

#125 “What Christianity Needs”
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Let us make no mistake. "Christianity" or "evangelicalism" is in big trouble. Many people have their ideas of what must change, but their ideas are far too shallow, far too human. So let's cut to the chase and find what God wants in order to bless His true church.

What makes the church grow in number and in health? What makes people want to read their Bibles? What makes truth advance and lies be exposed? What defeats the works of the devil and advances the kingdom of God? Is it a movement? Is it revival conferences? Is it sound doctrine? Is it a new reformation? Is it a return to old reformation truths or discovering some new "truths"? Is it putting Christians into positions of power and influence to turn the tide against prevailing secularism and worldliness? Is it a merging of traditional Christianity with bits and pieces of aspects of other world religions and ideas in an effort to find a central unifying reality? It seems everybody in evangelical circles has an idea about what the church needs. Some ideas are close to Biblical truths, and others are worlds away. So in order to determine who is right and who is wrong in this ongoing conversation, the only hope for the true church is to turn to the road map of the Scriptures. Opinions change, philosophies come and go, and the "in vogue" methodologies change as society and culture changes. Ironically, however, it is a cycle of the same repeated errors. In order to stay away from the treadmill of Satan's endless lies that run through the centuries and change in name only, we must turn to God's Word.

Movements come and movements go. Man can declare a revival, but only God can send one. Reformations change societies, but only God changes hearts. It is the Spirit of God Who is constant. He doesn't come and go, for He is always here and always at work in and around us. We need not look to other religions for something more or something we might have missed. We need not change the gospel or read a new perspective into the Scriptures. We need not seek the opinion of the world as to what will make the church advance. Neither do we need to compromise what the church stands for in order to widen the circle of the "church." What Christianity needs is very simple, and it is how God has always worked and what God always seeks.

Sound doctrine alone is not enough. It is essential, it is important, and it is part and parcel to the work of God Who speaks through His Word to His people so that we can see where we err and where we must grow. But even largely dead churches, as in the case of the church at Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6), can have good doctrine. Sardis had a reputation of being alive, a reputation of standing for the truth in a compromised society. But God says through His Spirit that they were mostly dead. God wanted them to both remember the truth *and keep it*. His issue wasn't as much with their minds as with their hearts. Just because we have a Bible in front of us and just because we hear it preached on Sunday (hopefully), doesn't mean that we are honoring God. So sound doctrine and a return to the Scriptures is part of what is needed, but unless the Spirit gives illumination to our hearts, we have no hope. Truth must be processed in the mind by grace through faith and be appropriated in the heart with the fruit of repentance. Unless God controls us at our

deepest level, we can't expect His help and blessing.

2 Chronicles 16:9 says, "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." God looks today to the same place He has always looked- to the heart. It is our hearts that He is interested in, and those whose hearts are fully devoted to Him will gain the support of our All-Powerful God. It is our hearts, the centerpiece and focus of who we really are, what we really think, feel, believe, and want, that God is interested in. He wants full control by His Spirit, and only hearts which are yielded to His purposes can and will be blessed of God and empowered by God to rightly do His will. God will strongly support those whose hearts are completely His. A divided heart and a double-minded attitude cannot receive the support of God. This is an all or nothing equation. Either we have the strong support of God because we are walking by the Spirit, according to the Scripture, by faith rather than by our own strength, and free from unconfessed sin, or we do not have the support of God because we fail in one or more of these areas.

What the church needs today is what it has always needed, the strong support and blessing of God. So let's not emphasize the talk of movements, the latest so-called revival, or the newest man-deigned "reformation," and let's return to the basics. **What Christianity needs is God, and in order for this to happen, God must have our hearts.** The whole notion of trying to live "Christianly" without the backing and support of God ought to be frightening. But if God is kept at bay from taking full control of our dreams, hopes, desires, and thoughts, then we don't have His blessing. Without His power, we have no power. So the church must recognize that no matter how many books are written, conferences held, and sermons preached, it adds up to nil if we are not pure in heart before our God.

What Christianity needs are the humble few who will lay aside vain glory and give God their hearts, surrendering control and yielding to a faith walk that is led by the Spirit of God according to the sole and ultimate authority of the Word of God. Indeed this is a rare person, but God wants more of these servants. He is asking you today, right now, if you will join His work and join His cause. Perhaps you have known the Lord for a while, but there are things you are keeping back from Him. Perhaps you are afraid of the changes you would have to make, the things you might have to give up should you let Him take control. But it is worth it, eternally worth it beyond measure. It is a very challenging, difficult, and sometimes painful road, but the joy that is available is beyond measure. We will never regret doing things God's way, and we will surely be rich in heaven. *Lord, take our hearts to be vessels of Your will and purpose alone, and thank You for Your promise of strong support to do things of eternal value and things that bring joy to Your heart and glory to Your name. Teach us to live in this way, a way of great eternal blessing, joy, wonder, and awe. In Christ's name, Amen.*