

Ministry Analysis and Confession

Aug 22

Dan McLeod sermon at Milltown Convention 2023

[First part not available]

... There's joy in heaven when a sinner repents. Jesus went on to say, he that doeth evil hates the light, avoids the light, doesn't want his evil to be exposed. But he said, he that doeth truth, a person who wants the truth, wants what is true and right and real, looks for light, looks for revelation, looks for exposure and confronts his or her own secrets and exposes them to the light. He said that his deeds may be manifest, may be made known So that we expose ourselves to God and to others that God lets us know that we need to expose ourselves to. So that it can be obvious that we are walking with God.

Nicodemus was a man who wanted to follow Jesus. He wanted to be born again. Jesus had talked to him about being born again. He wanted that. He realised that this was a teacher who had come from God. He realised that there was great miracles and power in this name, in this man. He wanted to follow him. We read on later on that he began to do that. At first maybe in a kind of a secret way, in a quiet way but eventually more and more openly.

I've been aware over the years that there is power in coming to the light. I think of some people over the years who have exposed some things to me. I don't remember asking them to do that. Somehow, they felt that they needed to be open to somebody about what they were working through. Somehow, they dibbed me in. I'm talking about people who are part of our fellowship. One lady told me about how she had been addicted to painkillers. Sunday morning meeting every week; Wednesday night bible studies; no one knew she was addicted to painkillers. Another man came to me and revealed that if it wasn't for his faith in Christ he would be living a homosexual lifestyle. He felt like he couldn't do that because of his faith in Christ. He said that was his struggle, that was the flesh that he had. There have been others through the years who revealed things.

We aren't told that we need to reveal everything to everybody, we aren't told that in the scriptures but we are told to confess our faults to one another. There may be times, may be situations, where it is totally appropriate for us to confess some things to one another. It is hard to do. It is like confronting something in your own self. It is a challenge to do.

I think about Adam and Eve. The Lord had told them to not partake of this one tree. They did it anyway and their eyes were opened. The light revealed that they were naked. That is exactly how it happens for us, not so much from eating from a tree but from other things we come up against in life where we know it is the wrong thing to do but there is something about it that we really want, we think it is going to give us something, give us some kind of knowledge or give us some kind of experience that we haven't had before that we would like to experience. God turned some light on us and then it's really important what happens next. It is really important that we come to the light, or we stay in that light or go to more and more of that light.

I don't understand much about this bit of Genesis 3 about Adam and Eve: They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. God was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. I have a hard time visualizing exactly what that would have looked like. I don't know if they could see him because it just says they heard the voice but they hid themselves from his presence. The Lord God called unto Adam in v9 and said unto him where art thou? Where are you? That's a really important question for us. Where are you? And how we respond to that is really important. God shines his light and this is an invitation. An invitation to come forward and to reveal where we are and to not hide that from God and from others.

For those of you who aren't part of our fellowship, we'd like to be really open with you about everything, about our fellowship, I say we and all of us in the ministry. We don't want to hide things that you need to know. We don't know everything ourselves, but we don't want to hide the things that you would need to know. One thing that I will tell you that has happened to us this year as a fellowship and that is that there has been a string of revelations about people in our fellowship, very embarrassing revelations about some people's personal lives and the way they treated others. We are dealing with that as a fellowship. We are working our way through that. Like someone said, it's not a tragedy, well, it's not a mark against any organisation that they have people who do

wrong things. It's a mark against any group of people if they have people with wrong things and they don't deal with it in a proper way.

It's not a surprise that human beings are sinners. That's what we are. Unfortunately, we haven't all handled it all well, these revelations, because we are sinners. We make mistakes, and then how we handle those mistakes we make more mistakes. I was reading in the Old Testament there are some times when OT prophets who were facing this crisis among the children of Israel, among the Jews, these crises I should say. They prayed to God, they confessed their sins to God in an open, well sometimes it seems maybe in private and sometimes in an open public way. It wasn't always Ezra Nehemiah and Daniel or others who did better and some others I haven't found. They told in some of those prayers, confessions to God, that they had sinned and they talk about others who had sinned as well.

I'm not quite sure what to do with that. I feel like we ought to be open as a group about what we are struggling with. That we as a ministry need to be really open about our own faults so there can be joy in heaven over our ministry, instead of disappointment. A lot of us have felt a lot of feelings, a lot of feelings of disappointment, sorrow, shame and guilt about sometimes how we as individuals have acted and sometimes about the actions of other people.

I think about a time, 8 years ago or so, I was temporarily in another state. A lady came to me and told about a man in the meetings we were having, a man who was attending those meetings, who had harassed her and abused her for years. She asked us to confront him and do something about it. I didn't know what to do. I talked about it a little bit with some other ministers there. They felt like she was kind of an unstable, difficult person to deal with. We ended up doing nothing.

It shouldn't be a surprise to us that people are unstable and difficult when they are wounded. When they cry out to God, He hears that and He would love it if we would be as sensitive to that as He is, as responsive to that as He is. We want to do a better job about that. We haven't done a very good job about hearing the cries around us and we want to do better about that. I want to do better about that.

So much of what we have heard about is about us brother workers, us guys, ministers, has been really disappointing. Sometimes we haven't respected other people's marriages. Sometimes we have looked lightly on our calling, sometimes we have, well the truth is that God has called

some of us to be single. I don't know if He called all of us in the ministry to be single. There were married ministers in the scripture. We have committed in recent years to be single and I can't say that God has revealed to me that there is some young lady that I should be married to so it seems like I am supposed to be single, at least for now, and I haven't done well at accepting that. At least for the time being I am single. That singleness or marriage is a gift from God, we read in I Corinthians 7. Every man has his proper gift of God, to be married or to be single. There are gifts involved in each of those. Sometimes I haven't looked for the gifts that there are in the situation God has me in.

One thing, young people that have been damaged, there has been trust damaged in our relationship with the people in our fellowship, between the ministry and what we call the friends, the believers, people who are believing in Christ and wanting to live the truth. Sometimes we in this ministry have damaged that trust by the way that we have acted. We have been demanding about our time in your homes, instead of being servants. That has eroded trust. I realise that there has been some trust damaged in the last few months but there has been trust damaged for many years. I have heard it all through the years.

Those are some things that God is shining a light on. It really matters how we respond to that, it really matters what we do next, that we come to the light, that we confess about where we are. When the Lord God spoke to Adam and Eve He said where are you? He is asking us that same question, where are you? He wants us to be honest about that first of all, where we are, and He wants us to be honest about where we are going.

When God made a covering for their nakedness, one thing about the light it not only exposes our faults, our mistakes, it exposes God's provision for our mistakes, God's provision for our thirst. There are people who are hungering and thirsting for righteousness. People who have even left our fellowship because they couldn't in good conscience stay. We read in the scripture there are people who leave the believers for several reasons. We also read that they might leave because they were not of us, they were not believers, they were anti-Christian. We also read that people might be consumed if we bite and devour them. It is not necessarily that they want to leave but because they have been bitten repeatedly they end up getting devoured and they are no longer there, no longer with us.

[Story about a spring flowing with water in the Everett area. All sorts of people, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, come to get the clean pure water that they have heard about, because they are thirsty and they want to get clean.]

I wouldn't have known about that water except someone told me. I wouldn't have known about Jesus except someone told me. Down through the years I have found that there is water there. There have been a lot of times where I have been thirsty. There are a lot of times where I wished He would give me more water or maybe different water. He has given water. We can go to Him. There is water there. There is water for people who are thirsty. There is water for people who need to be clean. Let's take advantage of that. The light is revealing that for us. Let's focus on Him, focus on that relationship that we can have with Him that will help us to keep taking steps into the light, experiencing a little of the joy that there is going to be in heaven because there's sinners who are turning away from what they have been.