

REVIVAL

Moving the Church from the Defensive to the Offensive

Let's look at Acts 4:1-20; Acts 5:25-42.

The Book of Acts is a book of Revival. It is a book of Actions, and not just Reactions. The early church was on the **offensive**, not on the **defensive**. They did not seek to **survive**, but to **thrive**.

The early Christians made up their minds to be the **influencer**, not the **influenced**. They made up their minds to **speak out**, not to be **silenced**.

The early Christians knew **what to stand for** and **what not to stand for**.

There comes a time to move the church from the **defensive** to the **offensive**.

And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. 1 Kings 18:1

Elijah had been hiding for about three years now. Jezebel had ordered the execution of every true prophet of the Lord. Baal worship was thriving in the land. Remember, Baal worship involves sexual immorality as a religious act.

Now God is saying to Elijah that the hiding days are over. The **man** of God with the **mind** of God, who has the **message** of God must make an appearance before Ahab, and in fact, the whole nation.

Is this the time for the church to **hide** or **appear**? We must make a decision.

There are many things that can cause the church to be on the defensive today. If we, as the church in Laodicea, are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, spiritually speaking, we will have no courage to mount an offense.

Compromise and sin in our lives will rob us of the **confidence** that gives us **courage**. King David of old knew what it was to feel insecure because of sin. But he also knew the **security** and **strength** of repentance.

[18] If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

[19] But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

[20] Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

Psalms 66:18-20

Let us beware lest we are as the church in Sardis, and are alive in name only.

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Revelation 3:1

Let us beware lest we have a name, but no flame. We leave our “upper rooms” only to return to our hiding, and not to the battle. We do not leave our “upper rooms” to go everywhere preaching the Gospel.

While we loiter, sin and Satan rage on. Let us rather become the militant church, everywhere on the offensive preaching and living the Gospel.

We notice that even after Christ gave the command in Acts 1:8 to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth, it was extremely difficult to get the believers out of their home base. In fact, it took dire means to move them out to obey.

[1] And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

[2] And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

[3] As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

[4] Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Acts 8:1-4

They were persecuted, yet they preached the Gospel. They were imprisoned, yet they preached the Gospel. They were martyred, yet they preached the Gospel. Great miracles were wrought through them, yet the Gospel preaching continued. They had contention and debates, yet they were not bogged down by these.

Why was the church so militant? They had revival.

In the midst of abounding iniquity, let us preach the Gospel. Let us wake up the sleeping consciences of people through the preaching of Christ crucified for our sins.

Let us challenge the compromise and sin of today’s “church” by living and preaching the Gospel of Christ, and His holiness.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Revelation 2:10