

TIME FOR CHRISTIANS TO AWAKEN

Rom. 13: 11 - 14

Sermon by Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION

1. Subject: TIME TO AWAKEN TO PRESENT DAY CHURCH PROBLEMS
2. In every institution, problems are bound to arise and there is not any way to keep problems from arising as long as there is growth and development.
3. It isn't surprising that we have problems in the church because the church is the family of God -- I Tim. 3:15
 - (1) We have problems in the family, and they don't destroy the family when these problems are met.
 - (2) When we have problems in the church they will not destroy the church if they are not ignored.
 - (3) The quicker you recognize a problem, and the more positively and righteously it is dealt with, the quicker it will be settled.
 - (4) Let us look at some of our present day problems.

I. THE PROBLEM OF INDIFFERENCE WE FIND IN THE CHURCH TODAY

1. The spirit of the age in which we live is affecting the church and it is one of our problems.
2. We have, at the present time, a condition of indifference and tolerance toward everything.
3. Nobody is to have any strong convictions on anything anymore -- if he does he is an EXTREMIST.
4. People in denominationalism are not zealous for the doctrine in their denomination.
5. The spirit of indifference and the spirit of false tolerance of this age is one that "we are alright", regardless of how wrong we are.
6. Too many members of the church are totally lacking in strong religious convictions -- Jude 3.

II. THE LEADERSHIP PROBLEM

1. Many times in a congregation you will find a group dissatisfied with the elders.
2. When this happens, an appeal is made to the "majority rule", ignoring the fact that the New Testament teaches that the church should be under elders -- Acts 20:28; Acts 14:23
 - (1) That the younger should submit to the elder -- I Pet. 5:5
3. Elders, many times, make the mistake of hiring a preacher they know little about, and then turn their work over to him.
 - (1) When they wake up to the fact that he has the church under his control, and they try to get their work back and right their mistake, they find they've got trouble.
 - (2) The preacher then makes an appeal to the inexperienced and thoughtless, the weak and unfaithful, and a faction is built up with a party spirit around the preacher.
 - (3) The results of all this is a situation that will bring many years of trouble.
4. Sometimes you will find a church that has reached a point of saturation in a community.
 - (1) They have baptized about all the people they can baptize.

- (2) This causes the church to get in a rut.
- (3) With this comes a spirit of restlessness, and of dissatisfaction.
- (4) This is a perfect set-up for division.

5. These are all problems that center in leadership.

III. THE PROBLEM OF UNDERCOVER ACTIVITIES

1. Many divisions are caused by men, sneaking around and acting along lines of sabotage.
2. Stirring up a rebellion in favor of false principles and false doctrine.
3. A movement in the church can just go underground.
4. Elders and preachers must ever watch for underground movements -- Acts 20: 28 - 31

IV. THE PREACHER'S AND ELDER'S PROBLEM

1. Any conscientious preacher has his problems.
2. A lot of members of the church make themselves a problem for the preacher.
3. Some members of the church have the wrong attitude.
4. Some think it is the preacher's business to look after them.
5. Some have to have special attention to keep them in a "good humor".
6. Elders have their problems:
 - (1) There is also always some member picking on some good man who is an elder.
 - (2) Elders receive less reward for their work than anybody.

V. THE PROBLEM OF GIVING

1. Too much ambition to accumulate things for our own use, and for our own selfish interests, interferes with the work of the church -- I Tim. 6: 9 - 10; Matt. 13:22
2. Secular things are legitimate in their own place, but the things of the kingdom must come first -- Matt. 6: 33
3. Too many Christians are just "tipping" the Lord a little on the side with their money and time.
4. Our relation to material things:
 - (1) The fullness of the earth is the Lord's -- I Cor. 10:26; Psa. 24:1; 50: 10, 12
 - (2) We brought nothing here, and we can take nothing away -- I Tim. 6:7
 - (3) We are stewards of what we possess -- I Cor. 4:2; Luke 16: 9 - 12

VI. THE PROBLEM OF DISREGARDING SMALL THINGS:

1. Zechariah 4:10 *"For who hath despised the day of small things?"*
2. We live in age that has despised small things.
 - (1) Everybody wants to do things in a big way.
 - (2) Big government, big farms, big stores, etc.
 - (3) In doing the work of the church many think it must be done in a "big way".
3. No one can afford to disregard the small things.

(1) Pennies make dollars; little material things make the universe; doctors cannot disregard small things -- too much of some medicine may kill.

(2) The church had a small beginning.

4. Little things in our own conduct:

(1) Little acts of discourtesy -- I Pet. 3:8

(2) Slightings and slurs with your friends -- Rom. 12: 17; James 1:19

(3) Deception, dishonesty and untruthfulness -- Eph. 4:25

(4) Sour, grumbling disposition -- I Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:14

(5) Failing to consider the rights of others -- Matt. 7: 12

(6) Going around with our feelings "on our shoulders", and looking for someone to "knock them off".

(7) Feeling sorry for ourselves; thinking the world as a whole has mistreated me -- I Cor. 16:13

VII. THE PROBLEM OF THE TONGUE

1. Slander -- Psa. 101: 5; I Tim. 3:11

2. The whisperer -- Rom. 1: 29; II Cor. 12:20

3. Tattlers or gossipers -- I Tim. 5:13

4. Murmuring -- I Cor. 10:10; Acts 6:1

5. Filthy speaking -- Col. 3: 8

6. Angry words -- Psa. 15:1

VIII. THE "SOFTNESS" PROBLEM

1. There is always danger here, when the church fails to emphasize doctrine, that it grows "soft" in its attitude toward error.

2. The church in many places needs to be re-indoctrinated.

3. This means, they need positive hard preaching that will expose and destroy error in every form -- II Tim. 4: 2 - 4; Jer. 1:10

4. Fundamentals need to be preached over and over.