

Current Affairs # 4 — Majesty
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We are continuing this series of messages that we began to tape in Grand Cayman. The purpose for this series is to provide timely commentary on things that are going on in the nation and around the world, specifically as they regard the church. Frankly, it is not my place, nor do I think it is the place of many in the church today, to try to call a nation, a secular nation, back to anything. But what has happened is that the church has become an extension of the political process within the nation, certainly the evangelical church; and the Roman Church, and much of what is called the historic church, is mired in self-destructive behavior. So much so, that there is a clear and obvious vacuum in the leadership of church in the nation, and I think around the world today, because everything seems to be polarized and the church is no exception. In fact, the church has unwittingly allowed itself to become part of this polarization. In the case of the evangelical church in America, it actually is being viewed in the worse extreme of this polarization. It is not just a voting bloc within the American political picture, it is at the extreme end of a voting bloc, in terms of both its support and what it supports, and how it is being viewed by most of the rest of the society. It is viewed as a thing that has sold its birthright for a seat at the political table.

Now, anybody could have seen this happening from years back, when certain ones openly said that their goal in pursuing a political agenda was to have a seat at the political table. Back then, I firmly and adamantly stated that this was a wrong-headed view and it would lead to catastrophe. The reason was that I understand that the church is put in the world to show the world the ways of God, not to take sides in a political debate as to who would rule a nation or any nation. Now, the argument has typically been, “Well, we cannot just sit by and do nothing.” I resented the notion that by presenting the Kingdom of God as an alternative, that somehow we were doing nothing. The misguided views of those who led the church then, and now, has been that only by taking a seat at the political table and by attempting to influence political decisions, could the church be relevant. Such a thing is absolutely rubbish. What the nation needs is not another participant in this deep division that is tearing at the very fabric of the nation. It does not need that; it needs solutions. And these solutions cannot come from any of the wisdom of either side of this gulf. The wisdom has to come from God.

The Kingdom of Heaven, you see, is not heaven itself. The Kingdom of Heaven is the government of God on the earth, seated upon the throne in heaven. So, the perspective that the church offers to

the world should be a perspective that saves the world out of exactly this kind of chaotic behavior and condition into which it has come. No one can doubt that the foundations of everything is currently being shaken, and there is nothing that can arise out of this morass of indistinct thoughts that are primarily designed to emanate or emerge out of the desire for power and rule, nothing coming out of that can restore the stability of any nation, let alone the United States. So for the church to become part of that, in the hope that somehow it can save that, is patently foolish. The fact that anybody would even consider that this is a way to go would show that they are not particularly well-connected to the mind of God or even to the understanding of Scriptures.

Now, they make all kinds of arguments. I think it amusing that now the arguments that used to be about morality, are arguments about the economy. But even when the arguments were about morality, it was not that the morality would be that which came out of a nation and was adopted by a nation; the morality has to be the standard of the Scriptures, which reveal the mind of God. If people do not agree that the Scriptures are the basis on which humans should govern themselves, then there is no basis of consensus. If you argue that any form of behavior is wrong, the question is: What is the standard by which you determine that it is wrong? If your standard is law, which it has come to be, then it is simple. In this form of governance that is called democracy, you change the law.

Homosexuality used to be, under law, wrong. Enough people began to agitate for a change to that and filed a lawsuit heard in the Supreme Court, and presto, the law changed. What was wrong now becomes right. Now, if your view is that what is legal is right, if that is the standard, then everybody has to scramble to adjust their perspectives. If, on the other hand, you take the view that the standard is an eternal standard as articulated in the Scriptures, and that the Scriptures are our foundation for understanding and believing what is right, if that is the perspective, then the argument will have to be either that the Scriptures are wrong or that the Scriptures are being misunderstood or misinterpreted. Now, some have actually attempted to make that argument as it regards the behavior of homosexuality, and it is amusing to watch how they dance upon this high-wire act. At the end of the day, the semantics do not overturn the fundamental issue. The fundamental issue is: What is the purpose behind God's prohibitions of various forms of behavior, not just homosexuality? But this is not the subject that I want to take up today. I am just simply showing you that if there is no standard or if the standard is a legal standard, then all you have to

do in a democracy is to change the standard. If what is legal is right, then when you change the law, you have changed the perspective on what is right.

This has happened to the church. So, now it has refocused its emphasis from what it used to call the moral questions, to now, economic questions. That is like going from the frying pan, as it were, into the fire, because what it shows is that the church has come to rely, not on the provision of the living God for their well-being and security, it has come instead to view that its security is based upon the well-being of a nation. So if the nation's economy is prospering, then they are secure. Now, obviously they are going to say that the nation is prospering because God is favoring the church. Now hold on, because we want to hear what is being said when the nation's economy changes, and as economic cycles go, this is 100% predictable. All it exposes, really, is the duplicity of the church and the unreliability of the church as a witness of Christ—the unreliability of accurately stating eternal principles in time.

We are watching as the erosion of and the dismissal, frankly, of these eternal standards are creating chaos across all the spectrums of society—throughout the entire spectra of human society. It is especially noticeable here in the United States. This past week in American politics we were transfixed as a nation by hearings regarding a nominee for the Supreme Court of the United States and an accuser who came forward, accusing him of attempted rape. It was not a trial, so much as it was a hearing to determine his suitability to sit on the nation's highest court. And of course, predictably, people took sides. The questions were whether the accuser was right and reliable or believable, or whether the judge was right and believable; and therefore, whether or not this was a political effort to sabotage his ascent to the Supreme Court. What was most troubling, however, was how it exposed what was in the hearts of those who questioned both sides of this debate, because it brought out in clear and unmistakable relief, the character of some of the leading figures in the nation. What we saw was the bold, bald, undisguised positioning of the various factors in this debate, according to their known political perspectives. This is chilling for a nation, because what it says is that there is no integrity to any process left in America.

In this climate of cannibalization (not too strong a word at all), the result is a political version of an old theory of the survival of the fittest. I think Darwin, in his book *On the Origin of Species*, announced the theory of the survival of the fittest. This should bring no one comfort, regardless of

your perspective, because what it tells us is, viewed through the lenses of such things as this hearing, we are able to get a close-up view on just how rotten, perverse, debilitated, and unretrievable the most important systems of the nation have come to be. Everything has been coopted. Regardless of your point of view, what should be increasingly apparent to you is that at the basest levels, at the very foundations of this nation, its institutions have become internally hollowed out and are incapable of bearing any weight of responsibility that integrity, honor, truthfulness would demand.

What is lost in the process, you see, is the church's ability to influence any of it. The salt, to quote the Scripture, has lost its savor (cf. Matthew 5:13). It cannot affect anything. At this point, have you noticed no one is even attempting to speak truth into this environment? The church has sidelined itself. The Romans have sidelined themselves by the self-destructive behavior that is now a matter of glaring undeniability. It is no longer a few bad apples. It is an entire corrupt system, an indefensible system that has lost all right, if it ever had any, to speak for God. And the evangelicals, by positioning themselves at the far extreme of political theater, at the political table, it is no wonder that nobody is speaking from the church to these tragic events, that are not unlike when the airplanes were flown into buildings in New York. We stood there in disbelief, glued to our television sets, watching fire consume the superstructure of buildings, resulting then in a total meltdown and collapse. We are in the same posture watching a nation—not buildings in New York now, but watching a nation—and by extension, if you were to deal with all the permutations of specific things happening in the rest of the world, we are watching the dissolving of nations, and we are watching the dissolving of the most powerful nation on the face of the earth.

The Lord spoke to this. I want to read you a Psalm. I warn you ahead of time that this is a troubling Psalm. In fact, it is one that troubled me since I was a young man. When I first read these words, I was troubled because I did not understand. It is the 82nd Psalm, and here is what it says.

Psalms 82:1-8 (AKJV)

¹*God stands in the congregation of the mighty; he [God] judges among the gods.*

[And this is what He says.]

²*How long will you judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.*

³*Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.*

⁴*Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.*

[God now begins to speak about those who are described as “the gods”:]

⁵*They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course [shaken].*

⁶*I have said, You are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.*

⁷*But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.*

[Then, another aside:]

⁸*Arise, O God, judge the earth: for you shall inherit all nations.*

Now, when I read this I was captivated by the statement “*God judges among the gods*” (verse 1), and the further statement, “*I have said, ‘You are gods’*” (verse 6). So naturally, what I did was I looked up the meaning of the word for “god,” and in the Strong’s Concordance the word for “god” is “*elohim*.” For those of you who are interested, it is Strong’s reference 430; it is the word, *elohim*. It is one of the names of God. So when it says, “*God judges among the gods*,” the word for God (who judges among the gods) is the word *Elohim*, and “the gods” that He references is the same word, *elohim*. So, “*Elohim judges among the elohim*.” Well, that was very troubling to me because I remember the statement of Scripture that says, “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD...*” (Deuteronomy 6:5), implying that there are not many gods; there is one God.

The references to God in the Scriptures take on different terms. For example, one of the words for God is the word, *Yahweh*; another word is *El-Shaddai*; and yet another word is *Elohim*. You see, God is too vast a person to be described by one word, so these references to God—*Yahweh*, *El-Shaddai*, *Elohim*—are references to different aspects of the character of God. For example, the word *El-Shaddai* speaks of God as our provider. It refers to a woman who is a nursing mother, so that we get the picture of God taking care of us. The word *Elohim* refers to another aspect of God and it is about God, the Judge. One of the meanings of the word *Elohim* is the word “magistrate.” It is connected to the word “majesty.” Collectively, the term “gods” refers to magisterium or a collection of magistrates. God attributes awe and majesty to that function of God that is a judging or ruling function. So when you speak of kings or queens as “His or Her Majesty,” you are not

talking about their bloodlines, you are not talking about the palaces, perhaps, in which they live, or the manner of their lives. You are talking about the quality of their rule—the way they rule. They rule by bringing out eternal standards: standards that reflect the fear of God; standards that relate to divine imperatives that are brought forth to align human society with divine imperatives—with the way that God says things from heaven.

I began this whole discussion this morning by talking about how there are no standards. So what God was doing [in Psalm 82] was rebuking those who judge in His Name among the nations, and His rebuke was that they had abandoned all the standards of righteousness. They were not acting in any manner that would display the majesty of God in the manner of their rule, and because of that God said, all the foundations of the earth are shaken. When those who have the responsibility to rule righteously refuse to do so, the result is nobody is secure. Everything you trust in becomes volatile. It is not difficult to predict the future based on this principle. Because men and women, whether in the church or in the nation, have abandoned almost entirely any pretense at recognizing divine standards as the basis of society, and because those charged with bringing forth this form of rule have devolved to the convenience of representing and presenting their own mindsets, their own personalized views, because of that, none of the rest of us can rely upon the society's systems.

So, what is the answer? The answer is obvious. I think it fascinating that this particular verse of Scripture ends this way. There is an appeal to Christ. It says, "*Arise, O God, judge the earth: for you shall inherit all nations*" (Psalms 82:8). It is an appeal for Christ to arise within His own Body and become the standard again by which the nations may be aligned, and it speaks of the responsibility of Christ to do so, because God promised Him all the nations of the earth for His inheritance. He inherits the earth through the sons of God. He inherits the earth in the form of His Body. It is time for His Body to arise and be clothed in the majesty of Christ.

Thank you.