

Call to Obedience #227
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The new gods are balance and tolerance, consisting of the mixing
the black with the white, and the cold with the hot.

The Divine "No!"

By Reimar Schultze

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3).

Psalm 1 in my thinking is the most precise, the most down-to-earth, the most comprehensive, the most practical, and the most representative of all the 150 Psalms. Psalm 1 is the pattern for godly living -- the Sermon on the Mount of the Old Testament.

Now, the first thing that this master Psalm tells us is who not to associate with. In short, Psalm 1 begins with a negative, with a divine "No!" Godly living begins with a divine "No." In his doctrinal treatise, the Holy Bible, God puts the "No" before the "Yes." In God's eyes, we cannot have the "Yes" until we first accept the "No."

We cannot be planted by the rivers of water, by the rivers of blessings, until we have pulled away from the rivers of corruption, of bad company, of selfish desires, and ungodly habits.

The man in Psalm 1 who is "Blessed" is first described according to the things he does not do. Hence, you cannot and will not be blessed until you fully and joyfully embrace the negatives of God with the same enthusiasm as you reach for the positives. You cannot engage until you disengage. You cannot say yes to something unless you first say no to something else.

Our trouble is that we have taken the "No" out of our religion. Hence, we try to engage the power of God without ever having disengaged the pull and influence of the world.

No wonder we live in a world of "make believe," going nowhere -- ever talking about how God is going to do a great thing here and there, but never seeing it -- ever propping up our religious language with big talk of revival here and there, and yet, the heres and theres are as illusive as the mirages in the Sahara desert.

We Have Not Disengaged!

Everything in contemporary Christianity is yes, yes, yes, and the "no's" of God, the negatives, have become our enemy and a threat to our complacent lifestyles.

Indeed, it is true that there is a "Divine Yes." Jesus is God's "Divine Yes." But this "Divine Yes" told his disciples to go everywhere, preaching the "Divine No" of repentance in order to pave the way for coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, the "Yes" of God (Mk. 6:12).

Again, in God's divine plan, the "No" preceded the "Yes." The "Yes" is meaningless without the "No." The "Yes" cannot be understood without the "No," as the right cannot be understood without the left, the up without the down, the high without the low, nor the strong without the weak.

Contemporary Christianity says "Yes" to everything and "No" to almost nothing. To her, most everything is acceptable if kept within the framework of "Remember, God loves us." So, she says yes to bad company, yes to divorce, yes to fornication, yes to adultery, yes to homosexuality, yes to debt upon debt, yes to disobedience, yes to lying and cheating, yes to

Hollywood, yes to dance, to card playing, to gambling, to worldly dress codes, to soap operas, to rock and jazz, to petting, dating, and premarital sex; yes to children carving their names on school desks and in spraying graffiti on the walls of restrooms, and yes to talking back to school teachers and others in authority. Contemporary Christianity says yes to conformity to the world, to her sounds, to her tastes, to her smells, to her entertainments, and to her lifestyles.

Contemporary Christianity says yes to being prayerless, undisciplined, unreliable in church attendance, and sacrificial, consistent servanthood.

Contemporary Christianity does not want to be negative. It does not want to draw lines. It does not want to polarize. It neither wants to be judgmental nor appear to have a "holier-than-thou" attitude. It believes it cannot and will not win the world without saying "Yes" to the world and its toys.

Modern Christianity does not want the gospel of repentance, for there is nothing to be repented of. Her gospel does not include a leaving something to get to something else, but a coming to something else while taking a lot of the wares of the old life with it to have them "sanctified."

Contemporary Christianity does not want to be radical. It does not want the radicalism of Jesus, John the Baptist, Jeremiah, David, Moses, or Noah. **Hence, this kind of religion fears and hates holiness more than sin.**

This religion worships two gods: the god of tolerance and the god of balance. Tolerance is the result of mixing black with white, and balance is the result of mixing cold with hot. Consequently, this new faith results in a grayness and lukewarmness, the very thing that Jesus will spew out of his mouth (Re. 3:15,16). Yet, this religion "tolerates" no lines of distinction. Anyone who draws them is cursed. Don't get caught up in this tolerance/balance frenzy. Obey God and he will bless you.

Yes, the man characterized in Psalm 1 draws lines. He is first described according to what he does not do. My friend, can you come up with a list of dozens of things you cannot and will not do, of dozens of places where you will not go? Do you draw lines? Are they clear? Are you truly disengaged from the gray and the lukewarm so as to drink of the springs of living waters that bring forth fruit in their season?

True Religion Begins with a Divine "No!"

Our faith began with Abraham, who is the spiritual father of us all, and the first thing God told him was to separate himself from family and country. This is a divine "No." Before Abraham could be rooted by the springs of life abundant, he had to disengage. God sent him so far away from his family and country that birthday parties, weddings, and funerals became impossible for him to attend.

When God gave the first laws to the children of Israel, he loaded them with nine divine "No's": "Thou shalt not...", "Thou shalt not...", "Thou shalt not...", etc..

Disengage, my friend. Disengage from the world, disengage from the gray; let all be pure white. Disengage from the lukewarm; for as long as we meddle in the gray and in the lukewarm, we have no hope for revival. Instead, engage in God Almighty. Engage in the life of God, of his love, and of his power.

Bill Bright, in his excellent book The Coming Revival, states along these lines that we must cease supporting the immorality makers by avoiding movies, videos, television programs that patronize lust and sex, and we must return to the basic Bible values of our founding fathers.

If we raise our children without "No's", we raise them for hell. If we preachers declare to our church people a gospel void of "No's", we also prepare them for hell, and their blood will be upon our hands on Judgment Day.

Jonah went into Nineveh, and he preached the divine "No," and the whole city had the greatest revival in the history of mankind. We will not have revival without the divine "No" -- we never will! This is why God told John the Baptist to preach repentance; this is why Jesus preached repentance, and that is why he told his disciples to do likewise. A minister who does not preach the divine "No" is deceptive, seeking men's favor, and is not a servant nor a disciple of the Lord but of the devil himself.

Peter preached the divine "No" on the day of Pentecost. When people asked him what they should do, his first word was "Repent..." (Ac. 2:38).

The church was born out of and built upon the divine "No," and she was sustained in godliness through the divine "No" alongside the divine "Yes." You and I cannot live godly lives without the divine "No" standing next to the divine "Yes."

Yes, "Blessed is the man that walketh not...that standeth not...that sitteth not..." My friend, these negative actions are the gateway to a blessed life. Actions must come first -- actions of separation. God will then help us with our thought life, as we see in the next verse:

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

The consequence of that thought life and that prior separation will be that we shall have life abundant; for we "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Hence, if your life lacks power and joy, begin by examining your actions before you get lost in your attitudes. Examine yourself to see if you have observed the "No's". For some, the victorious life will not come by going to another dozen conferences on the deeper life, but by simply clearing out the books, magazines, and music in the home that quench revival fires. For others, their only barrier to victory is neglect of being aggressive toward the television with all its filth. To some women, the victory that has eluded them for years through reading Christian books is in simply clearing the closet of all the dresses that expose too much and cover too little to the grief of the Holy Spirit. To some men, the victory is not in the prayer breakfast, but in getting rid of hobbies that take more money than their tithe and more time than their praying.

Oh, dear friend, perhaps your Christianity is not rooted in the divine rivers of life simply because you try to begin with a thought life while ignoring the divine "No's" -- the actions that are the first steps to the knowledge of God. So please, heed the call of God: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Co.6:17).