

The Church America Needs

Jeremiah 5:1-9

After the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, God did not leave Himself without a means of manifesting His glory. Ephesians 2:18-22 gives us this insight, “Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us. So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.”

There is much Scriptural evidence the Church that was born on Pentecost was much more than just an organization that offered fellowship and a Welfare program! The Early Church was alive and reaching men and women with a message of *life and salvation*. The book of Acts reminds us there were 120 waiting for the promise of the Spirit when the day of Pentecost came. **These 120 were the first to be baptized with the Spirit, as they became “charter members” of the universal, mystical body of Christ known as the “Church.”** Acts 2:41 tells us that in response to the *preaching* of Peter and the other Apostles about 3,000 “gladly received (the) word (and) were baptized.” And Acts 4:4 tells us “about five thousand” others received Christ as their Savior! **It is clear the Early Church acted with one goal and that was to share the Gospel of Christ to a lost and dying world!** As the Early Church began to develop they were involved in *Fellowship, the Breaking of Bread, Public Worship, and contributing to the support of the needy*. From that Pentecostal event the Church of the living Lord has moved throughout the world to proclaim the Gospel of Christ!

But what about today? You and I are living in a world filled with *unprecedented change!* Most of our *biblical values* are being

increasingly brought into question by a society that is hostile towards Christianity, and it seems the Church has become more concerned about being “politically correct” than we reaching the lost!

The truth is we have tried to attract people with safety for our kids, hand sanitizers in every hallway, high powered programs, and a preaching and worship style that has less and less emphases on the Word of God. And what have we gotten for all our spiritual protection and provision? A nation filled with hollow buildings, faltering memberships wandering in pain and confusion, as they continue to struggle with pastoral leadership who constantly look for someone else to blame for their circumstance.

The question we have to ask is where do we go from here? How do we keep our church *alive, sustainable, vibrant and open to God’s voice*? How do we live *a life of biblical influence* in a world that seems to be pulling farther away from God with each passing day? **And my question today is this,** “What kind of Church does America need today?”

I think we can find the answer in the Bible and I want to give you these three insights.

First, America needs a Church that is True to the Word of God. Jesus said this in Matthew 4:4, “People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”

One of the things that I have tried to emphasize from this pulpit is that we believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. Why is it so important that we understand the importance of this doctrine? The answer is simple, as seen in Hebrews 11:6, “...without faith it is impossible to please (God)...” **What does Hebrews 11:6 have**

to do with the Word of God? Romans 10:17 says, “So, then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” **The Word of God provides the foundation for all divine connection.**

The Bible is beyond all other books as a mountain is beyond a grain of sand, as a river is beyond a drop of water, as sunlight is beyond a candle! It takes the *pain out of parting, the sting out of death, it breaks the shackles of the Slave, and it sends the Prodigal home again!* If you were to turn to all the books of quotes in the entire world, you would find that most of the quotes come *from the Bible*, or would be *about the Bible*. Among all of the books that have ever been written, the Bible is still the *most quoted* and the *best selling* book in the world today!

Someone has asked, “Don’t you think we ought to make the Bible relevant to today?” My answer to that is “NO, we need to make today’s world relevant to the Bible!”

America needs a church that is true to the Word of God, for the Bible exposes the sin of ungodliness and unrighteousness in the lives of our people. Jeremiah 5:7-8 says, “How can I pardon you? For even your children have turned from me, they have sworn by gods that are not gods at all! I fed my people until they were full, but they thanked me by committing adultery and lining up at the brothels. They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for his neighbor’s wife.” **In the United States of America, we are living in the very midst of immorality!** Jeremiah tells us the people of his day had turned their backs on *godliness* and *righteousness*, and had gone after gods that were not God’s at all. And the sad part is they had not led their children into an honest knowledge of God.

You might be thinking, “What does any of that have to do with me?” **We live in a nation where every second 28,258 people are watching pornography on the Internet.** 2.5 billion emails sent or received everyday contain pornography. The Center of Disease Control reports there are 2,899 abortions in America everyday. That is

one abortion every 30 seconds. **We have more alcoholics in America (12 million) than we have students enrolled in all of our colleges and universities combined 5.55 million.** Psalm 33:12 says, “What joy for the nation whose God is the Lord, whose people he has chosen as his inheritance.” **But in our nation there are 43,000 suicides every year.** More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease, **COMBINED.** When I look around and see what is happening in America I am convinced we need churches that stand on the Word of God.

Second, America needs churches that will stir up the people. Jeremiah 5:2 says, “Though they say, ‘As the Lord lives,’ surely they swear falsely.” In other words, Jeremiah is saying the people are saying they believe in God with their *mouths*, but their *lives* are telling a very different story! Ladies and gentlemen, on any given Sunday less than half of our church’s membership shows up in Church.

With that thought in mind, look with me at Hebrews 10:23-25, “Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” **Child of God, there was a day when you invited Jesus Christ to come into your life, forgive you of your sins, and make you a Christian!** It was a statement to holy God that you were willing to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil for the cause of Jesus Christ - and at that moment I Thessalonians 5:24 made you this promise, “He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.”

Listen and get this: the One who calls you to a life of righteousness is the One, who by your consent lives that life of righteousness through you. The One who calls you to minister to the needs of humanity is the One, who by your consent, ministers to the

needs of humanity through you. The One who calls you to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature is the One, who by your consent, goes into all the world and preached the Gospel through you.

But somewhere along the way Satan caused you to take your focus off the Person of Christ and focus on things that have no eternal value! You began to focus on people, programs, attitudes, and Jeremiah 5:3 says, “They have made their faces harder than rock...” **What does that mean?** It means you have allowed Satan to use these things to fill you with anger and steal your joy! And in that frame of mind you became discouraged and lost your vision of the glory of God! And far too many of God’s precious children have walked away from what God has called you to do for His glory!

Last of all, America needs a church that will have a burden for the lost. Look at Jeremiah 5:5, “So I will go and speak to their leaders - Surely they know the ways of the Lord ^{and} understand God’s laws.” Jeremiah is saying there is a job to be done *and even the leadership is not warning the people of God’s judgment!* Romans 10:14-15 says this, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!”

Ladies and gentlemen, just outside those stained glass windows is a lost and dying world – some of those are family members, neighbors, colleagues in the work place, and wounded strangers. John 3:16-17 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” Luke 19:10 says, “(Jesus) has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” 1 Timothy 2:4 reminds us God “desires all men to be saved and to come to

the knowledge of the truth.” These people don’t need your *judgmental criticism*, what they do need is for *you to love them enough to let the love of God shine through you!* Romans 2:4 reminds us it is “the goodness of God leads you to repentance.” Church - people just need to know God loves them just like they are, and so should we!

Will you help make this church the kind of church America needs?

Stand for prayer.

Father,

Your Word is true. Give me the courage to help make this church the kind of church America need. In Jesus’ name. Amen.