

The Call to Restoration

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Introduction: We need to be familiar with the call to restoration among God's people.

- A. God's people have often departed from Him in history.
 - 1. Moses told Israel what would happen. **(Deut 8:18-20)**
 - 2. God has also warned us. **(1 Tim 4:1)**
 - 3. These departures often occur after a period of abundance and blessing.
- B. It is hard to realize this departure and come out of it.
 - 1. Why did Israel "kill the prophets?" **(Mt 23:34-38)**
 - 2. Those in Israel considered themselves faithful!
 - a. The prophets to them were "brotherhood watchdogs."
 - b. A careful study of attitudes shows who is open to God's word.
 - c. The casual disciple will not be able to discern.
- C. I believe that a great departure from God has occurred in this nation.
 - 1. Let us examine how God's people returned to Him in Nehemiah's day.
 - 2. We need to know the way back if/when we ourselves depart.

I. Repentance and prayer among God's people

- A. We must reach the point of disgust with ourselves.
 - 1. We need to be like the prodigal son. **(Lk 15:15-19)**
 - 2. Nehemiah had that realization and confessed to God without excuses. **(Neh 1:7-11)**
 - 3. Nehemiah knew the scriptures and what to pray for! **(Lev 26:33, 40-42)**
 - 4. Many today are sick of the corruption and games played by many churches.
- B. Among these will be some who will lead.
 - 1. Leaders will point others to God to find this repentance.
 - 2. Leaders will set their hearts fully on the goal of returning. **(Josh 1:7)**
 - 3. When you set your heart on the goal then God will give opportunity. **(Neh 2:1-4)**
 - 4. There must be no false motive of personal gain for us or for any human group. (Ex. Restoring the restoration movement!)

II. Commit all your resources to the task

- A. One of the reasons apostasy takes place is a "distracted" heart. **(Lk 8:14-15)**
 - 1. Some commit to restoration on a part time basis. God will have none of this. **(Jer 3:8-10)**
 - 2. When true repentance is found then there will be the joy of a full commitment!
- B. We need to be honest to see what God wants. **(Neh 2:11-18)**
 - 1. It is never an issue of what we think we can do!
 - 2. A clear faith in God has only one thing in mind.

III. Understand the adversary and stay focused

- A. Satan will use opponents in these ways to stop you.
 - 1. Ridicule and peer pressure. **(Neh 2:19, 4:1-3)**
 - 2. Direct attack. **(Neh 4:7-9)**
 - 3. Negotiations to compromise principle **(Neh 6:1-3)**

4. Slander and Gossip (**Neh 6:5-9**)
 5. Notice that in every case God's people stayed focused on Him and were not distracted in fear. (**1 Pt 3:12-15**)
- B. Satan will use some among God's people to stop you.
1. Internal fighting and selfishness. (**Neh 5:1-12**)
 - a. Satan's greatest work has been accomplished here.
 - b. If we build as we should and have the right kind of shepherds then Satan will do nothing in this area!
 2. Those who want fellowship with the adversaries. (**Neh 6:10-18**)
 - a. Many will be uncomfortable in opposing the "status-quo" of denominationalism or peer groups of men.
 - b. Sensitivity to relatives often cause men to seek compromise.
 3. Leadership worked with God's people to solve these problems.

IV. A return to all that God has commanded

- A. A new commitment to the written word is essential. (**Neh 8:1-3, 6, 8-10**)
1. This desire to follow God's word carefully will scare those with a partial commitment.
 2. We need to study the word anew each day.
- B. There is no Bible issue too "small" to ignore.
1. Consider the Feast of Tabernacles. (**Lev 23:39-43; Neh 8:13-18**)
 2. Some could have framed the issue this way: "Our traditional way of worship was to do this, but now it is different" or "You must not insist on legalistic obedience to outward forms because we all love God!"
 3. Nehemiah led the people to restore many outward forms. God expected all Jews who ever lived under this dispensation to keep these directions.
- C. We too call people back to a "radical restoration" even in outward matters.
1. Baptism as described in the Bible. (**Acts 2:38**)
 2. Respecting God's choices concerning the first day of the week. (**Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1-3**)
 3. Worship as God has chosen. (**Mt 26:26-29; Eph 5:19**)
 4. Remember these "outward" matters become important because we have first resolved "inward" matters. (**Mt 23:23**)

V. Each generation must fight this battle

- A. We might think that this generation and their children stood strong after this. We would have thought wrong!
1. God's enemy Tobiah had been given a place in the house of God! (**Neh 13:4-9**)
 2. Other instructions of God had been neglected. (**Neh 13:10, 15, 23**)
- B. Compromise in our fellowship and in God's law of marriage are problems today!

Conclusion: Have you heard the call to restoration?

- A. Do not listen to those who say "restoration is past."
- B. Do not follow those who make peace with God's enemies in the name of restoration.
- C. Do you have a clear view of God's work today? Is your heart fully committed to the task?