

SUBJECT: Touch Not The Glory

SCRIPTURE: Numbers 4:1-15

From the sermon file of Dr. Doyce H. Nolan

INTRODUCTION

How many of you like banana pudding? Our son has had a continuous love affair with banana pudding since he was a child. When the family gets together his mother always prepares a banana pudding. It has been a standard policy that any banana pudding left over Phillip carries it home with him. His three sisters have had a continuous love affair with aggravating him by reaching for that last bit of banana pudding. He always makes one statement; "Touch it and die." Of course our son is only kidding.

God made this statement to Adam in the Garden of Eden. (Gen. 2:16-17)

Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. God wasn't kidding! To die carries the meaning of separation. The moment Adam and Eve ate the fruit of that tree they died spiritually!

God makes this same statement to Moses. (Num. 4:15)

And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them; but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die.

When God was ready for Israel to move to another place He gives instructions to Moses concerning the transporting of the Tabernacle. Aaron and his sons were to wrap and pack everything used in ministry and the sons of Kohath was to do the moving of the holy things with a stern warning that if they touched any of the holy things they would die. The sons of Kohath was allowed to touch the coverings, but not the things covered, on the penalty of physical death. God inflicted death more than once for disobedience.

- (I Sam.6:19) And He struck down some of the men of Beth-shemesh because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. He struck down of all the people, 50,070 men, and the people mourned because the Lord had struck the people with a great slaughter. (ASV)
- (II Sam. 6:6-7). But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. 6:7 And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God. (ASV)

So, dear friends, God has the right to send spiritual or physical death for disobedience, especially when we tamper with His glory!! The fear of my heart is that the 20th century church has lost reverence for God! We are touching holy things, and there is but one recourse for God, spiritual or physical death!

In our 37 years as pastor and wife, Ada and I have witnessed actions and attitudes of people within the local church far removed from New Testament Christianity! We have witnessed God's Word being ignored and wrongly interpreted to suit some people, situation or circumstances within the church. Worship services becoming more and more a monument to man's prideful reality then God's spirituality! People so busy doing church work that honor and respect for God is forgotten! The fear of my heart is that we have become so busy that we have been blind to the fact that God is in the process of slowly removing His blessings and glory from the church!!

As we approach the door of the 21st century we need a revival! We need a revival of God's Word in faith and practice and church discipline! We must remain obedient to God's Word and God's leadership at any cost. We need to stop patting ourselves on the back, taking credit for what God is doing within in the church!

When we stand and sing "We Are Standing On Holy Ground" we need to realize that Holy Ground is dangerous ground!! God works in the midst of His church that He will be glorified. Don't Touch The Glory Lest You Die Spiritually! We are on dangerous ground when we touch His glory in four areas if ministry:

1. The Word of the Lord. (1-2)
2. The Work of the Lord. (3)
3. The Will of the Lord. (4)

4. The Wonder of the Lord.

I. THE WORD OF THE LORD (1-2)

And the Lord spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 2 Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers. We need to understand that when God calls a man to lead His people, He speaks to and through that man to the people. He spoke to Moses concerning.

Israel's Conduct And Commitment (Duet. 4:1-2)

"Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgements which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish anything from it, (diminish = Means to reduce in degree of importance) that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

To enjoy the Promised Land the Israelites had to bring glory to God by obeying His commands. Moses assures them that God's Word is complete and sufficient for providing for their needs. There is nothing they must add to nor take away from God's Word. Don't Touch The Glory Or You Die Spiritually! ..

1. There are Many Churches Dying Spiritually From Touching God's Word.

The Bible is not an optional guidebook for the Christian life and for the operation of the church. Adding to and diminishing God's Word to suit our situation has become a big, big problem in our day!

Illustrate: A deacon, recently shared with me that scriptural qualifications of a deacon was only to be met for him to be ordained, after ordination they did not apply to his character afterward! This was decided by the body of deacons!

- a. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have no other God, nor make images, nor swear, you must keep the sabbath day holy, honor father and mother, thou shalt not kill, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor lie, nor covet what belongs to your neighbor. We just ignore these as old hat. But God says, Touch Not The Glory!
- b. The Tithes Of The Lord (Mal. 3:8) Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, How have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. We change this to justifying the reasons why we can't give to God. Touch Not The Glory!
- c. The Command To Witness (Acts 1:8) But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you; ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. We change this by convincing ourselves that a silent witness is more effective than a verbal witness of the gospel. At least, we don't feel so embarrassed when we see it that way. Touch Not The Glory!
- d. The Qualification Of Deacons (Acts 6:3) Wherefore, brethren, look among you for seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. When we touch God's glory we change this to electing deacons according to their seniority in the church, who their relatives are, the amount of their contributions or the amount of their influence they have in the church. Touch Not The Glory!
- e. The Selection of A Marriage Partner (2 Cor. 6:14) Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness. We change the command not to be unequally yoked in marriage with an unsaved person to say that it is best not to but you can marry them and win them to the Lord later. Surely love takes precedence over the Word of the Lord because even God is love. Touch Not The Glory!
- f. The Assembling For Worship (Heb. 10:24-25) Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. We change this to a matter of convenience rather than conviction. I will worship when it is convenient and no more! Touch Not The Glory!

2. God's Word Is Eternal And Sufficient For Life's Circumstances.

- a. The Word of God is eternal and just as sufficient to instruct us in the ways of righteousness in our day as it was in the days of Moses! It is sufficient for all matters, pertaining to our life. We glorify the Lord when we listen, learn and obey the Word of God. We are not to pick and choose, take or leave but be obedient to the Word of God. Touch Not The Glory In The Word Of The Lord Or You Die Spiritually!!

II. TOUCH NOT THE GLORY IN THE WORK OF THE LORD. (1 Cor.15:58)

"My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord " Imagine! The God who created the universe, the world, and you and me invites and allows us to be involved in His work!! BUT:

1. We Remove The Glory Of The Lord When:
 - a. We take credit for what we do for our own satisfaction.
 - b. Refuse to get involved in what God is doing.
 - c. Try to work for the Lord in the flesh.

The work of the Lord is too important to revolve around personality conflicts, individual agendas, and power structures. Sometimes it seems that all the work you do just runs aground. Sometimes it seems that it is useless to continue doing something, which seems ineffective or unappreciated. What did Paul say?

1 Corinthians 15:58. *"My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord "*.

2. Four Golden Links In A Chain.
 - a. If you do something for the Lord at the prompting of the Lord through the strength of the Lord for the glory of the Lord, you can be guaranteed that you will be rewarded by the Lord and the Lord will be glorified. That is, after all, why we work for the Lord, so that He will be glorified. Jesus said,
 - b. Matthew 5:16. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven" Are you working for the Lord? If not, why not? Isn't He worth glorifying? The Bible says
 - c. 1 Peter 2:12 "Having your conversation (lifestyle) honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" . God is working through us to accomplish His eternal purposes. Touch Not The Glory In The Work Of The Lord Or Die Spiritually!

III. TOUCH NOT THE GLORY IN THE WILL OF THE LORD. (4)

This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things.

1. God Alone Knows What Is Best For Our Life.
 - a. There is glory in the will of the Lord because He knows what is best for us in life. All we have to do is cooperate with the Lord in the matter of His will for us.
 - b. Eccl. 12:13. The wisest man in the world, Solomon, wrote these words: *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandment: for this is the whole duty of man"*.
2. We Have Not Been Saved To Ignore God's Will.
 - a. It is God's will that you serve Him in and through His church! God knows exactly how to use your life most effectively for His kingdom's work because He knows your spiritual gifts. It is important that His children do what He wants us to do. The scripture says: Philippians 2:13 "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure"
3. Are You Rejecting God's Will For Your Life?
 - a. Are you rejecting His working in your life because you have chosen to go your own way and do you own will. You take the glory of the Lord out of the will of the Lord when you choose not to obey Him but do what you want to do with your life. Don't Touch The Glory In The Will Of The Lord!

IV. TOUCH NOT THE GLORY IN THE WONDER OF THE LORD.

Of all the false gods and religions in the world, none has every accomplished what Jesus did for us in obtaining our salvation. When we brag about anything other than His sacrifice for our sins, we take the glory from the wonder of the Lord.

(Ephesians 2:8, 9) In writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul said "For by grace are you saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast".

(Galatians 6:14a) Paul wrote, "But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" We take the glory from the wonder of the Lord when we :

1. Brag about how we are building the church.
2. Presenting an easy believism gospel that requires no repentance of sin.
3. Take for granted that God is going to bless us.

Church, we are not to touch the glory of the Lord in boasting about anything other than what Jesus has done for us.

CONCLUSION:

Unsaved person, you are desperately without hope when it comes to being spiritually alive. The Bible says you are dead in your trespasses and sins and unless you repent of sin and receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you shall die in that state and spend an eternity in hell for your rejection of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Christian, you are not to touch the glory of the Lord as He reveals Himself through His Word, His works, His will, and His Wonder! Touch Not The Glory, Lest Ye Die!!

Wherever the camp of Israel went, the tabernacle of the Lord went with them, and care must be taken for the carriage of it. Wherever we go, we must see to it that we take our religion along with us! We should appear beautiful before men, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

It is time for you to look into the face of Jesus with confession and asking forgiveness for touching the glory in times past and hindering the Lord's work in the church! Do it!