

Chinese Bamboo

Rec & Prayer

We are in a year of jubilee - Praise God! Yet, I want us to look back over the last several years in the life of his church. Christ has called us to make disciples. Have we maintained or decreased?

What have we learned from the parable of the talents? When our master returns will he be pleased with what we have done with what he has given us?

We have new people come into the church, some leave for various reasons and some cross the veil, but this morning we need to ask ourselves a serious question... On the whole are we comfortable with maintaining the status quo? Do we really have a desire to do what Jesus commanded us to do or are we content with what we have.

Recently, I was asked: Why don't we have revival right now in Salmo? I thought about this for several minutes before I came to several conclusions...

I have heard many preachers deal with this subject. Most attribute it to one of three things:

- Sin
- Complacency
- Prayerlessness

So I went over the sermons I have heard on this and in my mind I had to agree that these preachers had a point.

I have often heard: "You do not have because you do not ask..." used in this context. While, I do agree with the principle of bringing our requests to God Let's take a look at James 4:2-3 NKJV:

You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

Not exactly the context of revival. Principle valid, but I think this is really more an admonishment that pride promotes strife in your life. But what he has said is many times we don't have what we need because we don't ask...

Now there are many scriptures, which do substantiate the fact that it may be sin, complacency and prayerlessness that causes a lack of revival, yet as I was praying about what will be happening after this year of jubilee, I was not impressed with what God had revealed to me... Not my job to approve of what I am told, but I was

very concerned with what God had spoken to me in prayer directly to my heart about his churches in Canada.

To better understand, I brought these ideas that my peers had suggested before the Lord and he confirmed what these ministers are saying and more. Here is what really kicked me flat!

I believe the Lord answered my fervent prayers. He said: "My people are not asking me for revival in prayer; they are not diligently seeking me for it.

So I asked in prayer: "Why Lord?"

"They do not want my presence, they do not want change, they do not want revival because they have grown complacent. They like things just as they are."

So I argued with God in prayer saying: "Lord surely there is a remnant who do want to see your mighty hand working here."

And He said to me: "Many who call themselves Christians do not want revival, many of those who say that they are my children do not want revival, many will not even speak my name to the hurting or the lost. There are even many who call themselves my priests who fear or simply do not want the increased work of revival. They have allowed their hearts to grow cold."

God what can I do?

He spoke this scripture clearly to my heart... 2 Chronicles 7:12b-18

"...As I had spoken to Solomon before you..."

"I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually."

A very clear message that God has heard the cry of my heart and that of many others. He has chosen despite in the struggle and trials of our lives here in Salmo and I believe in Canada overall, to honor his promise that **IF we humble ourselves and pray and seek his face, and are obedient to what he has told us to do here in Salmo, that he will heal our land.** He has promised to hear our prayers and more. He will set his gaze upon us and his heart will be in this place. It is conditional upon our obedience, hence the IF"

So... This morning I want to talk about Chinese bamboo...

My friends let me share with you this illustration from the 5th gospel.

Chinese bamboo produces little fruit for the first four years of its life... On the surface it appears puny and pitiful...

Have you ever felt that the efforts here have been less than enough? ... Well this morning, I am here to tell you to look deeper because just like the Chinese bamboo something is going on beneath the surface.

In the next year of it's life the Chinese bamboo grows 8 feet.

So what is my message in this little story this morning?

It is quite simple really... in real churches the root comes before the fruit.

Luke 8:6

Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture

Without our roots running deep and soaking up the living water we will wither away...

Now make no mistake about it. Jesus expects each one of you to produce fruit. Jesus really isn't a fan of the fruitless. Consider the fig tree...

Turn with me to John 15:5-8 NKJV

*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. **If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered;** and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. **By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.***

Now let's look at Ephesians 3:14-19 NKJV

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, **that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what

is the width and length and depth and height — to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Do you love God this morning?

He has said in John 14:15 BLB

If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

John 15:10-12

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you

Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

The time for complacency has passed; the time for apathy has passed. You are called this morning. How will you respond to Jesus?

That said... I want to bring some research into the sermon this morning.

There is an amazing Christian researcher by the name of Thom Rainer. He and his team have interviewed literally thousands of un-Churched non-Christians. Recently he compiled a list of the seven most common comments in order of how often they occurred during the interview process.

(Except from “What Non-Christians Really think about Christians” – Thom Rainer)

1. Christians are against more things than they are for.

“It just seems to me Christians are mad at the world and mad at each other. They are so negative, they seem unhappy. I have no desire to be like them and stay upset all the time.”

2. I would like to develop a friendship with a Christian.

“I’m really interested in what they believe and how they carry out their beliefs. I wish I could find a Christian who would be willing to spend some time with me.”

3. I would like to learn about the Bible from a Christian.

“The Bible really fascinates me, but I don’t want to go to a stuffy and legalistic church to learn about it. I would be nice if a Christian invited me to study the Bible in his home or at a place like Starbucks.”

4. I don’t see much difference in the way Christians live compared to others.

“I really can’t tell what a Christian believes because he doesn’t seem much different than other people I know. The only exception would be Mormons. They really seem to take their beliefs seriously.”

5. I wish I could learn to be a better husband/wife/dad/mom, etc., from a Christian.

“My wife is threatening to divorce me, and I think she means it this time. My neighbor is a Christian, and he seems to have it together. I am swallowing my pride and asking him to help me.”

6. Some Christians try to act like they have no problems.

“Harriett works in my department. She is one of those Christians who seems to have a mask on. I would respect her more if she didn’t put on such an act. I know better.”

7. I wish a Christian would take me to his or her church.

“I really would like to visit a church, but I’m not particularly comfortable going by myself. What is weird is that I am 32 years old, and I’ve never had a Christian invite me to church in my entire life.”

Do you see the pattern? Non-Christians want to interact with Christians. They want to see Christians’ actions match their beliefs. They want Christians to be real.

In one study we conducted, we found only 5 percent of non-Christians are antagonistic toward Christians. It’s time to stop believing the lies we have been told. Jesus said it clearly: “The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore,

pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest” (Luke10:2, HCSB).

Satan is the author of excuses. There is no reason to wait to reach those who don't know Jesus Christ. We must go now. The harvest is waiting. And the Lord of the harvest has prepared the way.

Conclusion:

There you have it folks, the facts, the word of the Lord and clear direction... What will you do now? Each of us needs to ask ourselves...

In this upcoming season of growth, will I chose to be a barren fig tree or a Chinese Bamboo?

I leave you with this scripture from the depths of my heart that I offer up as a challenge for all of us...

Joshua 24:15 NASB

If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord

Prayer