

# He Must Increase, And I Must Decrease

## Psalm 34:3

3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. i

## Psalm 40:16

16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified. ii

## John 3:30

30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease. iii

### I.) IN OUR GENERATION, MAN'S KNOWLEDGE HAS INCREASED INCREDIBLY

Daniel predicts two things about the last days:

#### Daniel 12:4

4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

iv

The experts say that human knowledge is multiplying at a tremendous rate. By one estimate, if one inch represented all of humanity's accumulated knowledge from the beginning of recorded history to 1845, then what human beings learned from 1845 until 1945 would amount to three inches, and what we've learned from 1945 until today would reach the height of the Chrysler Building in Manhattan. (1048 ft.)

By horseback and horse drawn carriage, the fastest man could travel was about 25 miles per hour or so. And this condition lasted for almost 6,000 years. Then, at the turn of this present century, because of the above listed inventions, man has increased the speed of his travel from 25 miles per hour to 25,000 miles per hour!

**I told you last week that in 1519 Magellan sailed around the world in 3 years, and in 1962 John Glenn orbited the world (12,000 miles) in 1 ½ hours!**

Since this flight of John Glenn, Jr., we have built even faster, more efficient spacecraft and airplanes, including the Shuttle.

Daniel also predicted that knowledge would increase just as travel. The increase of knowledge has made the increase of travel possible, as it has many other facets of human existence. It is not in question that major technological advances have been made, but it is significant to note that most of these technological advances that we have become so accustomed to today have been accomplished just in this century, and then again, most have been accomplished just in the last 40 years.

Advances are moving extremely fast in computer technology. I have heard it expressed that computer technology is doubling every 15 months. Any one that has recently bought a computer knows this is true because the computers sold as state of the art only a couple of years ago are not so state of the art today. One of the computers in my office, only 4 years old will not run much of the software that is on the market today.

We KNOW so much more now than ever before, and that knowledge can get to us so much quicker than ever before.

We've reached a point as a society where we feel that we have no need of God, or heavenly intervention, etc.

And, we're in the worst possible place as a society that human beings could possibly be in – refusing to acknowledge our need for God!

II.) MOST OF OUR PROBLEMS ARE CAUSED BECAUSE WE HAVE INCREASED AND GOD HAS DECREASED

For all of our advances in human knowledge, most of us know far less about God's Word than our ancestors did. And we wonder why we're so confused!

There's a heartbreaking passage in the Book of Hosea that really makes the point.

**Hosea 4:1-3,5-6**

Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because *there is* no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. 2 By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. 3 Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall

be taken away. 5 Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. v

God looks down from heaven at his people and he says, "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying. . . . , . . . . [M]y people are destroyed from lack of knowledge" (4:1-3,5,6).

Those words were first recorded in the eighth century before Christ. But doesn't it sound like the closing days of the twentieth century? ***"You stumble day and night; my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge."***

They weren't destroyed because they lacked knowledge of mechanics, or computer technology, or rocket science!

They were destroyed because they lacked the knowledge of God, and their need of God!

### **Romans 1:22-28**

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,  
28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; vi

### **Romans 1:22-28**

22 They said they were wise, but they became fools.  
28 People did not think it was important to have a true knowledge of God. So God left them and allowed them to have their own worthless thinking and to do things they should not do.

(NCV)vii

- The decrease of God and the increase of man always brings destruction!

- I am here to tell this congregation this morning that we need God! We need the spirit of God in our lives!
- God, strip everything away from me that is keeping you from being magnified in my life!
- Take my knowledge, my strength, my riches, everything from me that's keeping you from being magnified and increasing in my life!

### III.) WE NEED TO LEARN THE VALUE OF NOTHING!

#### 2 Kings 4:1-2

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. 2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. viii

Now, what excites me about this passage is this woman's total dependence on God!

She had reached her wit's end! She was a good woman, her husband had been a prophet.

Probably when her husband was alive, she had substance, had food in the pantry, had clothes on her back, her sons were well cared for.

When her husband was providing for her, she had no need of help from any other source.

She openly admits that the reason she's calling for Elisha is that her husband is dead!

- She has no more power to provide within her own house.
- She has no other source of income.
- Her resources have run dry, her comfort zone has been violated, her source has been taken away from her.

And now, she's down to NOTHING!

**EXCEPT!**

**For a "pot of oil".**

Now, oil in the scripture has always represented anointing, healing, provision.

And, this little woman basically said to the prophet: ***"I have no money, no income, no career, no means within myself to stave off the creditors, I have NOTHING"***

And, then she remembers, ***"Oh, but wait.....I DO have a small pot of anointing still in the house"***

**In her eyes, she was down to nothing!**

**She had decreased to nothing, her knowledge exhausted, her resources dead, she had no other choice but to turn to God for help.**

- ***But, her nothingness became the seeds for God's never ending supply!***
- ***Her failure became the seeds for God's victory!***
- ***Her decrease became God's increase!***

**Oh, God, teach us the value of nothing!**

**It's when I am down to nothing that God can begin to work his miracles in my life!**

- ***When I run out, God runs in!***
- ***When I give up, God gets up!***
- ***When I throw in the towel, God throws in his hat!***
- ***When I am down to nothing, God is up to something!***
- ***When I am at my wits end, God is just beginning!***

When human ability runs out, heavenly provision takes over!

**In fact, I can't even see the Lord the way I need to see him until flesh is out of the way!**

## Isaiah 6:1

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ix

Until Isaiah's friend and provider, Uzziah, died, Isaiah has lost his vision of the Lord!

Only when his human strength was removed could God's strength be revealed in his life again!

- ***There are some of us who came to the Lord in dire straits!***
- ***Our reliance on Him was total and unequivocal!***
- ***We had no other choice.***
- ***Alcoholics Anonymous had failed us!***
- ***Narcotics Anonymous had failed us!***
- ***Psychology had failed us!***
- ***Positive thinking had failed us!***

We were down to nothing, and we came to this altar and poured ourselves out, throwing ourselves on the mercy of God!

**But, over the years, we've gotten our lives together!**

We've gotten good jobs now, live in nice homes, drive nice cars!

We have

- education,
- have culture,
- have dignity
- and refinement.

On the surface, things appear to be going well for us, but underneath, there is an emptiness that's developed, almost imperceptibly.

- **We have more things, but have no inner fulfillment!**
- **We are busier, but more discontent than ever before!**
- **We have need of nothing, yet feel more unfulfilled than we have in a long time.**
- **We know more about God, but have less fellowship with God!**

Let me just tell you what the problem is:

## **WE HAVE INCREASED AND HE HAS DECREASED!**

Our faith is now in our jobs, in our ministries, in our homes, in our families!

We've erected some King Uzziah's in our lives that have blocked out our view of the Lord, and it's not until King Uzziah dies that we'll see the Lord again, high and lifted up!

- *There will be no divine commission until the idols in our lives are removed!*
- *There will be no divine peace as long as I rely on sinful flesh!*
- *There will be no lasting soul fulfillment until we acknowledge our need once again, totally and completely, for Jesus Christ and Him alone!*

### **1 Corinthians 2:2**

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. x

### **Philippians 3:8**

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,  
xi

If anyone had the right to boast about their education, their knowledge, their self-sufficiency, it was Paul!

Multi-lingual, educated at the feet of Gamaliel, a Jew by birth, but a Roman by purchase, a man of power and authority, a man who could have spoken with flowery terms and enticing speech – yet he said:

### **I HAVE COMPLETELY DECREASED SO THAT JESUS CHRIST MIGHT INCREASE IN MY LIFE!**

I am nothing, in me there is no good thing! If there's anything good in me, it's only because he's placed this treasure in earthen vessels, but I have chosen to live in

complete abandon so that I might experience the complete peace that only comes thru knowing Jesus!

## **CONCLUSION**

I feel so strongly in my spirit lately that there are so many people who know God and know the Word who are living their lives in torment.

- Saved, but not settled!
- Redeemed, but not refreshed!
- Justified, but not joyous!
- Bound for heaven, but living in hell on earth!

And it's all because we are not living according to the Word of God!

- We know it, but ignore it!
- We love God, but don't surrender to Him!
- We worship Him, but don't rely on Him!
- We want him sometimes, but don't NEED Him!
- We enjoy his Hand, but don't seek His face!
- We enjoy the blessings, but don't live by His Word!

## **(DIFFERENCES IN DAVID AND SAUL, AND THE PHILISTINES AND THE ARK)**

And it's only when we get to a point of nothingness in our own lives that God can begin to arise in us and bring the peace that passeth all understanding!

- As long as we rely on our own strength, we'll never experience God's strength!
- As long as we rely on our own wisdom, we'll never experience God's wisdom!

It's only when I decrease that He increases!

Now, one final thought and then we're going to come to this altar and pray.

I cannot decrease until God increases.

You say, ***"What's do you mean, Pastor?"***

I cannot decrease on my own, I simply don't have the strength and willpower.



John said, "HE MUST INCREASE, and I MUST DECREASE"

The only way I can decrease is to start increasing Him in my life.

It starts when I begin to worship Him and lift Him up, and magnify Him. That's when the increase of God and the decrease of my flesh begins to take place.

Who wants to come to this altar today and increase Jesus in your life?

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- i *The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.
  - ii *The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.
  - iii *The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.
  - iv *The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.
  - v *The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.
  - vi *The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.
  - vii *The New Century Version*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing) 1987, 1988, 1991.
  - viii *The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.
  - ix *The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.
  - x *The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.
  - xi *The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.