

THE SHOEMAKER SYNDROME

Making a Difference in Our Community for God's Kingdom

By Dr. Steve Daily

The story is told of four strangers who were traveling together in the same compartment of a civilian train, two men and two women facing each other. One of the women was a very wealthy and sophisticated seventy-year-old lady who was decked out in the finest of furs and jewelry. Next to her sat a beautiful young woman, nineteen years old, who looked like something right off the cover of a fashion magazine. Across from the older lady was a very mature looking man in his mid-fifties who was a highly decorated colonel in the Air Force. And, next to the colonel sat a young private fresh out of an exhausting boot camp, who wore a neatly pressed uniform and a crew cut.

As these four strangers traveled they talked and chatted about trivial things, until they entered a tunnel that had no lights. There they sat in complete darkness and total silence, until the sound of a distinct kiss broke the silence and following the kiss a loud slap could be heard throughout the cabin. Then these four strangers sat quietly with their own thoughts. The older lady was thinking, "Isn't it wonderful, that in this permissive day and age, there are still young women who have a little bit of self-respect and dignity." The young woman, shaking her head and greatly puzzled was thinking, "Why would any man in his right mind want to kiss an old fossil like that, when I am sitting here?" The colonel, rubbing his sore face and deeply outraged, was thinking, "how could any woman think that a man of my position would try to sneak a kiss in the dark?" And the private, grinning from ear to ear, was thinking, "what a crazy and mixed up world this is, when a private can kiss the back of his own hand and smack a colonel in the face!"

It is a crazy and mixed up world we are living in today, and it doesn't seem to be getting a whole lot better. More and more people are out of work, we read in the paper last week that the Inland Empire has the highest rate of unemployment in the state. More and more people are losing their homes, I talked to someone doing evictions this last week and he said the numbers are increasing not decreasing. We seem to be surrounded by terrorist alerts and ominous prophecies as we approach the end of this year, and most church pastors that I talk to say they are feeling overwhelmed and their churches are struggling. How does all this fit with God's promise that we are going to trample hell's gates in Matthew 16:18, and crush Satan's head in Romans 16:20? Today we look at the eleventh fruit on our kingdom tree which has

to do with impacting our community for Christ. I've entitled it "The Shoemaker Syndrome," because there is an old saying about how the shoemaker's kids have no shoes.

The plumber's house has leaky faucets, and the preacher's kids are the biggest hellions in the church. It is human nature to often ignore what is closest to home. In Mark 8:36 Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?" I need to make sure I'm right with God before I try to get others right with God. We need to focus on getting our own families right with God before we try to get other families right with God. And the church needs to focus on making a difference in its own community before it tries to change the world. I'll never forget the experience I had in the first church I ever pastored up in Lindsay, California. The church was right in the middle of a neighborhood, so the first thing I did was to go door to door in that neighborhood, introduce myself, and ask the people if they'd ever had any contact with the SDA church and if so, what their impression had been.

To my amazement most of the people said, "no contact," even the ones right across the street. And the few who had experienced contact happened to live by a church member who was pretty grouchy and pretty legalistic. She was an older lady in her 80s who could no longer take care of her yard, so some neighbors decided to surprise her one Saturday morning while she was at church by weeding and fixing up her property. She exploded at them when she returned home that day for breaking the Sabbath in her yard. Needless to say, they didn't have the best impression of us Adventists. I've often wondered, how is the church going to rise up and fulfill its final destiny, when it seems like the church is becoming increasingly marginalized in our society today. But, God gave a vision to Bill Bright, before he died, that was confirmed and given separately to others, that gives me great hope in this regard.

In Revelation 17:9, we read that the Whore of Babylon dominates seven hills or mountains at the end of time. In the vision that God gave to Bill Bright and Lauren Cunningham, He revealed that these seven hills or mountains represented the seven major mountains of culture or global society at the end of time, that the enemy had stolen, and that God was going to take back for His kingdom. This seven mountain prophecy is a miracle story in and of itself, that you can read about in Johnny Enlow's recent book entitled, *The Seven Mountain Prophecy*. But, for our purposes here at Kingdom Life, I

want to focus on three of these mountains this morning, by addressing them primarily from a local context, and we'll finish our series next week, by addressing the other four mountains primarily from a global context. We start our study this morning in Deuteronomy 7:1, where we read the following words: "The Lord your God will bring you into the land that you are entering and that you will have as your own. As you go in, He will force out these nations: the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites – seven nations that are stronger than you" (*New Century Version*). The Lord showed the recipients of His vision that these seven nations corresponded to the seven centers of culture, that He would restore to His Bride at the close of earth's history. Let's consider them individually.

1. The first mountain to be taken back for God is the restoration of the family. You noticed that the seven nations mentioned in the verse we just read were all stronger than Israel – and yet God said that He would completely conquer each one of them. The family has been attacked and devastated in western culture over the last several decades like no other institution. The word Jebusite in Hebrew literally means – a place trodden down. This word can be interpreted as a synonym for "rejection." The spirit of rejection has devastated our family systems over the last half century. Spouses rejecting each other through the onslaught of divorce, and children feeling rejected through the fracturing of their families. Yes, the church can try to offset this trend by conducting marriage seminars and parenting classes, but my Bible tells me that we are no match for the Jebusite army. My Bible tells me that God alone can defeat this army and that He is posed to do so through an unprecedented supernatural work that He describes in Malachi 4:5-6. Our job is not to think that we can defeat this foe through our wisdom, training or strength, but to believe His promise, and keep declaring it until it becomes reality.

When my wife was 7 months pregnant with Justin, our second child, we were living with very high levels of stress. We were both in very demanding jobs, I had just finished my doctoral work at Claremont the year before, and now the Dean of Religion at the university where I taught was telling me that because I was the youngest faculty member they wanted to pay for me to get a Ph.D. in psychology, because no one on our staff was trained in that area. My wife wasn't thrilled, to say the least, and I wasn't sure that I could balance full time work, with family and schooling any longer. I was only getting about four hours of sleep on many nights and I found that I was

falling asleep while driving home from classes in San Diego. On more than one occasion the Lord woke me up right as I was driving off the road or about to hit a freeway pillar. The most scary occasion was the night I drove about 15 miles past the exit to our home as if in a trance, and suddenly woke up shocked at what had happened. At that time I was taking my oldest daughter with me to the Vineyard most Sundays and had read a book that I had bought there by Don Gosset, entitled, *What You Say Is What You Get*. It exposed me to word of faith theology, and I began declaring and believing that God was going to take me and my family through this difficult time by His supernatural power alone.

We have three amazing kids today, but it is not because my wife and I are amazing, its because our God is amazing. The only hope for our families in this crazy and mixed up age is continually declaring the goodness and grace of God over them. Declaring, believing and holding fast to your confession. One of my best friends in high school, during my rebellious years, grew up in what I would have to call a perfect Adventist home. I lived with them one summer, so that I could get a summer job, and his parents were truly remarkable. They were loving, caring, kind, generous, had family worship faithfully every night, served the best home grown vegetarian food on the planet, were strongly committed Adventists and were not hypocritical, but I saw all four of their kids rebel against the church and turn their backs on God. I can remember my friend's mom crying in the kitchen as she was talking to me one day, saying I don't know what more we could do as parents, but nothing seems to work, when it comes to the church. And her words were very true, there are no human works that can guarantee that kids will choose the ways of God, there is only His grace, and faith in His goodness.

Donald Sloat, in his excellent book entitled, *The Dangers of Growing Up in a Christian Home*, points to research which tells us that there are two major spiritual mistakes that parents make with their kids. One is hypocrisy, where our kids see that God really isn't number one in our lives, and two is being overly prescriptive about the nature of faith – expecting our kids to see faith the same way we do. But bigger than both of these, in my opinion, is thinking that we can do anything to lead our kids into the kingdom, except trust in His grace. The Exodus is the perfect picture of what we can do. The Jebusites, like the Egyptians, are much stronger than we are. So we plead the blood & trust in God's grace. We declare His goodness and keep on pro-

claiming & praising. As Moses put it (Exodus 14:14) “The Lord will fight for you, you need only to be still.” First the Egyptians then the Jebusites.

2. The second mountain to be taken back for God is the mountain of education. The Amorites and the Amalekites are the two enemies of God who are stronger than us in this realm. The Amorites were known for their pride and arrogance, for their trust in their own human strength. They represent the philosophy of humanism that has taken control of the educational establishment today. One would hope that the National Education Association would focus on providing American children with the best academic preparation possible while avoiding political and philosophical extremes. But an examination of their lobby efforts and national student scores compared to other nations, demonstrates that they have failed miserably in both of these areas. While opposing school prayer and any provision allowing for God or Christ to be mentioned in the schools, the NEA has repeatedly promoted a value laden approach to education that is intentionally hostile to Judaeo-Christian values. As one influential NEA leader, John Dumphrey, has put it:

I am convinced that the battle for humankind’s future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as proselytizers of a new faith. A religion of humanity that recognizes and respects what theologians call divinity in every human being. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new, the rotting corpse of Christianity together with all its evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism. It will undoubtedly be a long arduous, painful struggle, with much sorrow and many tears, but humanism will emerge triumphant. It must if the family of humankind is to survive.

The arrogance of the Amorites is alive and well in our public educational system today. What once was a system founded on the Scriptures and committed to the great principles of Christianity, has become the enemy of true faith. Which brings us to the Amalekites – they were the descendents of Esau who was the son of Isaac, and the grandson of Abraham, but they became great troublemakers of Israel. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, nearly all of the greatest schools in our nation started as Christian Schools, or even as seminaries. But look at how these schools and our public school system have changed today. Many Christians want to overtly fight these changes with laws and politics and school board meetings, and I’m not here to criticize these people, but we must recognize that Israel was no match for the Amalakites in their human strength. It was only when the hands of Moses

were uplifted, and kept uplifted, that they were able to prevail against the Amalakites (Exodus 17:8-9, 12). Again, it is all about faith, all about believing, declaring and holding fast to our confession. What else can we do in addition to interceding in faith? Especially at the local level? I believe the answer is found in Romans 12:21, where Paul tells us, that we “overcome evil with good.”

I do not feel called to picket or protest the public schools. But, I do believe we are called to try to provide a healthy alternative wherever we can. I have been excited to see the response to our Kingdom Life School of Ministry this first year. Monique and I have both been blessed by the passion to learn and grow that we are seeing in our students. I am thrilled to see Shaina starting a community dance class for kids, and to see our KEYS program finally getting some major traction with Hollywood and the motion picture industry as Chris shared with us during our testimony time this morning. I have seen his animation programs to teach kids the dangers of drugs and to keep them safe from other forms of abuse and neglect, and they are as professional and captivating as anything I’ve ever seen in the field. KEYS (Keeping Education Your Strength) is a non-profit branch of our church that invites every one of you to use your creativity for God’s Kingdom. I was just talking to Roger last week, and if any of you have cars that aren’t running or that you want to donate for a tax write off – even if they have been totaled – Roger has the gift of resurrecting them and blessing those who need a car with dependable transportation. I’ll say more about KEYS in the last sermon in our series, but for now, if you have a creative idea that you think can help build God’s kingdom, let me know and we’ll give it a try.

3. The third mountain to be taken back for God is the mountain of economics, business and wealth. This mountain is connected to the Canaanites who were known as merchants and traders who built their country into a prosperous land that was flowing with milk and honey. The word *Cana* literally means zealous, and the word *Canaanite* means trader, but can also mean under subjection. The Canaanites were zealous for wealth and prosperity from a worldly motivation, but it was God’s will that they be conquered and put under subjection so that their wealth would be transferred to the Israelites – as Israel believed God in faith. And you all know the story of how the twelve spies scoped out the land of Cana and ten of them concluded, based on their natural minds and their flesh, that they were no match for the giants who inhabited this land, they said, “We were like grasshoppers compared to them. There are two spirits that keep us, as God’s

people, from conquering this mountain of prosperity and abundance. The first is the spirit of Mammon, which is the spirit of greed or dependence on material things. Mammon is a popular false God in America, and Jesus made it clear that we can't serve both God and Mammon (Matthew 6:24). Mammon involves "the love of money" which Paul says "is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:11-12).

When Pastor Michael from The Gate, was here a few Friday nights ago, he shared a story that God used to convict me deep in my soul. He talked about how he was working on a dairy at the age of twenty-one and came to the conclusion that he could become very rich, very young, if he went into business for himself. So he borrowed as much money as he could and bought 30 baby calves, with the intention of raising them and selling them each for a major profit. He had learned the basics of raising cows in Indiana and understood that you closed the barn up tight every night to keep the cows warm, and you opened the barn every day to keep them from getting too warm. But one day he forgot to open the barn early enough, so the cows got all sweaty and many of them began to catch pneumonia after that. As the cows started dying he started watching his profits disappear. He did everything he could, including praying like mad to save them, but they kept dropping. Finally, as the twelfth cow was dying in his lap, he said he began to weep before God like a baby, the cow still died causing him to lose all his profits, but that was the last one. He said, later on the Lord spoke to him and said, "Do you remember how you wept for that cow?" He responded, "how could I forget Lord?" And God said, "You have never wept over a lost soul like that."

Michael said, that experience produced in him a new passion for souls that he had never known before. It wasn't the cow that caused the weeping, it was the money that the cow represented. How many of us are moved more by money than we are by souls. The spirit of Mammon is about loving things or money more than people. The second spirit that keeps us from conquering the mountain of prosperity and abundance is the spirit of poverty. The ten spies suffered from a spirit of poverty. "We are poor compared to these Canaanites, and if we go up against them we will surely be defeated." The spirit of poverty is a close relative of the spirit of fear. Faith is all about choosing the path of risk, and fear is all about choosing the path of safety. The ten spies are thinking, "what if we say let's go up against them and we lose? They may stone us to death." So the vote of the General Conference Committee was 10 to 2 to take the safe way (surprise), they left

Caleb and Joshua holding the bag as scapegoats (surprise). They did the politically astute thing and watched as the multitude tried to stone Caleb and Joshua (Numbers 14:10). Thankfully, God decided to reveal His glory right at that moment, which would have consumed the multitude had Moses not pleaded for their protection.

Caleb and Joshua were about declaring. This nation is stronger than us, but our God is much stronger than them. They are much bigger than us, but our God is much bigger than them. We will not speak through our natural eyes, but through the powerful promises of our God. In Proverbs 13:22 God says, "I will give you the wealth of the wicked." How many of us are declaring that reality into our lives. If we are not living under the spirit of Mammon or the spirit of poverty that promise is ours to believe, to declare and to hold fast to as a life changing confession. I have been so impressed with the generous spirit that this congregation has manifested in our short time here at Kingdom Life. One of our goals is to create a storehouse that will allow us to be even more generous. So we pray against the spirit of poverty wherever it may still exist in this congregation and we come against the spirit of Mammon wherever it may still exist in our midst. We declare abundance, prosperity, blessing, favor, breakthrough based on Your grace alone Oh God. We declare salvation and spiritual breakthrough for our kids, Oh God, based on Your grace alone. We declare breakthrough for this valley, Oh God, intergenerational unity and revival, by Your grace alone. May our spiritual kids never go barefooted, may we never succumb to the Shoemaker Syndrome.