

SOUND DOCTRINE

"And If ye call on the Father who without respect of persons judges according to every mans work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear;" I Peter 1:17

TIMELY ADVICE

It is vital that we take to heart In a very serious way the counsel given to us in this verse; "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." But It must be said that the exhortation to fear God amongst us evangelicals today Is very rare indeed.

Have you ever seen a song about this in any of our evangelical song books? How many sermons have you heard preached about this?

This is not included in the list of "edifying" sermon topics. But isn't it strange that this subject is so ignored by us when the word of God, which we profess to follow speaks frequently, clearly and emphatically about it!

"...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Phil. 2:12.

Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." II Cor. 7:1b.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matt. 10:28.
"Submitting yourselves one to another In the fear of God." Eph. 5:21

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE

If you have been born-again then it is sure that you approach God as your heavenly Father. Do we not pray "Heavenly Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus..."

God has the heart of a father and He makes Himself the father of any person who has been adopted into His family by the Holy Spirit. It is wonderful to think that the creator of the universe calls those who have been born-again His children. But it seems that the brethren to whom Peter originally addressed these words, like many believers today, tended to only dwell on these aspects of God that were pleasant to them. It also seems that the Scriptures point us back to those aspects of God that are not so pleasant to think about. What Peter was saying could be paraphrased like this, "Listen, brethren now you may be able to approach God as your Heavenly Father but you better remember that He is also the Eternal Judge who without any favorites is coming to judge every man's work, including yours." Paul like Peter also did not ignore this aspect of God: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether It be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences." Neither did the author of Hebrews overlook it: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:28,29

SOUND DOCTRINE

Strong words? Yes, but we believers today would be very unwise to ignore this type of teaching. Proverbs tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and Psalms says it is clean and endures forever. While Hebrews 6:2 tells us the teaching on eternal judgment is one of the principles in the foundation of the Christian faith. In Matthew 25 we find the parable of the talents. The emphasis of the parable is mainly on the servant who received one talent but did nothing with what his master gave him except to bury it. Then came the day of reckoning and what did he say, "I knew you to be a hard man..." On the day when each of us will have to give an account for what we have done with what the Lord has given us, we will meet this aspect of God face to face. The justice of God will be without compromise.

There will be no favoritism; it will be a very hard thing. Now we can only accept this by faith In the written word of God and act accordingly. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

If that great and fearful judgment day of the Lord came, what would we say? What would we say when He asks us about the efforts we went to to reach every creature with the gospel? What would we say when He asks us what we did with the religious freedom that we had? Did we take advantage of it by working diligently, spreading the word of God? What would we answer when He asks us about our financial resources? Did we use them to lay up treasures on the earth? Have we labored for the meat that perishes, or for that which endures unto everlasting life, providing for ourselves a purse that does not wax old? What would we say when faced with the Lord's words, "And a new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you."? Would we be guilty at this moment of discord, sectarianism, spiritual pride or spiritual prejudices? Do we seek to fellowship with, and to love in word and deed, all of those born-again; or do we separate ourselves from those who may not "believe exactly like we believe" because the color of their doctrine is different from ours?

Do we dare do that brethren? The Bible warns us against it; "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaks evil of his brother speaks evil of the law and judges the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judges another?" "Judge not one against another, brethren; lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge stands before the door." James 4:11,12, 5:9

Really, how would we do this moment if we found ourselves before the scales of God!?

MOTIVATION

Iniquity is abounding in our world today and because of that the love of many is growing cold. The minds and lives of millions today are being affected by apathy, causing great indifference toward God, the things of God; concern for eternity and toward fellow human beings of which thousands have great physical as well as spiritual needs. Has this same spirit affected us evangelicals? It can, and it seems that it has. We need to wake up and walk not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time for the days are evil. Brethren, we are all in the same boat. We are all going to be judged by the Lord Himself!

WE NEED A PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

Our Christianity must not only be spiritual but there must also be a practical expression of it. The writers of the New Testament call us time after time to right behavior. There must be right doctrine, but without the corresponding behavior, our right doctrine is really vain for us. We in 'Christ is the Answer' are realizing this more and more, and seeking to live in the light of the fact that judgment day will be just as it is revealed in the scriptures. We are children of the Lord, that is, all of us who have been born-again. He is our Father. Let us love Him but also fear Him. It is possible, you know, to love and fear someone at the same time. Let us pray for one another.