

Accidental Pharisees – What We Need Is Another Great Awakening

I just watched a good movie in the theater called **The Great Awakening!** It told the story of a critical turning point in the early days of this country!

The Revolutionary War was over... but there was another battle now being fought between the then non-united states! Disagreement & discord ensued... and the Constitutional Convention convened to try to unite them!

It is said that Benjamin Franklin said, in reference to a half-sun that was engraved on the back of George Washington's chair, **"At this convention, I have often wondered if that sun was rising or setting on this country..."**

It wasn't until the end of the convention, when the US Constitution was signed and the **United States** was born, that he said, **"That sun is rising!"**

I wonder... is the sun rising or setting in our country today? What about in the "Church" today? What about in our church today? Are we united?

When the delegates signed the US Constitution, they did not agree with everything in it... they didn't agree with everyone who signed it... but what they understood was **the need to unite, despite not all being uniform!**

Uniformity & unity are two different things! Uniformity means everything & everyone is the same! That never existed in this country, or in the church!

But **"unity in essential things, liberty in non-essential things, and in all things charity"**, is possible by the grace of God... We've seen it work with this great American experiment... But how? The point of that movie was that it was the widespread proclamation of the gospel... & prayer... that brought it about!

Could it be possible for us to truly be **"one nation, under God, indivisible?"** It won't come from us being uniform... that won't happen... but could unity in the essentials, & liberty & charity for the rest be possible in this country?

And what about in the Church? With all our denominations & disagreements? **How might we think & approach our differences differently?** Maybe we need another "Great Awakening" in the Church, as well as in our country!

The 1st Great Awakening happened as the gospel was unleashed in this country, & as God answered the prayers of the people! The same is possible today... **But our hope must be found in Jesus, & in the God who answers prayer!**

The gospel tells us that we are all in the same place of need & that Christ is

the answer, no-matter who we are! Therefore, it's not about us... being better... being right... having the majority... We have all been created equal... we all sin... we all need a Savior... & Jesus is the Savior to all!

This understanding, & a proper response of prayer, is what puts us in the right posture to receive such an awakening from God! We can't presume upon His answer, but **we can posture ourselves to ask rightly & be ready to receive!**

We don't need uniformity... we need Jesus... we need prayer... and we need unity in the essential things! But this means going to war against:

- 1) **Pride** – **Proverbs 16:18** – ***Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.***
- 2) **Selfish Ambition & Rivalry** - **James 3:16** – ***Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.***
- 3) **Division & factions** – **1 Corinthians 3:4** - ***"I follow Paul," "I follow Apollos"***
- 4) **Bitterness & unforgiveness** – **Matthew 6:15** – ***If you do not forgive others sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.***
- 5) **False teaching & legalism** – **Galatians 3** – ***"Who has bewitched you... Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by the hearing with faith?"***
- 6) **Gossip & careless speech** – **Proverbs 16:28** – ***"A whisperer separates close friends."***
- 7) **Fear & Suspicion** – **Proverbs 29:25** – ***"The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe."***

True & lasting unity is built upon what we have already received in Christ by faith – **Ephesians 4:1-7**

- **Humility**
- **Gentleness**
- **Patience**
- **Bearing with one another** (Grace & Forgiveness)
- **Love**

"Grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift."

We've seen great awakenings take place both inside and outside of the church... It's possible to see it again, b/c with God all things are possible! May we repent of our pursuit of pharisaical uniformity... & seek the unity that Jesus prayed for & the unity that the Church, & countries, are built upon!

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- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____ (Grace & Forgiveness)
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