

Teaching for 4-30-08

Compelled to Christ

It all comes down to one thing: *Who do you believe Jesus Christ to be?*

The early church turned the world upside down because the believers were absolutely convinced of the supremacy, majesty, and beauty of Jesus Christ. They were compelled to Christ! We are given a clear picture of this through Peter, the man who had earlier given in to fear and self-preservation by denying Christ. Now he stood before an international audience (Acts 2) and preached this truth: *Therefore let all Israel be assured of this; God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.* On this truth alone, three thousand immediately believed and were baptized!

We have just participated in a nationwide call to repentance through *ReignDown USA*. Thousands across this nation and around the world responded to the call, offering their hearts in repentance before this same Lord who so compelled Peter to live in such radical obedience.

It is this lifestyle of obedience, driven by unwavering belief in the supremacy of Christ, that will once again impact our culture. But right now we have to recognize an honest assessment of the challenges that face us because of the poor image of Christians from those outside the Christian community. In the book *UnChristian*, a sobering image is painted of Christians and their current impact on society. It does not appear that our lifestyles are “compelling” people to believe in the truth of Jesus Christ.

Back to the Beginning

For Peter and the early believers, their understanding of the supremacy of Christ was the basis of their fellowship with each other and mission to the lost world. In Acts 2:42-46, we are given a picture of what it meant to be a part of the Church. As they devoted themselves to prayer, teaching of the Word, fellowship, and the Lord’s supper, the response was a sense of deep awe. Their message of Christ was authenticated through miraculous signs and wonders. Every day people were being compelled to Christ and added to the Church. It was not about great programs and effective outreach strategies; it was because they were absolutely convinced of the supremacy of Christ!

Is your understanding of Jesus Christ compelling? Is He so compelling that you are willing to risk all, expend all, and sacrifice all to follow Him no matter what? The Apostle Paul was so compelled. He expressed this in Philippians 3: *But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ...I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...*(vs. 7, 10).

Paul links maturity in the Christian life with this compelling vision of Christ (vs. 15). However, it seems that today most who claim the name of Christ Jesus know little of that compelling vision of the majesty and supremacy of God’s Son. It apparently does not affect their maturity in Christ. In fact, in their book *UnChristian*, David Kinnaman and David Lyons found in surveys that *one-*

third of young born-again believers admit that the way Christians act and the things they say make them embarrassed to be a Christian (Baker Books, pg. 35).

In his book *Christ Is ALL!* David Bryant states that *the “crisis of supremacy” rises inside the Church wherever Christians are paralyzed by a significant shortfall in the way they understand the person of the Son of God, His leadership in the Purposes of God, His distribution of the Resources of God and His honor from the People of God (pg. 183).* We have lost a compelling vision of the glory of God’s Son. *Who Jesus is* has escaped us and been replaced with a shadowy substitute that is not compelling to believers or the world watching us.

Time for Rebirth

It is time for those who claim to be His followers to be reborn to the understanding of who Jesus Christ is in all His glory and majesty. David Bryant quotes from a document from 70 national leaders titled “An Open Letter to the Church”: *Today, the Spirit is increasingly speaking to the church worldwide about our need for a revitalized hope defined by the supremacy of Christ in all things. God is preparing many Christians to be “reconverted” to His Son at much deeper levels in their lives and ministries. Jesus Christ must be lifted up before the Church as never before. The fullness of His reign must be proclaimed with renewed passion to believers everywhere.*

This is a challenge for every one of us who name the Name of Christ. Be honest: Is Jesus ordinary to you? Is He compelling to you—and are others compelled to know Him because of what they see in you? Is growing in the knowledge of Christ something that burns in your heart?

The only thing of this life that will remain beyond the grave is to know Him. Right now the Spirit of God is stirring in many of you, compelling you to know more of Him. He is not a fad or a passing fancy. He is the Supreme Lord of the universe, the Head of the Church. As the title of David Bryant’s book proclaims from Colossians 3:11, ***Christ Is ALL!***

The *Christ Summit* on May 10 is all about raising this standard in our lives and in our churches. That is why Prayer Transformation Ministries has invited David Bryant to come to the Twin Cities—to call us to a renewed vision and commitment to the supremacy of Christ. We desperately need to know and reflect the Christ who *is* compelling.