

LIVING IN A DYING SOCIETY

By

Curtis Dickinson

The discovery of fraud and corruption among the high and mighty of our world has become so common that such reports compete for newspaper space. They represent the whole spectrum of our society; TV evangelists, elected officials, Wall Street tycoons, newspaper moguls, serial killers, mass murderers, rapists and all manner of evil workers.

Of course, there has never been a shortage of sin and sinners. Violence and wickedness have run rampant in many nations at different times in history. About ten years ago a friend said to me that the end was near, the Christ must come soon because things just couldn't get any worse, But they did.

Modern technology has helped to enthrone evil in our world. When the nation was founded, news traveled only by letter or personal courier. When something happened in New York, it was days before they heard about it in Virginia.

Today the whole world sees it on TV **as it happens** or no later than the evening news. We have been desensitized to bloodshed, immorality and blasphemy through TV programs, which condone every kind of sinful activity, and commercials, which pander to lust, pride and greed.

Of course, we can turn off the TV, or we can carefully select what we view. But all the evil is still there. Graft is destroying whole corporations, politicians are stealing billions from the taxpayers, 2,795 teens get pregnant each day, and murderers are loose in every city even though criminals are being arrested faster than they can be processed to prison.

Through immigration, both legal and illegal, the population is rapidly changing to that of a third world culture, while public education erodes traditional Christian concepts.

Add to this the fact that we have a President working to surrender our national sovereignty and economic system to an international cabal which he calls a New World Order.

These are only a few in a long list of frightening conditions under which we begin the New Year of 1992.

Now, how are God's servants to live in this kind of world without fear and anxiety? Let me suggest three things.

TAKE A STAND. Jesus calls His followers to be salt and light. Salt has a distinct flavor which cannot be mistaken. Light dispels the darkness and helps people to see their way. Not all can go public and be heard by the masses, but to everyone around us we each give a distinct flavor and degree of light by words and example in daily living.

The sad fact is that many try to take a neutral stance, remaining silent when truth and justice are in question. Someone proudly boasts, "I never discuss religion or politics." Yet these are the two most important subjects of our time. To keep silent on the moral and religious issues of our day is to let the salt lose its savor and to hide one's light (if he has any) under the basket.

It is especially shocking that few preachers are willing to take issue with the trends of the day. Instead they are trying to accommodate the church to the world,

helping people “feel good about themselves,” and preaching sermons on how to improve their images and get along in the world.

Peter wrote that we are to be “ready always to give answer to every man that asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you.”¹ Peter expected us to be talking freely of our faith, or else no one will ask us about it. Paul wrote that we are to “stand, having girded your loins with truth.”² Obviously this means one is to speak up for truth and then courageously stand on it.

This isn’t always easy and may not make you popular. Instead, be prepared to be called a bigot or a hate monger. There is a widely supported effort today to censor any criticism of certain evils, such as sodomy, and to block any discussion or debate on certain religious issues, such as Zionism. Jesus predicted this when He said, “Blessed are you when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.”³ Truth is always unwelcome to evil. As evil increases so will the opposition to truth, and so we must strengthen our own stand upon it.

True Christians are never the “silent majority” but are the ones gladly confessing their faith in Christ and upholding His truth and righteousness “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom (we) are seen as lights in the world.”⁴ It is when the night is the darkest that the light is needed the most. If there was ever a time for each Christian to take a stand, it is now.

DON’T WORRY ABOUT IT. King David and his people were also greatly concerned about evil in their day. For their encouragement David sang, “Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be you envious against them that work unrighteousness. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass.”⁵

Vast numbers of wealthy have obtained their riches legally, but by taking advantage of others, including the taxpayers. David writes, “Fret not thyself because...of the man who brings wicked devices to pass.”⁶

This is not to suggest that we are to be indifferent to evil but that we are not to allow the apparent success of the wicked to upset us and make us envious. Their pleasure and success may eventually bring them misery in this life and will mean their doom at the judgment. “For evil-doers shall be cut off.”⁷

David’s advice was to trust God, do the right thing⁸ and cease envy and anger, for God will judge the wicked. The evil-doers “shall be cut off” but the faithful shall ultimately be God’s heirs.⁹ It is better to be righteous with only a little than to have the wealth of the wicked.¹⁰ The wicked’s prosperity is only temporary, for their end will be total destruction. “But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of Jehovah shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; in smoke shall they consume away.”¹¹

The anger of God towards sin is a fearful thing to consider. “God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, He will whet His sword: He has bent His bow, and made it ready.”¹² As we witness the collapse of nations, the increase of disease, starvation and poverty, and other overwhelming problems which man seems powerless to solve, it appears that God’s judgment has already begun. When Jesus comes, it will be to take “vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.”¹³

Rather than fret and fume in anxiety over conditions which we cannot change, we are told: “Delight yourself in Jehovah, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”¹⁴ “Rest in Jehovah and wait patiently for him.”¹⁵ *Be not anxious.*¹⁶

FOCUS ON GOD’S PURPOSE. The daily news tells us of the decisions of world leaders and governing bodies, of the rise and fall of great corporations, of court decisions and economic failures. All of these nerve-shattering events grip our attention, instilling many with fear and uncertainty and destructive anxiety.

We need only to put them in proper perspective with God and His purpose to see that they do not endanger us whose lives are hid with Christ in Him.¹⁷

What is God’s purpose? It is to bring man to repentance, to redemption through Christ, to a resurrection to immortality and eternal life in His image.

To accomplish this can mean hardships, painful discipline, bitter lessons, a broken and contrite heart and patience through long periods of affliction and tribulation. Whether due to sin of our own or to the evil-doers that work against us, such suffering is used of God to purify our motives and strengthen our faith.¹⁸

The business of the world is governed by men who act pragmatically with no concern for the purpose of God and the guidelines He has given. This is the reason they continue to fail. Antichrists in our own nation have been able to divorce government from its proper role, that of upholding justice as defined by God, resulting in a morally bankrupt government. Multitudes greet each day in fear because they see no purpose or direction to life, and all the predictions and signs of the future are pessimistic.

Jesus has redeemed us “from this present evil world,”¹⁹ which is to be destroyed.²⁰ Instead of seeking its wealth and security, we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, with faith that He will provide what is needed until we reach the ultimate eternal purpose.²¹

The only future is in Christ. He will not fail.

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