

Are You Clothed With Power?

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I count myself among the old men who look for Christ in every line of the Old Testament. If Christ be removed from the Old Testament, if everything there is not a picture of Him, then I am left with nothing but moral stories.

The animal slain to cover the nakedness of our first parents, that was Christ. The ark that weathered the deluge, that was Christ. The ram caught in the thicket by its horns, that was Christ. The temple and its sacrifices, that was Christ. He is the seed of Abraham and one greater than Moses and Joshua. When I read of Samson ripping up the gates of that city and throwing them down, I see Christ ripping up the gates of hell and throwing them down like they were the tiniest feather on the smallest fowl.

Let me tell you something: I know Paul Washer. And I need more than proverbs and maxims and moral stories. I need a mighty God who can wrestle this man to the ground and save him.

Jesus has really risen and He has appeared to us. We have seen Him with our own eyes. Now where do we learn about that? If you are going to be a missionary or a preacher, you cannot rely on the secondhand testimony of others. You cannot rely on the testimony of Calvin alone, or Piper alone, or even something you parrot from Scripture. You yourself must experience the resurrected Christ.

You must be born again to testify of the new birth. You say, "Why do you say that to pastors?" Because so many are not born again. You must be broken to testify of repentance. You must believe to testify of faith. You must know something of the filling and the baptism of the Holy Spirit if you are going to give testimony to the power of the Spirit. And you must know Him to testify of Him.

We are not going to spread the Gospel into this whole world through the cleverness of our minds but in the power of the Holy Spirit. I don't care what you think about the words, let me ask you, Are you clothed with power from on high?

Sometimes the only thing that will ever keep you going is that He has risen, He has risen indeed! He has risen indeed. Your sins are gone! He has risen indeed. The world has a Savior. He has risen indeed. The universe has a King. He has risen. And one day, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trumpet call of God, you will too. And I can't wait to see your beauty on that day.

"It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world." You must know it for yourself. You cannot depend upon the testimony of your godly grandmother, or your mother, or even men around you that you greatly esteem. You must know it for yourself. My goodness, some of us should just leave and get alone with God.

The missionary, the preacher, must be entirely convinced of the grace of God. Because everyday when you get up and you look in that mirror, you know you are called to proclaim a message that you yourself cannot even live up to. You need grace, you need grace, you need grace! But someone says, "If you throw that much grace around, it would be a licence for sin."

Only among the unconverted church members. Oh, they would take it as an excuse for sin, and the ungodly pastors will take it as an excuse for sin. But I want you to know this, the genuinely converted will say this: "If grace be such, if it be so large and so wide, depths I cannot asound, then O let me be holy; O let me serve Him." You see, that's the difference between the unregenerate and the regenerated heart.

When light shines out of darkness and we understand that we have been justified by faith, and the great weight of sin rolls off our shoulders, and we cry out, "Abba, Father." Do you know that?

It comes from countless hours alone with God in the Word of God, not simply to gain knowledge so that you become a better debater, or not simply to prepare sermons, but you're alone with God in the Word of God because you want to know God.

It comes from countless hours alone with God in the night watch when men with better sense are tucked in their beds. Of being shut up to God, I learned that language from old men. Of being shut up to God. Of being consumed by God, in communion with God where no one can save you from Him. It comes from empowerings and fillings of the Holy Spirit; I will not give that up though you call me Charismatic. Empowerings and fillings of the Holy Spirit as He replaces the virtue that has gone out of you in ministry, and proves once again that it was to our benefit that Christ leave us and go to the right hand of the Father, so that He might send the ever-present, all-powerful Comforter.

It comes from countless trials, and a peace that has absolutely nothing to do with the natural. A peace from God. A peace that passes all understanding. It comes from countless victories over sin. Yes! Believers ought to have victory over sin! It comes from great victories over sin and the joy of making progress in the Christian faith and of bearing fruit that endures. But it also comes from countless failures, and terrifying revelations of self, and bone crushing discipline, and bending, and breaking, and repentance, and restoration. A man of God, when he reaches old age ought to be broken into a thousand pieces.

Give us missionaries? Give us missionaries? No. Give us men who have been ravished and mauled by God, and we'll have missionaries.

You can have a high view of Jesus Christ, only to the degree you have a high view of His Gospel. And if you preach this truncated gospel, four spiritual law thing that's going around, I can assure you that it's because you have a truncated Christ. And if in the book of Revelation, we are warned that if you alter, add to, or take away from this prophecy, you will be brought under a curse, how much more, sir, will you be brought under judgment for not giving men the Gospel, that is the Gospel of Christ. Without being truncated, without being edited, without being adorned in order to make it palatable to your carnal generation. O how we should fear in preaching the Gospel.

Maybe you've never heard this before. Proclaim Christ as the only expected Person. Do you realize how important this is? Christ made it clear. He said, "I'm the fulfillment of everything."

Now I want to read something to you from Loraine Boettner, listen to this, (and this is true,) "In all the history of the world, Jesus emerges as the only expected Person. No one was looking for such a person as Julius Caesar, or Napoleon, or Washington, or Lincoln, to appear at the time and place that they did appear. No other person has had his course foretold or his

work laid out for him centuries before he was born. But the coming of the Messiah has been predicted for centuries. We can use that. And we ought to use it more in our preaching. He is the only expected Person. There is no one else like Him. But He is not only the only expected Person, He's the context of everything.

Listen to this, from the Expositor's Greek New Testament: "The gist of prophecy in the Old Testament, the gist of it is the suffering and the resurrection of Christ, and the preaching in the name of the risen One to all nations of repentance unto remission of sins." Now missionary, you want to be encouraged? Then understand this: Not only the appearance of Christ was predicted, not only His death and resurrection was predicted, but also the Scriptures of the Old Testament predict the missionary endeavors of the church and its success. Yes! I said success.

So many people use this idea of election just because they don't want to go out and witness to anybody, and they are convinced they are the only group God is going to save. No! God ALWAYS is successful. He is going to call forth a Mighty tribe of people. Look what it says in Psalms 22 after explaining in great detail the suffering of the Messiah, in verse 27, it says this: "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before You." When you go on that mission field, I don't care how dark it is, I don't care how wicked it is, you stay there long enough, you preach through enough, and somebody is coming out of there saved. It's going to happen.

Missionaries, some of you, friends of mine, on the day you're slaughtered in the foreign field, and your blood comes out, I want you to bleed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Bleed it. With all that is in me, I promise that we will take care of your wife and your children. Don't worry about them. But BLEED the Gospel. Your blood is not as precious, nor is mine, as the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

You will not be satisfied laying on your bed because there's been some measure of blessing on your ministry. You will not be satisfied until the flag of Christ flies on every hill of this world. You will go to bed and you will rise up in the morning with the Moravian cry, "O that the Lamb might receive the full reward of His suffering." It's so much bigger than all of us. It's so much bigger than all of us. O that all of us would just be pulverised into dust, that our names would disappear, but that Christ would be glorified.

The book of Acts is not the acts of the apostles, but the acts of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, working through the apostles.

When Moses interceded for idolatrous Israel, stood in the gap, God was going to destroy them. Some lesser theologians would say that the entire destiny of the nation of Israel was being held in the hand of the man Moses. But they forget Moses was held in the hand of God and sustained by His grace.

The preacher is not a spin doctor, and he is not a marketing executive. He is only a faithful messenger of what has already been said by God, and he needs to say it just the way God said it, whether anyone likes it or not.

The old Brainerds, and the old Edwards, they would cry out for more and more of a manifestation of the Spirit of God in their life and their ministry. Do that! Do that, and you would do well.