones who will press into it by force-- to those who are desperate and count all else as worthless.

Our souls, as they fall into a state of declension, lose that heavenly, diligent craving after God and His Word. We find time to eat natural food for our bodies, but we let our souls starve. In our "first love" we remember how our souls panted and thirsted after God, but we need to *return* to our first love *and remain* there. *"As the hart [a male deer] panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul THIRSTETH for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"* Psalms 42:1-2.

How often do we thirst and crave for God just as the thirsty physical body craves for water? How often do we experience the deadening effect of the flesh, the world, and Satan! All conspire together to turn our thoughts away from God and to rob us of spending time with Him. **Even the mechanics of Christian service can become such a snare that we become drained of spiritual energy because we find ourselves doing every other needful thing but spending time alone in a love relationship with the Lord.** We spend so much time "doing for the Lord" that He HIMSELF is relegated to the backseat in our daily schedules. We don't worship Him for who He is and for what He has done and is doing for us. *This ought not to be.* And when this takes place, we will suffer for it, as our souls will decline and stray away from that one worthy object of our affections, Jesus Christ our God and Saviour.

Have we forgotten our first love, and left it? Has it grown dim? Have other things robbed us of feasting and walking with Jesus our Lord? Listen to this: *"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that*

loveth Me shall be loved of My Father [not in an initial sense but] ...I will love [make love] to him, and will manifest Myself to him...If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will [make] love [to] him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him," John 14:21,23.

Do we tend to think of God's love as being some *inactive* thing that we take for granted but which does not affect us so much now? Then let us think of the husband and bride relationship. Let us think of God, even our Lord Jesus, as actively making love and manifesting His love to us. His bride, a bride who loves Him enough to feast upon Him and who keeps His blessed words. The Father and the Son not only love the bride but will show that love just as a loving husband shows his love to his loving bride.

But oh, how we have been unfaithful to the Lord. We have been unfaithful to His love! Yes, as Christians, we are guilty of spiritual adultery. *"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. BE AFFLICTED, AND MOURN, AND WEEP: LET YOUR LAUGHTER BE TURNED TO MOURNING, AND YOUR JOY TO HEAVINESS. HUMBLE YOURSELVES IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, AND HE SHALL LIFT YOU UP,"* James 4:4-10.

All this is written to Christians. Yes, we as Christians are often guilty of spiritual adultery, of leaving our first love, of not being true and faithful to God's love, of finding earthly and worldly objects for our affections that detract from our devotedness for the Lord, our true Husband.

Since we can see that the sin of leaving our first love and the sin of negligence lie at our door, I ask again, "WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?" When Israel of old saw their idolatry was wrong, when they were convicted over it, what did they do? At least, when they repented, what did they do? Did they say, "Idol worship is wrong, but we are too weak to forsake it: we can't be perfect, you know?"

NO! When they repented, they *forsook* their sin. They cried unto the Lord and He heard them. They destroyed their idols. They humbled themselves before the Lord. And we are to act the same way. Of course we can do nothing in our own strength, but Biblical instruction calls for ACTIVE response. *"RESIST the devil and he will flee from you."* James 4:7. *"FLEE also youthful lusts,"* II Timothy 2:22. *"HUMBLE YOURSELVES therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom RESIST steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world,"* I Peter 5:6,8-9. **Repent, Turn, Obey, Ask, Seek, Knock, Call** upon the name of the Lord and thou shalt be saved, and that continually. These are all active responses that we are responsible to make, that we are commanded to make, that we are empowered to make through Christ in whose Spirit we must walk.

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon," Isaiah 55:6-7.

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to REVIVE the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones," Isaiah 57:15.

WHAT IS YOUR SIN? Is it what we have been speaking of here? Or has the Holy Spirit convicted you of other sins as well? Then look to the Lord Jesus Christ. Humble yourself before Him in repentance. Obey His commands. Rest on His promises. Trust in the Lord and lean not to your own understanding. If His children do not forsake their sins, His chastisement will become more and more severe. *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is IN you, except ye be reprobates?"* II Corinthians 13:5.

Now in conclusion, *"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy*

works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. [A faithful, active, lively church, wouldn't you say?] NEVERTHELESS I HAVE SOMETHAT AGAINST THEE, because THOU HAST LEFT THY FIRST LOVE. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and REPENT, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, EXCEPT thou repent," Revelation 2:1-5.

Do we want the light of the Lord's smiling countenance to rest upon us? Then let us heed this commanding passage and RETURN TO OUR FIRST LOVE and remain there.