



table talk

8/23/26

"When A Christian Nation Forgets God"

Lutzer's Seventh Thesis: When our nation forgets God, we must exalt the Cross.

Bonhoeffer's theme was simply: "CONFESS! CONFESS! CONFESS!" The movement he led was often referred to as "The Confessing Church" – a confession that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:11).

This is what he said on July 23, 1933. If we stand upon Christ as the Rock, "the church will not be taken from us. The name of the church is DECISION. The name of the church is DISCERNING OF SPIRITS. Come, you who have been left by the church. Let us return to Holy Writ [the Bible], let us go forth and seek the church together. For the times, which are times of collapse to the human understanding, may well be for her a great time of building. Remain the church. CONFESS! CONFESS! CONFESS!"

The day after Hitler had been installed as Chancellor of Germany (January 1933), Bonhoeffer delivered an address via radio to the nation. When people idolize a leader, "then the image of the leader will gradually become the image of the 'misleader.' Thus the leader makes an idol of himself and mocks God." Before the last sentences could be broadcast, Bonhoeffer's microphone had been mysteriously turned off.

"Bonhoeffer warned that if the church should ever substitute one Lord for another, if the cross of Christ was replaced by any other cross, the Gospel would be betrayed and the church judged."

Loved Ones, my concern is not that a Hitler could arise in America, though it certainly could happen without God's gracious mercy. My concern is that anything that replaces God or His Word in our society opens the door to judgment. Whether it has to do with doctrine, laws or civility.

Bonhoeffer said, “It is becoming increasingly clear that what we are going to get is a big, popular national church whose nature cannot be reconciled with Christianity, and we must be prepared to enter upon entirely new paths which we shall have to tread.” (August 1933)

Loved Ones, throughout most of America’s history, Christianity has had the “home field advantage.” In spite of all our sins and mistakes, the church, or at least part of it, would call out society for her evils and mitigate our worst behavior. For all our flaws, we were still the best place in the world.

But we are living in a “post-Christian” America now. We are following the path of post-Christian Europe at an alarmingly rapid pace. Don’t be deceived. We are in a struggle for the survival of the message of the Cross of Christ in this increasingly hostile culture.

In the days ahead, we may find ourselves in the same place as the early church. “With no political base in the Roman government, without any majority in the culture, the Gospel changed the spiritual and moral climate of the Roman Empire. Christianity competed with paganism and, for the most part, won the hearts and minds of the populace. Without freedom of religion, without a media presence, and without the ability to redress the wrongs against them, the Christians discovered that the Gospel had the power to change individuals, families, and the culture.”

Pastor Lutzer nails it: The church can only live and breath at the cross. without it there is no life and no reason to exist!

I love you,
Pastor Stephen