

THE UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM #28

“The Power of the Pulpit”

Part Two

Introduction

This is Part 2 of my message about recovering “The Power of the Pulpit”; a message provoked by some words of warning spoken to Christian pastors, almost 200 years ago by the great American revivalist Charles G. Finney:

Charles G. Finney

“If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it.”

Finney saw the close connection between the power of the pulpit, the condition of Christian people and the politics of the nation.

Charles G. Finney

“If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in great degree.”

In more modern times, Dr. Michael Youssef said it this way....

Dr. Michael Youssef

“As goes the pulpit, so goes the pew. As goes the pew, so goes the nation.”

Look the logic of this in light of our national election.
The nation will go the way of the pew, meaning the Christian voters.
But the Christian voters will go the way of the pulpits they hear from!

Today, our nation is on the brink of a takeover by the sinister forces of National Socialism. It is an antichrist spirit that seeks to literally transform America, as founded, into a socialistic system that will bring upon us the judgment of God.

Theme

So two things have to happen to save America from a socialist takeover:

- 1. Repentance by Christian pastors**
- 2. The Christian pulpits that made America great must rise up and make America great again.**

I. First Things First

A. Many Pastors Need To Repent

REPENTANCE BY PASTORS

- Those who say nothing about politics
- Those who preach wrongly about politics
- Those who agree with the enemies of God and God's word

1. Breaking it down:

a. The last group, those who actually agree with the enemies of God, may not be Christians at all. There are so-called Christian Pastors out there who actually support abortion, gay marriage, and preach that socialism is a Christian concept. Frankly, I hold little hope that these men and women will repent.

b. The 2nd group preaches wrongly about politics: they wrongly misapply the separation of church and state; they say Christians should stay out of politics; some actually believe that Jesus was a socialist.

2. But it is the 1st group is really the most troubling of all; those Pastors who have made a deliberate choice to say nothing at all about politics.

a. And there are many! How do we know? Consider this:

CBN News 9/20/19

90 million Christians in America are eligible to vote, but as many as 40 million fail to vote in Presidential election cycles. And 15 million are not even registered to vote, according to the My Faith Votes website. (Out of 90 million Christians, only 35 million actually vote!)

3. These figures are staggering! And there is only one way this could happen: **most of these people attend churches where the pulpit is silent on the subject of politics.**

a. This is borne out by a Barna survey of American Pastors.

Barna Research

“Why Are Our Pastors Not Preaching the Truth?”

90 percent of surveyed pastors agreed that the Bible does speak to every political issue. But when the pastors were asked if they were teaching their

people about what the Bible says about those issues, only 10 percent of the pastors said they were or would do so.

4. Look at this! 90% say they know the Bible speaks to political issues but they have chosen not to teach on it. Do they not know that the Bible calls this sin!

James 4:17

"Whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, to him it is sin."

5. We have shown you in this sermon series how the nations that have fallen to socialism all have had one thing in common: the pulpits were silent on the subject!

a. Hitler rose to power in Germany on the wings of a backslidden Christian Church.

b. A few were faithful. The great Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer rebuked his fellow German pastors with this:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"Silence in the face of evil is evil itself. God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."

- Silence in the pulpit is evil; to choose not to speak, not to act, is evil!

c. History tells us that as the nation was gradually falling into socialism, German clergymen were limiting their messages to seeker-friendly sermons.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself."

d. The Pastors did not listen: Germany fell to the Fascists; Bonhoeffer was hanged just several days before the liberation.

6. How can this same thing be happening in America? The socialists are poised to take over the government. Why are 90% of our Christian pulpits so silent?

a. Christian researcher George Barna did surveys to find the answer and laid the blame on how American Pastors define a 'successful' church.

Pastors surveyed listed their 5 measures of a successful church:

- **Attendance: (How many people do you have on Sunday)**
 - **Giving: How much money comes in**
- **Number of programs: How busy do you keep your people?**
 - **Number of staff: How many people do you employ?**
 - **Square footage of facilities: How big is your building?**

b. George Barna points out the problem:

George Barna

“Now all of these 5 points of success are good measures except for one tiny fact: Jesus didn’t die for any of them.”

c. Pastor Chuck Baldwin pulls no punches on the problem.

**Pastor Chuck Baldwin
infowars.com 8/11/14**

“The reality is that pastors care more about being successful than they do about presenting the truth. In most cases, they believe if they tell the truth to their congregations, their churches will probably not be as ‘successful’.”

7. It seems the American church has copied the ways of the world in how we pursue success; try to be like who you want to be like. This was the problem with the “Church Growth Movement” of the past 30 years.

George Barna

A few mega church pastors have influenced 1000’s of small church pastors: Pastors read their books (and those of others) about how to create a "successful church" and then they attend "successful church" seminars. So they end up trying to mimic the tactics and strategies which these so-called pastoral role models are teaching.

George Barna

And part of this advice includes avoiding anything that is controversial; they are also encouraged to make salvation as easy for unbelievers to receive as possible; and they are taught to create a church which is the perfect stress free environment for seekers. When researchers ask those pastors what else they

are willing to do to get their people active in the political process, Barna said ‘it’s almost nothing.’

8. I don’t always agree with Pastor Chuck Baldwin’s views; but I do here:

Chuck Baldwin

“It is time for Christians to acknowledge that these ministers are not pastors; they are CEOs. They are not Bible teachers; they are performers. They are not shepherds; they are hirelings.”

Pastor Chuck Baldwin

“It is also time for Christians to be honest with themselves: do they want a pastor who desires to be faithful to the scriptures, or do they want a pastor who is simply trying to be “successful?” Be honest with yourself, Christian friend.”

9. Personal Testimony: I had to make my decision on these issues many years ago. I would not try to copy the model of any mega church pastor to stick with the Apostle Paul.

a. One of the last epistles of the Apostle Paul was his second letter to his spiritual son Timothy; in a sense he was writing his own epitaph:

II Timothy 4:7

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

b. Notice that he didn’t say, “I had a large congregation, we had big offerings, we had a lot of programs, I had a large staff, and we had large facilities.”

c. Paul’s definition of success was fighting the good fight, finishing his course and keeping the faith; not the size of his congregation.

d. Actually, he had only one man left with him.

2 Timothy 4:9-11

Be diligent to come to me quickly; 10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica — Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. *Only Luke is with me.* Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

10. Review: So what have we said so far? If we want to see our nation turn around a big part of it will be repentance by her pastors.

Chuck Baldwin

“Please understand this: America’s malaise is directly due to the deliberate disobedience of America’s pastors—and the willingness of the Christians in the pews to tolerate the disobedience of their pastor. Nothing more! Nothing less!”

Review: So the 1st thing we need is repentance by Pastors
The second thing: We must recover the power of the Christian pulpits that made America great must make America great again

II. Recovering the Power of the Pulpit

A. We Must Repent of the ‘Sin of Forgetfulness’

1. Moses said this to Israel on its entry into the Promised Land:

Deuteronomy 4:7-8

For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?

Deuteronomy 4:9

“Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren...”

2. Time and again in the Old Testament, Israel committed the sin of forgetfulness; she forgot her history and what made her great. Several hundred years after Moses warned the people about the sin of forgetfulness, God spoke this through the Prophet Hosea...

Hosea 4:6

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

3. America has committed the same sin today; even though he was one of our worst Presidents, Woodrow Wilson said one very wise thing:

Woodrow Wilson

“A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we have come from, or what we have been about.”

a. Christian historian David Barton commented on this in his book, “The Role of Pastors and Christians in Civil Government”:

David Barton

“This is true with America today. We have forgotten where we have come from and what we have been about, and this is especially true in the role of the church—of ministers and Christians—in the civil arena.”

- **Some cry out that the Church has never been involved in such things and should not be now**
- **Many Christians have embraced this constricting mentality by adopting a compartmentalized view that allows them to express their faith and values in church but then divorces their faith and values from the political arena**
- **The teachings of the Bible reject this compartmentalized approach and our history proves that previous Christian generations had a different view**

b. These words thundered from the pulpit the Rev. Matthias Burnet, one of the new nation’s many preachers who warned His people...

**Rev. Matthias Burnet
(1723-1783)**

“To God and posterity you are accountable for your rights and your rulers. Let not your children have reason to curse you for giving up those rights, and prostrating those institutions which our fathers delivered to you.”

c. A generation later, in the 1830’s the great revivalist Charles G. Finney preached to people during America’s ‘Great Awakening’ revival:

Charles G. Finney

“The church must take right ground in politics. The time has come that Christians vote for honest men and take consistent ground in politics. Christians have been extremely guilty in this matter. But the time has come when they must act differently.”

Charles G. Finney

“God cannot sustain this free and blessed country which we love and pray for unless the Church will take right ground. It seems sometimes as if the foundations of the nation are becoming rotten, and Christians seem to act as if they think God does not see what they do in politics. But I tell you He does see it, and He will bless or curse this nation according to the course that Christians take in politics.”

4. We modern day preachers have forgotten the role the power of the pulpit played in our nation’s founding. We desperately need history lesson.

B. Alexis de Tocqueville

1. In 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville, a French aristocrat and historian, visited the United States to learn about America’s exceptional prison systems.

a. While he did visit some prisons, he traveled widely and took extensive notes about what he observed in the new land.

2. He was completely won over by what he saw and the result was a book, “Democracy in America”, published in 1835.

a. His first impression of America was its Christian spirituality!

Alexis de Tocqueville

“On my arrival in the United States, the first thing that struck my attention was the religious aspect of the country. The Americans combine the notions of religion and liberty so closely in their minds it is impossible to make them conceive of one without the other.”

3. de Tocqueville spent nine months searching for the secret of American greatness...

Alexis de Tocqueville

“I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers—and it was not there; in her fertile fields and boundless forests— and it was not there; in her democratic Congress and her matchless constitution—and it was not there.”

a. Then he writes where he found it...

Alexis de Tocqueville

“It was not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.”

4. Notice how he connected the greatness of America with her churches and ‘pulpits aflame with righteousness’ to the ‘goodness of America’! Then he (basically) says if the pulpits go bad America will go bad.

5. How have we forgotten the fact that America's Christian pulpits shaped the formation and foundation of our great nation?

C. We Have Committed the Sin of Forgetfulness!

1. We have forgotten that our Thanksgiving holiday was inspired by the Pilgrims...

Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock

In 1620, the Pilgrims established their colony "for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith."

2. We have forgotten that the great city of Boston was founded by a Christian preacher!

Puritan leader Rev. John Winthrop, founder of the city of Boston in 1630 declared that it was established to be “a city set on a hill”, a term used by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

3. We have forgotten that the great **Harvard University**, founded in 1636 by William Harvard, was originally established for the education of Christian ministers.

4. We have forgotten the words of our 1st President about religion and politics:

George Washington

“It is impossible to rightly govern a nation without God and the Bible.”

5. In our hot political war raging right now over the appointment of a new justice to the Supreme Court; the Socialistic voices are slandering her Christian faith and declaring her unfit for the seat. Americans have forgotten a man named...

John Jay

**(Appointed by George Washington to be the first Chief Justice of the SC)
“Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty as well as the privilege of interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.”**

a. Think what would happen today if Chief Justice John Roberts said the same thing!

6. We have forgotten the words of the 2nd President of the United States, spoken in his inaugural address:

John Adams

"I feel it to be my duty to add, if a veneration for the religion of a people who profess and call themselves Christians, and a fixed resolution to consider a *decent respect for Christianity among the best recommendations for the public service ...*"

7. We have forgotten the words of the 3rd President of the United States:

Thomas Jefferson

"Of all the systems of morality ancient or modern, which have come under my observation, none appear to me so pure as that of Jesus."

8. Many politicians today would be afraid to be so bold; many preachers too, sad to say. America's ministers have forgotten that God has called us to speak the truth to power.

D. Speaking the Truth to Power

1. When those in political power sin...

God Sends His Ministers to Confront Civil Authority

- **Elijah confronts Ahab and Jezebel about their sins (1 Kings 17)**
 - **Samuel confronted King Saul about his sin (1 Samuel 13)**
 - **Nathan confronted King David about his sin (2 Samuel 12)**

- **John the Baptist confronted King Herod about his sin (Matthew 14)**

2. Whatever happened to our courage to confront sin and speak the truth to power?

David Barton

“There certainly is no biblical model where God has His ministers remain silent with civil leaders, or about civil issues.”

Summary

Theme

So two things have to happen to save America from a socialist takeover:

- 1. Repentance by Christian pastors**
- 2. The Christian pulpits that made America great must rise up and make America great again.**

III. Concluding With a Question

A. Do We Need a Preaching of Revival or a Revival of Preaching?

1. Church attendance, even before the virus, has been dropping for years.

In 1985, a nationwide survey sampling of 782 adults who had left the church were asked the primary reason for their departure: 42% replied, “Irrelevant sermons”.

A.T. Robertson

“The greatest proof the Bible is inspired is that it has survived so much bad preaching.”

- a. Folk hero humorist Garrison Keillor said this...

Garrison Keillor

“My problem with ministers is that I can hardly bear their sermons.”

One woman said this to her Minister after service:

“Pastor, your sermon was like giving a drink of water to a drowning man”.

- b. It may surprise you that many modern ministers don't agree.

In his book “Quest for Better Preaching”, Edward Marquart tells of an extensive survey where Preachers were asked to rate their Minister’s preaching skill as to: “Excellent”, “Very Good”, “Good”, “Fair” or “Poor”. Over 80% of the Ministers rated themselves as “Excellent” or “Very Good”. But when their members were surveyed, almost 80% replied, “Fair” or “Poor”!

2. Apparently we think we are better preachers than our people think we are; and this is sad because...

3. My personal observation is that God’s people rarely rise above the level of the preaching they hear.

4. So while many today say we need a preaching of revival I believe we need a revival of preaching!

a. My favorite book on the subject is Phillips Brooks’ “The Joy of Preaching”.

Phillips Brooks

“We must find young men as determined to be great preachers as those out in the world determine to be great doctors or lawyers.”

5. Who will rise to this great work?

6. Let me give you the ‘Bottom Line’: If we can recover the power of the pulpit that made America great, we can make America great again.

John Wesley

“Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not whether they be clergymen or laymen, they alone will shake the gates of Hell and set up the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.”

Closing Prayer

OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL SLIDES

Gary DeMar

“There is sin in the Christian camp. Entire denominations support abortion and homosexuality or remain silent, which is the same as giving support. Politicians, many who claim to be Christians, maintain that abortion should be a protected right. They are ‘personally opposed’ to abortion, but they can’t impose their morality on others.”

Gary DeMar

“Many pastors are afraid to lose members and their money if they teach what the Bible says about certain sins. Their sermons are humanistic in that they cater to fallen men and women and their needs rather than God and His laws. We will not change things at the top until we change things at the bottom.”