



Old Testament Reading – Isaiah 43:1-21

New Testament Reading – 1 Peter 2:11-25

The Epistle of Joy

“Living For Christ In a Crooked and Perverse Generation”

Philippians 2:12-18

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In Philippians 2:14-15, the Apostle Paul wrote, ***“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”***

- “Crooked and Perverse” is an expression that the Bible uses to describes a society that has deviated from God’s Word and embraced moral corruption as a lifestyle.
 - A “crooked” generation twists the truth from that which God had declared.
 - A “perverse” generation distorts the truth to make it say what they want it to say.
 - A “generation” identifies a society at a specific period of time, including the time in which we live today.
- Therefore, a “crooked and perverse” generation describes the behavior of the depraved, degenerate, and immoral.

The Church at Philippi was a poor, persecuted Church, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

- Because of its massive wealth from the goldmines and the fact that it was inhabited by many Roman soldiers, Philippi was a rough place to live – it was a lawless society, with all kinds of idolatry and pagan practices.
- The few Christians who lived there were poor, alienated from society, mocked and belittled the people, and attacked by the Jewish legalizers who demanded the males to be circumcised.
- However, the Apostle Paul urged them to continue living as the children of God, and to shine as lights in the world.

Regardless of their location, every Christian is living in a “crooked and perverse” generation.

- Although the calendar indicates that the world is about 6,000 years old, spiritually and morally, our society is equal to the days before Genesis 6, which means we are living in the culture the Lord Jesus said we would be just before He returns.
- Civil wars have already broken out in several countries, and God is moving the major nations into their respective positions to launch WWII.
- However, what is happening around the world is nothing less than the evidence of God’s divine judgment – the global events we are experiencing today, i.e., the massive storms, deadly tornadoes, huge earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, famines, fires, and floods, **are the precursors** to the major events that will occur during the time of Tribulation.
- In Romans 1:18-32, the Apostle Paul described the characteristics of a nation that is under God’s judgment.
- While there are several kinds of “God’s wrath,” the final wrath is the wrath of abandonment – when God **“gives them up”** (or over) to their evil desires.
- The evidence of God’s abandonment of a culture is:
 - **Sexual perversion** – sex becomes more about personal pleasure than procreation.
 - **Homosexuality** – sex is no longer limited to the marital relationship between a man and a woman.
 - **A Debased or Reprobate Mind** – a level of insanity from which there is no return.

What we are seeing in our world today is the unfolding of God’s divine judgement, and according to God’s Word, while the people involved are redeemable, **God’s judgment is not reversible.**

- The day is soon coming when the arrogant evildoers will be burned like the chaff; ***“neither root nor branch will be left, but those who fear the Lord will be saved.”***
- As Dr. Francis Schaeffer asked in 1970, **“How Should We Then Live?”** How should Christians live in a crooked and perverse generation?

1. Remember Where We Are – Vs. 15 – “*In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.*”

- The terms, “crooked and perverse” describe a state of human depravity, which is the evidence of God’s judgment upon that culture or that generation.
- Proverbs 21:8 – ***“The way of the guilty man is crooked.”***

- Isaiah 59:8 – ***“They made their paths crooked.”***
- We are where we are because we are where God wants us to be at this time in human history.
- Therefore, as Christians, we should not complain about where we are, or in any way, dispute God’s sovereignty.

**Therefore, it is time for Christians to stop
whining and start shining!**

2. Remember Who and Whose We are – Vs. 15 – *“Children of God...among whom You shine as lights in the world.”*

- **We are children of God** – therefore, we should act like our Father and not the devil.
- 1 John 3:10 says, ***“By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who doesn’t practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who doesn’t love his brother.”***
- As Christians, we are aliens in a society that is under God’s judgment.
- We live among people who cannot know God, and have no desire to know Him, for apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, they have no ability to accept the truth of God’s Word, and because they are children of the devil.
- However, according to John 1:12, Romans 8, and Galatians 4, because we are the children of God, we know the truth, we can hear the truth, we can believe and receive the truth, we love the truth, we live the truth, we defend the truth, and we proclaim the truth.

3. Understand What We Are To Do – Vs. 16 – *“Holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”*

- Jesus told His disciples, ***“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. So, let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”***
- We are to work out that which God has worked in us, with fear (respect) and trembling, making sure our aim is to glorify Christ and not ourselves.
- If Christians express the same anger towards the decaying culture as those who are lost, how can they see our trust in the sovereignty of God? **How can they ask us to give them a reason for the “hope” that is within us?**