

THE UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM #27

“The Power of the Pulpit”

Introduction

In the midst of all the chaos in our country right now, the Lord reminded me of something that gets lost in the long list of what’s gone wrong; something the great revivalist Charles G. Finney said during America’s spiritual revival in the 1830’s known as the ‘2nd Great Awakening’...

Charles Finney

(1792-1875)

“If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it.”

Finney pulled no punches in pointing out how the pulpits of America’s Christian churches had failed the nation.

Charles Finney

(1792-1875)

“If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in great degree.”

Many of our modern Christian prophets are declaring that America needs a spiritual revival; many are calling for a 3rd “Great Awakening”.

But what will it take for that to happen?

Many things, actually; but here is one I would like to submit for the record...

Theme

Saving our country from a socialistic takeover will require 2 things: repentance by our pastors and a recovery of power in our Christian pulpits.

I am not just preaching my personal opinion. I will show you how God uses the power of the pulpit propels the spiritual course of a nation. This is not a new idea!

Dr. Michael Yousef

“As goes the pulpit, so goes the pew. As goes the pew, so goes the nation.”

3 Goals for Tonight

1. To show the power of the pulpit; the primacy of preaching
2. To show what happens when pulpits lose their power
3. To point out a pathway to recover the power and save the nation

I. Restoring the Power of the Pulpit

A. The Primacy of Preaching

“Primacy”

The fact of being primary, preeminent, or most important

1. The God of the Bible is the God of the spoken Word.
2. God communicates His will to His creation through His word; there are 2 Greek terms for ‘word’:
 - a. The full expression of God’s will and nature is the “Word” expressed as the LOGOS. (See John 1: 1, 14)
 - b. The spoken expression of God’s will and instruction is known as the RHEMA. (Hebrews 4:12)
3. **Preaching is the vocal proclamation of the ‘rhema’ word of God or through His delegates: In the Old Testament, God spoke primarily through His prophets, but in the New Testament, God uses preachers.**
4. The primary importance of preaching fills the New Testament: **The last prophetic word in the Old Testament came to Israel through prophet Malachi. Then, after 400 years of silence...**

The Primacy of Preaching

John the Baptist came *preaching!* (Matthew 3:1; Luke 3:2-3)

Jesus came *preaching!* (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:14)

Jesus sent the Apostles out *preaching!* (Luke 9:6)

- a. After His resurrection, in the Great Commission, Jesus sent His disciples out to preach!

Matthew 28:18-20

“And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

After the Resurrection

Jesus’ disciples went forth *preaching!*

(Acts 8:4, 12: 10:36; 11:19-20; 14:35; 20:25)

The Book of Acts ends with Paul preaching (Acts 28:30-31)

The Apostle Paul links salvation directly to hearing the Gospel through *preaching!* (Romans 10:13-17)

Paul says, “...it is through the foolishness of *preaching* God saves them that believe”. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

Titus 1:3

God, who cannot lie, promised (eternal life) before time began, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching...

5. It is a historical fact that every great revival and outpouring of the Spirit in church history has been accompanied by *great preaching!*

SUMMARY

1. So we have seen the power of the pulpit; that preaching is primary in the plan of God
2. But what happens when the pulpit loses its power

B. When Pulpits Lose Power

1. A generation ago, the great Swiss theologian Francis Schaeffer bemoaned the silence of the lambs in American pulpits over the legalization of abortion. He saw it coming...

Francis Schaeffer

“As we turn to the evangelical leadership in the last decades, unhappily we must come to the conclusion that often it has not been of much help. Spirituality to the evangelical leadership has often not included the Lordship of Christ over the whole spectrum of life.”

2. Schaeffer was calling out the preaching of American pastors that focused only on a ‘personal’ salvation; preaching a Gospel that did not require a commitment to Christ as Lord over ‘the whole spectrum of life’, which would include political kingdoms!

Joseph Mattera in Charisma News

“The Lord Jesus is the ruler of all kings and nations of the earth. The need for this teaching is great, since most Christians only think of Jesus as their personal Savior instead of as the exalted Lord of heaven and earth.”

3. Example: Many American preachers are calling for spiritual revival, casting longing looks at the revivals of the past; but Francis Schaeffer wondered if the preachers new what a real revival would look like.

Francis Schaeffer

“The old revivals are spoken about so warmly by the evangelical leadership. Yet they seem to have forgotten what those revivals were. Yes, the old revivals in Great Britain, Scandinavia, and the old revivals in this country did call, and without any question and with tremendous clarity, for personal salvation. But they also called for a resulting social action. Every single one of them did this.”

4. There is no such thing as a true revival that does not impact the culture nor fail to speak the truth to power. And yet...

Larry Alex Taunton

“Today we have throughout our country mega-churches with more churches planted every day. Yet their societal impact is negligible. Why? How is it possible? Francis Schaeffer would attribute it to a poverty of preaching.”

5. Many American preachers have limited the power of the Gospel to personal salvation and turned our pulpits into self-help sessions. But...

Larry Alex Taunton

“The Gospel remains remarkably unchanged. Its power to transform societies is one of the most underrated benefits of Christian belief. Through the inward transformation of the individual, there is a corresponding outward transformation of society.”

6 The Gospel really works—where the Gospel is truly preached...

But today, our nation is teeter-tottering on the brink of a socialistic takeover of our government! Yet many pastors won't preach on politics or speak to social issues at all!

Tucker Carlson

“Why aren't America's pastors doing more to combat the Black Lives Matters Marxist agenda?”

Why indeed!

7. Let me run through a list of how pulpits lose their power from the words of the great **English revivalist George Whitefield**, (1714-1770); a man who preached a series of revivals in America in the “Great Awakening” of the 1740's.

a. Whitefield was convinced that some so-called ‘Christian’ pastors were not even saved.

George Whitefield

“The reasons why congregations have been so dead is because they have dead men preaching to them. How can dead men beget living children?”

b. Whitefield warned of weak pulpits with watered down sermons:

George Whitefield

“It is a poor sermon that gives no offense; that neither makes the hearer displeased with himself nor with the preacher.”

c. Whitefield warned about preachers afraid of what people might think of them.

George Whitefield

“He is unworthy of the name of a minister of the gospel of peace, who is unwilling, not only to have his name cast out as evil, but also to die for the truths of the Lord Jesus.”

d. Whitefield warned about sugarcoated Christianity:

George Whitefield

“If you're going to walk with Jesus Christ you are going to be opposed. In our days, to be a true Christian is really to become a scandal.”

e. All these words of wisdom apply to us ‘in our day’; the time has come that anyone who preaches the Word of God will be opposed; and be a true Christian will be an offence.

8. Let me give you some other things that causes pulpits to lose their power:

a. Turning to worldly ways of church growth strategy.

Lester Roloff

“The only way to build a church, if you have a Bible church, is to preach out of the Bible, teach out of the Bible, read out of the Bible.”

b. Preaching for popularity.

Vance Havner

“The preacher who jests and jokes with his people all week will soon find that he cannot stand I his pulpit on Sunday with power to reprove, rebuke and exhort. He may be the life of the party but it will be the death of the prophet.”

c. Misrepresenting God; by that I mean focusing on the more appealing attributes of His nature (love, grace, goodness, and mercy) while neglecting His more intimidating aspects (holiness, justice and anger).

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

(1899-1981)

“These modern preachers do not believe in the wrath of God; they say it should be banished. But in the Old Testament this idea is put before us 580 times. That God is angry against sin, that God hates sin, is a basic proposition.”

(Remember, God does not change! Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8)

A pulpit loses its power if it cannot confront sin.

S.D. Gordon, “Quiet Talks on Prayer”

“It takes power for the man of God in the pulpit to speak plainly about particular sins before the faces of those who are living in them; and still more power to do it with the rare tactfulness and tenderness of the Galilean preacher.”

d. Pulpits lose power when preachers focus on conforming the church to the culture.

- **Skinny jeans, smoke machines, hot dogs (or gourmet coffee):**

(Don't mishear this; these are not evil things; but conforming the church to the world cannot replace the preaching of the Word)

- **Everyone wants to reach the millennial generation; but Rachel Evans,** Washington Post, 4/30/15, had some advice for us. "Want Millennials Back in the Pews? Stop Trying to Make the Church 'Cool'"

e. The bottom line; these things are not evil of themselves except when they replace the primacy of the preaching of the Word as a centerpiece.

REVIEW

- 1. We have seen the power of the pulpit; the primacy of preaching**
- 2. We have looked at how pulpits lose their power**
- 3. Now let's close by pointing out a pathway to recovering the power and turning our nation around**

C. Recovering the Power of the Pulpit

1. We said this in the beginning:

Theme

Saving our country from a socialistic takeover will require 2 things: repentance by our pastors and a recovery of power in our Christian pulpits.

2. True repentance precedes true faith; a national revival begins with pastoral repentance; we must take responsibility for the state of our nation because we will answer to God for it:

James 3:1

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

a. Jesus was gentle with sinners; He reserved His harshest words for the Scribes and Pharisees, the preachers of His day.

3. Our nation is under attack!

Larry Alex Taunton

Today, practicing Christianity in America is treated much like smoking. You can do it, but only in designated areas.

4. Those who want to turn America into a socialist nation are threatening to burn down our system of godly government.

Don Lemon

“We’re going to have to blow up the whole system.”

5. Our President is working to put a Bible believing Christian on the Supreme Court; here is what his enemies are saying:

Senator Chuck Schumer

“Let me be clear. If Leader McConnell and Senate Republicans move forward with this, then nothing is off the table for next year.”

Nancy Pelosi

“We have arrows in our quiver that I’m not about to discuss right now but the fact is we have a big challenge in our country.”

Laura Bassett

“If McConnell jams someone through, which he will, there will be riots.

Reza Aslan, CNN

“If they even TRY to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg we burn the entire f*** thing down.”**

6. This all reminds me of when Herod, the political power of His day, threatened the Lord Jesus. His response?

Luke 13:32

Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out demons and doing miracles today and tomorrow; and the third day I will reach my destination.

a. Paraphrase: “Go tell that fox nothing will stop Me from preaching God’s word and doing God’s work until my job is done!

George Whitefield

“We must all have the spirit of martyrdom, though we may not all die martyrs. We are immortal until our work on earth is done.”

7. We need not fear man! We have a job to do!

III. Close

A. Our Job: Awakening a Sleeping Church

George Whitefield

“The Christian world is in a deep sleep; nothing but a loud shout can awaken them out of it. It is high time for Thy ministers, O God, to lift up their voices like a trumpet.”

1. We must use the power of the pulpit!
2. The power of heaven is on our side! We need not be on the defense.

Charles Spurgeon

“The word of God is like a lion. You don’t have to defend a lion. All you have to do is set the lion loose and it will defend itself.”

B. The Last Words

1. The condition of the pulpit determines the condition of the nation.

Charles Finney

(1792-1875)

“If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it.”

Charles Finney

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“If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in great degree.”

2. After 50 years walking with the Lord, I believe this with all my heart:

God’s people rarely rise above the level of the preaching they hear.

3. The fate of our nation is not in the hands of the enemy; it is in the power of the pulpit.

Larry Alex Taunton

The American church is a sleeping giant. Should it ever awaken and recover its authentic mission, it will bring about a third Great Awakening and the spiritual transformation of America.

a. It's time to ask this question:

“Pastor, what are you doing to use the power of the pulpit to change the nation?”

4. And remember this: The true men of God need never worry about getting a crowd!

a. The great John Wesley said this to his young preachers:

John Wesley

“Be set on fire. Many will come to watch you burn”.

5. May the true men of God recover the power of the pulpit and the power of preaching the mighty Word of God.