

ROBBING GOD TODAY ?

I have recently been studying the book of Malachi. It is a sobering book of rebuke and challenge.

Israel had been back in their land about 100 years. They had returned with the knowledge of a prophesied golden era; instead they were struggling through a drought, which God used from time to time in judgment. The times were such that Israel had become so blind to their sin they saw nothing wrong with worshipping God with defiled offerings. The priests were divorcing their wives wrongfully and were then rebuked by God for robbing Him in their tithes and offerings.

Once we take our focus off God, and place it on circumstances and things, we can very quickly develop a distorted view of the character of God.

Malachi was looking upon this situation, deeply distressed. The second word of Chapter One should capture our attention. The word "burden" means to have a weight upon you, a deep concern for something, or a passion for something. Malachi was burdened about what he saw in the midst of his people, and in particular amongst the priests.

We are living in an era of tolerance in the church: tolerating and allowing things which were once abhorred. For example the type of amusements and entertainments that Christians pursue, which are clearly not honouring to God. We also see an epidemic of broken marriages amongst Christians.

Where are the people like Malachi, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah who will stand up and be counted and speak out against these things? Where are the Christian men and women who are burdened about the sin that is eroding the witness of the Christian church?

Evangelism is spoken about a great deal in our churches. I have lost count of the seminars and books written on the subject, and yet we are still declining in real terms. Why? Because we don't have men and women with a passion for God like Malachi.

The fact that Malachi was God's messenger indicates that he had an intimate walk with his Heavenly Father. His passion for spiritual things spawned out of this intimacy. He couldn't stand by and watch Israel profane God with defiled offerings.

However, down through history we have had passionate people for the gospel of Jesus Christ. John Knox, the great Scottish reformer, prayed "Give me Scotland or I die". In today's vernacular that would be considered almost fanatical, yet history has shown that such passion can turn a nation around.

When John Wesley and George Whitfield came on the scene in England it was a nation in crisis. Alcoholism was a major problem. The church was more ritualistic than real and conversions were few and far between. The established church appeared unconcerned and somewhat ambivalent about the dreadful plight of the nation. Wesley and Whitfield were burdened about what they were seeing. After trying to stir the established church into action they did the unthinkable and started to conduct open air meetings. They were banned from preaching in their churches and so were labeled "the enthusiasts".

God blessed their vision and soon hundreds and then thousands were responding to the preaching of the gospel. It wasn't easy for them, as at times they were spat upon, food and rocks thrown at them. What kept them going? They were men of the ilk of Malachi, burdened by God and passionate about communicating the Word of God. Revival came to England which turned the nation around spiritually, and helped to prevent a revolution such as what happened in France.

Why? Because two men were willing to speak out. Two men that God had burdened and given a divine passion and vision to reach the lost. We need men and women like this in our churches today so we can turn our nation around for Jesus. Oh that God might burden our hearts.

– CARL CARMODY, EDITOR OF CHALLENGE

PRAISE

As we reflect on this year and the prayer requests sent out we realize how many of those requests have been wonderfully answered. To mention a few :

- The Trezona family and their visa approval for the USA coming through.
- For a vehicle and accommodation for the Trezona family on their arrival into USA.
- For finances to enable the move for the Trezona family.
- For a new Editor to join the work of Challenge. The Newell family will commence ministry with us as of February 2014.
- For required funding needed each month to produce the different editions of the paper.

PRAYER

- Thank you for your ongoing prayer for the ministry. We recognize two things: firstly how much we need your prayer support; and how thankful we are that our Heavenly Father is faithful in answering our prayer requests.
- Please pray for the Australian edition of Challenge as we have experienced quite a few cancellations of late.
- Continue to pray for the different editions of Challenge, that God will use each paper as a seed to bring many into a personal relationship with Himself.
- Please pray for Bob Walker and Carl Carmody as they travel shortly to South Africa [Nov. 19 - Dec. 11]. This trip will involve promotion and development of the paper as well as gathering much needed testimonies to use in the paper.
- Please continue to pray for much needed finances for the various editions. The main hubs that we fund are South Africa, India and Australia.



Photo through vehicle window, South Africa

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MY RESPONSE

Post to: Challenge Literature Fellowship, PO Box 978, Cloverdale WA 6985 or Fax to **(08) 9453 3006**

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