

RESTORATION OF THE FALLEN

by Shaun Kearney

The casualty rate among the ministry is unquestionably high. The system creates its own problems because it functions outside the boundaries of God's grace. The consequential outcome that these fallen men create, is tragic for all concerned.

One can almost feel the pain that spouses, and their immediate families, suffer. Added to their spiritual shame is the psychological and financial stress. These can be very considerable. Our prayers go up to the throne of grace for victims, who have to suffer consequences, caused by the unbridled passion of the perpetrator. The original state of the offender was one of living union with the head.

Often the fall is the result of a relationship built on service and not on separation to holiness.

The way back though always difficult, but not impossible. "The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from all sin."

Let us see the process of restoration from a Bible perspective.

Restore (Verb). To bring back to its original condition.

Restorer (Noun). Someone who restores.

Restorative (Adjective) is a process for restoring health and vigour by good treatment.

Restoration (Noun). The act of restoring.

Restitution. Returning something or someone to its lawful owner.

Reconcile (Verb). To re-establish a relationship after an estrangement.

Reconciliation (Noun). The settlement of an estrangement for the purpose of peace.

1 Timothy 5:20 "Them that sin rebuke before all that others also may fear."

John 16: 8 "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement".

Reprove: "elegcho" Greek. Appears 7 times in New Testament and means to rebuke; to bring to shame the person reprovved; to convince; to tell one's fault.

Open sin must be dealt with openly. Elders are to be rebuked before all. The reason being, there is less excuse for them than any other man. If the sinner remains unrepentant, then fellowship must be denied, because he will, contaminate other members. A little leaven will leaven the whole lump.

The purpose of disciplinary action is to restore the offender TO THE LORD!

The means by which this is accomplished is through confession, repentance, forsaking the sin, and where possible restitution. The

outcome of this action will result in the offender being completely forgiven and returned to the fold.

The order is as follows: People must first be restored to the Lord. God restores people to Himself, not back to a position or pulpit, the place from whence they fell.

The goal of most clergy who fall morally, is to get into another pulpit as soon as possible.

The problem can always be traced to a relationship built on the wrong foundation; service instead of holiness. True restoration is to a Holy God, against whom we have sinned. The consequences of moral failure bear their own reward. The wages of sin is death.

"They are addicted to a position, instead of being committed to a person, the Lord Jesus Christ"

"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths." 2 Tim. 4:1-4 (NIV).

If leaders claim they are worthy of double honour, then they must in turn accept rebuke for public moral failure, and seek forgiveness from that section of the body they have betrayed; then the body must lovingly receive them back into fellowship.

The following incident took place during a conference I attended with 400 ministers who were part of a particular grouping, when I was living in the USA.

During a break between sessions, a brother drew to my attention that the minister sitting next me was a very high profile person, who had been stood down for moral failure a few months earlier. Nobody seemed to know whether the situation had been resolved satisfactorily or not, apart from a handful of senior pastors. The problem was that if the individual had repented we needed to know, so that he could be received into fellowship again. The matter was never addressed, and the senior brethren never did discuss it. That is absolutely unacceptable; not only for the other ministers, but for the person concerned. What should have happened then? A word of cleansing should have been pronounced, so we could respond accordingly.

God forgives the truly repentant absolutely, but He will not alter the consequences of their actions.

The root cause of much of what we see, are the unscriptural religious systems, that allow one man to have charge over a group of God's people. It is a recipe for every kind of corrupt moral deviation.



The clergy, to protect their system, will try to supervise and deal with immoral behaviour of their own members, behind closed doors, if at all possible.

Many times they cover-up the sin of a particular member, keeping the saints in that particular communion in the dark. Should it become public, in most cases they will stand the offender down for a few months, give them a slap on the wrist, and the next thing you know, they are back in a pulpit again.

If the wrongdoer had a successful pulpit ministry he will soon be snapped up by any one of a number of denominations. Often, offenders will actively set about looking for another opening. They will not rest, even if it means going abroad, until they find what they want. You see, they are addicted to a position, instead of being committed to a person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"And so I solemnly urge you before God and before Christ Jesus, who someday will judge the living and the dead when he appears to set up his Kingdom, to preach the Word of God urgently at all times, whenever you get the chance, in season and out, when it is convenient and when it is not. Correct and rebuke your people when they need it, encourage them to do right, and all the time be feeding them patiently with God's Word. For there is going to come a time when people won't listen to the truth, but will go about looking for teachers who will tell them just what they want to hear. They won't listen to what the Bible has to say, but blithely follow their own misguided ideas." 2 Timothy 4:1-4 (TLB).

As most of these preachers remarry, the embarrassment their families suffer is almost unbearable. Former spouses are humiliated and devastated, children backslide, saints are stumbled, and the name of Christianity defamed. What is the final answer to this?

The only righteous course is to hand the reigns of the church back to Christ.

Shaun Kearney, a New Zealander who returned to Brisbane from the US where he and his wife Anne ministered for a number of years, has been in ministry for over 40 years. He has served as pastor, bible teacher, author and currently is in travelling ministry. He was one of the COG NZ National Convention Speakers with Bro Harold McLeod in 1994. He has a wealth of ministry experience and a real burden as to where the church has been heading. This article is included for your interest as it is pertinent to what sadly has been happening in many situations around the world. 📖