

November 17, 2008
Do You Trouble Religious Leaders?

"[Western Christendom] has not obeyed His voice, she has not received correction.

She has not trusted in the LORD, she has not drawn near to her God" (Zephaniah 3:2).

If you've read Lifebyte 59 then you've seen how God used me to confront sin among a number of leaders in a variety of Christian institutions. The tendency for many (perhaps you're among them) is to make an idol out of Christian institutions, and even the government for that matter. Don't be too quick to deny this! How often have you found yourself looking horizontally for others to meet your needs rather than crying out to your Father in trust for HIS answer and intervention? The same God Who used 10 plagues to confront the gods of Egypt is confronting the "gods" in which so many "Christians" have placed their trust: riches and religion. In other words, your idolatry may be shaping up as counting on the government to ensure your financial security and to your clergy to convince you that you're okay with God.

Consider this: Ever since the New Deal was established during the Depression in the 1930s, government policy has been robbing generations of children and grandchildren in order to provide the lifestyle to which you've become accustomed. Even now as the Treasury prints up more and more money for "bailouts", who do you think is going to pay for your greedy, self-gratifying lifestyle if you're among those who have given way to self-indulgence? Have you subconsciously presumed that some sort of "safety net" will be there when you've overextended your wants and now can't meet your needs?

Are you grieved to discover that your clergy leadership are as anxious and fearful as you are, trying to sustain their own position and finance all the programs and building costs? Their fear keeps them from confronting biblical sin and preaching repentance because that might offend those who give and turn off the financial supply.

This nation needs to see the power of God at work among those who claim to be His! In Lifebyte 60 we'll pursue this in depth because where the power of God is manifested among His people who love and trust Him with all their being, the fear of Him falls on everyone.

An anecdote from my past captures the complacent blindness I see today among so many Christians:

My first assignment off Vietnam was flying cargo and ammunition from a supply ship off the coast to resupply the "gunline"— a group of destroyers off North Vietnam tasked with halting the flow of enemy supplies to the south. Late one afternoon I hovered my helicopter over the gun mount of a destroyer as it was firing its guns beneath me. The ship had run out of ammunition, and as fast as I was delivering it, they were firing it. Several days later as I entered the wardroom of our supply ship, the other officers congratulated me. My helicopter, with our ship's name on it, had made the front page of Stars and Stripes newspaper. Someone had taken a picture of it as I'd hovered over that destroyer.

When I saw that picture I was livid! Forgetting Navy regs I berated the astonished officers with choice 'Navy phraseology.' In cleaned-up parlance my words went something like this: "You men are out here safe and secure on this ship, feeling like you're doing your best for the war. Let me tell you the truth. I have to hover off the back of your flight deck waiting 10 minutes or more for the next load of ammo to be ready. That's because you don't see the men dying in the foxholes down south. You don't feel the sorrow of their families when they receive the death notice. Those destroyers are running out of ammunition because of you! Vietcong supplies are getting south because of you! And you are killing our own men!"

The commander of the supply department quickly escorted me out of the wardroom. In the passageway he said, "What you did in there was wrong, but what you said was absolutely correct." He asked me to accompany him down to the cargo holds. That day we redefined how cargo was moved aboard that ship. In one day we increased our speed of delivery from 9 tons an hour to 126 tons. Our new motto became: "No one dies because we didn't care."

Until the larger purpose of that supply ship had been clarified, the officers carried out their duties with a goal no larger than their own comfort and safety. Many of God's people live with this same myopic view of their Christian lives. They don't feel the burden of a loving God who desires the salvation of ALL mankind, nor do they grieve with Him over their loss.

***"But if the watchman sees the sword coming
and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people
and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them,
that man will be taken away because of his sin,
but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood"*** (Ezekiel 33:6).

You've probably been indoctrinated since youth to put your trust in institutions— institutions whose purported goal is to help make your life better. This parameter is how you measure their effectiveness—in what they do on your behalf.

In the religious arena, the efforts of the congregational leadership can provide the guise of success even where the vitality of Jesus isn't real. That's what is so deceptive about it. You think their efforts are pleasing God because of all the activities and programs they manage. Yet, beneath the programs and social entertainment lies an emptiness that you won't admit. Confidence in institutionalism deceives you into feeling good about yourself even if it has nothing to do with obeying God's will or having an intimate relationship with Him as Lord of your life.

A dear friend was preaching in England a few years ago when he asked the congregation this: "If Jesus Christ were dead, how long would you keep on doing what you are doing?" The people were convicted as they realized and admitted that everything would go on just as it had. The institution provided all that they needed or wanted to meet their social and religious needs. Is this true for you?

"When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you TROUBLER of Israel?"
(1 Kings 18:17).

As with Jesus, all who are called by God to speak prophetically for Him are troublers to the religious and government leaders who are concerned only with perpetuating and

maintaining their system. Again, the god of ALL religion is Satan no matter what label is attached to it. Religion sets its own way of trying to reach their god. But the God of the Bible is the God of intimate relationship Who reaches out to set apart by love those who embrace His Covenant. The God of His Word is the God of purpose who has called you out of the world's ways to love Him and serve Him by your obedient responsiveness to His Spirit. And the particular work to which He has called you as part of His body is Kingdom work as a "living sacrifice" (see Ephesians 2:10; Romans 12:1 for example). In Lifebyte 59 I detail why I was called the "enema" by so many who refused to repent. I needed those many years of refinement BEFORE our Lord could entrust Sue and me with the message of the Hebraic Restoration. If you embrace these scriptural truths that out of His grace He is again making clear, you WILL receive a prophet's reward (Matthew 10:41). You will be refined until the character and motivation of Jesus compels you to represent Him to the world in the way His whole Word portrays Him. That depth of intimate trust and reliance thrusts behind you any dependence on crowds of others in religious establishments who ignore one another's compromise with the world's values and fears and activities. Instead, you'll hunger for and find solace in every divine encounter with the Spirit of Jesus within you.

***"The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman...,
yet snares await him on all his paths,
and hostility in the house of his God"*** (Hosea 9:8).

If you're putting into practice the Hebraic foundations, then you're being recruited as a prophetic voice in these days of chastisement. Don't let your voice be stilled! The ones who will oppose you the most are those who call themselves "Christian" yet by entertaining unconfessed sin are used by Satan to attack authentic followers of Jesus (see 2 Timothy 2:25,26).

Let them attack, because the Bible forewarns this will occur. But He has called His servants to be humble before Him, knowing that each of us too was at one time similarly compromised. Don't despise anyone! Even your attacker is made in the image of God, and our Lord died for them as well.

However, this next point is crucial, as your children and others close to you are observing and will be influenced by your decision. Don't remain in fellowship with those who embrace darkness and refuse to walk in the light, for that's not the kind of fellowship that God is calling for (1 John 1:5-7). Our Father is calling for those with ears to hear to follow through in obedient trust in Him and heed His command: ***"Therefore come out from them and be separate. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you"*** (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Go find those who have ears to hear! ***"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest"*** (John 4:35). Don't exchange being one of our Lord's available and prepared harvesters just so you can enjoy complacent fellowship with the unrepentant. Flee the darkness of religion and its self-gratification so you can be about our Master's business—the salvation of mankind!

Be a prophetic voice to rescue as many as will hear.

Mike & Sue