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WE ARE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Heb. 11:13

Ever since the time that the News Media broke the story of the deadly Corona-virus having spread its deadly virus throughout ever major and minor nation of the world, we have witnessed what some would call a world-wide panic. The fear of this disease has affected about every segment of our society. Many businesses have suffered bankruptcy, schools closing, sports schedules have been forced to cancel, churches have been told by various political figures that they must not only close their doors to worship and if they dare to meet in any size group they must not sing.

We have witnessed what the news media calls protest, which I define as nothing more than anarchy and violent revolution. We have witnessed our nation in constant turmoil while the mass-media has attempted to manipulate the present crisis to push their own agenda. There is nothing legitimate about destroying a man or woman’s business in the name of “restitution and reparation for injustice” that was done long before anyone in our day was born.

I am sure you have heard such nonsense being suggested by people such as Janna Thompson who in her examination of the problems, raised reparative demands and put forward a theory of reparation for an historical injustice. This argument may play well for some people, but I doubt it will solve the present crisis. In the meantime we have continually witnessed...the burning of such cities as New York, Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles, Chicago, and recently in Kenosha following after the shooting of another person of color.

What we continue to ignore or forget is that there has been a time of injustice from the first day that Cain killed Abel, after their parents sinned, bringing upon the very thing that God warned them saying: “*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.*” (Gen. 2:17) Incidentally, this was the first positive instruction God gave to man; and it was given as a test of obedience, and a proof of his being in a dependent, probationary state.

It was important for Adam to know that he was only God’s vicegerent, and must be accountable to him for the use of his mental and corporeal powers, and for the use he made of the different creatures put under his care. While God was granted parental powers, community powers to govern the known populace at that time, he needed to understand that it was the manner in which he handled this responsibility which would determine man’s dwelling place and well-being. Incidentally, nothing has changed since that time, except, as to who rules or doesn’t rule. In America, our happiness, freedom, and well-being depends upon who rules over a nation. If we have corruption in government, we will suffer the consequence in our streets.

WHAT ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN IN THE MEANTIME

The Apostle and writer of Hebrews addressed that question in his Epistle by stating, that the believer must realize that we are not dwelling in our eternal home. We do not belong to this earth. This earth is going to be destroyed and it is in the process right now. One day this earth “...will melt with fervent heat.” (2 Peter 3:10) And there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Why a “new earth” (Rev 21:1). It will not be like the earth as we know it today. “***And there was no more sea.***” (Rev, 21:1) The Apostle Peter added to this by saying: “*Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*” So the question is, what do we do in the meantime? That answer is found in Hebrews 11:13

Now the answer to this question some people will not like. But the answer to our present day dilemma is to study and consider **Hebrews 11:13** – “They confessed (who?) Christians made this public confession; *“that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”* **Note:** “*For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.” They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly (vs. 16.) How does God feel about such people? “...wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”*

I read recently read that four million people have already left America and are seeking “**a better country**” somewhere within our globe. About 1.7 million of the 4 million people in total were in Mexico or Canada, with more than 400,000 in Mexico City alone. Many more were in Europe, including Britain, Germany and Italy. Yet, most of us have believed that America is the greatest country in the world, because people from all over the world want to live here. Yet why is it that Americans want to live some place else?

What they do not realize is that their dissatisfaction is due to the condition of their soul. When they get to where they are going they will find the same dissatisfaction there that they found here because they are taking their misery with them. In their packing and unpacking they are making a fatal mistake because “*a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*”(Luke 12:15 KJV) Paul writing to the Corinthians said, “*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*” **Christian Standard Bible** puts it – “*If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be of all men most miserable*” (1 Cor. 15:19).

Living the Christian life one can be subjected to more trials than any other class of people. Christians today are the most persecuted people around the world. This is nothing new; they have always been persecuted and reviled, and subjected to toil, and privation, and want, on account of their belief and faith. For some life never improved. So if they failed to have the right perspective they would be disappointed with Christianity and Christ as some are with America today. But true believers consider themselves not as citizens but rather pilgrims. They don’t expect rewards here. They live for a better country wherein dwellth righteousness. Therefore they are not living a life of regret and misery....they live in expectation of Christ’s soon return.

PILGRIMS AND STRANGERS

We, as believers should learn to live our life as “strangers and pilgrims,” in order to avoid being so disappointed at times. We should not expect this earth, this nation, friends and loved-ones, or even our boss or government to please us! We shouldn’t expect our favorite sports team to always win, because we belong to a greater team than what is found in any sports stadium.

We should not expect to win every election even though it is nice when we do. But do not always expect to have a Trump to help us fight for our churches to remain open during a Pandemic because there is an element out there that will try to find the least of excuses to close our doors. The closer we get to the coming of the Lord the worse it can get.

But don’t worry about it because we have a High Priest, a Good Shepherd, the King of kings and Lord of lords who is coming with power and great glory, then “*all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.*” (Matt. 24:30) But we won’t mourn....we will rejoice because our blessed Lord promised that a day will come in which He will return to take us to be with Him. It is then that the crooked places will made straight....and everything we sacrificed in this life will more than make up for what we have had to suffer in this life.

At this point in time I am about to send my manuscript for my new book to be printed entitled: “People Whose Lives Made an Impact.” These are people who have already finished their course in this life. I was privileged over their years to be their pastor and in getting to know them was amazed how God has used them while they made their dwelling here on earth. I found a common thread among them that this book will point out. But the essence of the book reveals that in spite of their hardships in this life they refused to be defeated. Why? Because they knew they were made overcomers by the blood of the Lamb. They did not expect the world to praise them, but they found a way to serve God and their fellow man and thus made an impact. You may be surprised in some of their stories...I myself have been amazed of the significant contribution they made. But I shouldn’t be amazed because you see they were God’s children and that is what they do when they place their life in His hands. Amen.