

"Lawlessness In The Last Times"

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Proverbs 8:13 (KJV) The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

The Prophets foretold of a spirit of lawlessness that would manifest in the last times that would be greater than anything experienced hitherto. There is in this hour a revival of lasciviousness and its deadly allurements are widespread as well as deeply rooted. This disease is covering the entire world with America as its prototype. Sensuality controls the airwaves and the effect is noted in the tremendous amounts of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

The fuel that feeds this disease is nothing other than passion for pleasure and wanton unbridled lust. The carrier that transmits and permits such licentious living is wrought by an absence of the fear of the Lord. I hear all kinds of definitions for the fear of the Lord and many may be correct but the beginning of true fear of the Lord is a smiting fear. This is the fear that is so much needed today and so absent.

In the 9th chapter of Acts we read of the young zealot named Saul that was traveling to Damascus to continue his quest to persecute and torture Christians. But we read of a sudden interruption that spoiled his plans. Saul had been intercepted by Jesus who shined a powerful light all around him and began to bring rebuke to the violent Pharisee. But this encounter with the Master left this hypocritical teacher of the Law trembling beneath a tremendous load of smiting fear inasmuch as to leave him crying out: "what wilt thou have me to do?"

It was the smiting fear of the Lord that left this persecutor of the righteous saying: what wilt thou have me to do! This smiting fear stayed the sin in the life of Saul and smiting fear will stop this flood of lasciviousness today. We have such waves of sin and unrestrained lust today because the fear of the Lord has no place in our hearts. Smiting fear is the beginning work of salvation in our hearts. Paul said to the Philippians: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"! Isn't that amazing? He doesn't say work out your salvation with love and laughter - like we say today - but he says fear and trembling!

The love of God will never turn the heart of a rebellious sinner to God, only the smiting fear of the Lord can! Lasciviousness is rampant today because this smiting fear of the Lord is lying asleep in the closed books of yesteryear's theology. Modern tickle-me doctrines have replaced the proven flesh smiting truths of our forefathers. We want to reap the joy without sowing the tears. Why can the men of our modern culture watch women undressing in private bedroom chambers on television without guilt or conviction when only 30-40 years ago a man would hide his eyes to such conduct? Because 30-40 years ago men trembled in holy fear before the all-seeing eyes of God! Today's culture reeks of the doctrine of "if it feels good do it"! There is no conscience for there is no smiting fear of the Lord.

In the First Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon called: Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. While Edwards was preaching this sermon the people began to weep bitterly and moan under extreme conviction. There was groaning and shrieks and screaming while the man of God preached with fire and anointing. One recalled the moment saying: "I was under such conviction I felt as if I were dangling over the very fires of hell". This smiting fear of the Lord was prevalent in those meetings and the result was a people delivered from the claw of sin! Sin's power lost its control and Jesus Christ claimed the hearts of His beloved. Why? Smiting fear!

Today's ministers seem to lack the fortitude and grit to minister with such fervor and exactitude in fear of offending the weak of heart or the wealthy. The result is today's wave of sensuality and lawlessness. Oh that we would again behold the goodness and the severity of God. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil and if we are ever to be delivered from our promiscuous ways of living we must be gripped by its chilling grasp.

When Peter stood before the Jewish leaders on the day of Pentecost and preached that fiery sermon that pointed out the rulers guilt and shame we read that their hearts were pricked to the point they cried out: "what shall we do?" What caused their hearts to fear? It was the anointed Word of God preached with passion and fire that confronted their wicked hearts. Peter was not worried about offending them. No, he loved them too much to lie to them. He spoke the Truth in love, a confrontational Truth, a pricking Truth, a piercing Truth, and a smiting Truth! This is the missing jewel in the Church today!

The Prophet Malachi tells us that in the last days Elijah the Prophet will come and restore the hearts of the children to the Father. This is not the fleshly Elijah but the spirit therein. John the Baptist operated in the spirit and power of Elijah and his message was repentance. This is the message for the Church today as well. This is the message that brings smiting fear: the smiting fear that turns the hearts of the children to the Father and brings forth - glorious deliverance from sin addictions.