

Culture at the Crossroads

How are we as Christ followers to respond to our culture that seems to be running off the rails when it comes to morality, decency, justice, human life values and love for one another?

So much is happening in our world at such a rapid rate as morality is being redefined. No longer are the foundational truths found in God's Word being accepted and lived by. Yet, His Word is perfect, trustworthy, right and radiant. Psalm 19:7 says, "***The instruction of the Lord is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. The precepts of the Lord are right, making the heart glad; the command of the Lord is radiant, making the eyes light up.***"

Today, everyone seems to be doing whatever seems right in their own eyes (*Judges 17:6*). Moral absolutes found in God's Word have been rejected and morality is whatever society decides or the courts determine at any particular point in time. When we suggest that God gave us a better way to live, we receive the same response given to the prophet Jeremiah, "***But they'll just say, 'Why should we? What's the point? We will continue to live as we want to, stubbornly following our own evil desires'***" (*Jeremiah 18:12*).

When truth is no longer believed, when justice is no longer practiced, when fraud has taken the place of honesty, when violence has taken the place of self-control, when integrity and virtue are laughed at and the value of a human life is no longer respected, we have a society in deep need of Christ's love, truth and transformation. We read in Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25, "***There's a way that looks harmless enough; look again—it leads straight to hell.***"

Has God been taken by surprise at the crumbling of foundational truths He has given us in His Word? Absolutely not! In fact, if we look back to the Davidic Period before David became king and was fleeing King Saul, he posed a question in Psalm 11:3, "***If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?***" Our holy God, as He witnesses the decline of biblical values and sees our culture moving farther and farther away from His moral teaching, undoubtedly is disappointed. We see a similar situation in Isaiah's day when he lamented, "***Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness, who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter***" (*Isaiah 5:20*). Those who cast off moral distinctions introduce chaos and in place of ethics and virtue substitute expediency.

God, Himself is the embodiment of morality and as a result all of His teaching is moral. In His Word, He has given us instructions on how to live a holy life that will bring Him glory. He even went so far as to send His Son to show us how to put those instructions into practice and model what a righteous, God honoring life looks like.

The fact that the "Good News" is not impacting our culture as it should, rests with those called to advance it----you and me. Although He is the only One who can draw people to Himself and change hearts, he desires to work through us.

How can we be winsome models that impact our culture for Christ?

First, by going to the throne of grace and asking God to:

- (a) Restrain the one who desires to see the foundations destroyed (***John 10:10***).
- (b) Remove our self-sufficiency and teach us that our significance is in Him and Him only (***John 15:5***).

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(c) Strengthen our faith to stand firm when trials and persecution comes (*1 Peter 5:8-9; James 1:2-3*).

Second, by facing the evil in our world and showing God's love through random acts of kindness as we follow God's instruction found in Matthew 22:37-40 which says, "***Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.***" Jesus showed the spiritual intent of God's Ten Commandments (*Exodus 20:3-17*) in these two statements and expounded upon them in His Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5*). Hearing God's Word on Sunday and reading God's Word during the week without doing what it says becomes boring and is of little value. The Book of James tells us, "***Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says***" (*James 1:22*). Showing God's love is the key to overcoming spiritual boredom and will open the door to explaining His love.

Third, by verbally sharing our faith. Once we have earned the right to speak into their lives, ask your neighbors if they have any spiritual beliefs. Regardless of whether their answer is "Yes" or "No", ask for permission to walk them through the Epic Story of the ages by explaining biblically the significance of the following five words suggested by our Louisiana State Minister, Dr. Michael Sprague:

GOD (*Does He exist and what is He like?*)

CREATION (*Who am I and what is my identity?*)

STRUGGLE (*What is wrong with the world...me and who is the villain?*)

RESCUE (*What/Who is the solution?*)

HOME (*Where am I going and is there any hope?*)

In summary, let's be ***Praying***, not bashing, ***Caring***, not ignoring and ***Sharing***, not remaining silent. Focus on these three God-directed activities during the next 60 days and watch Him work through us in the lives of those He places in our path. What a 2015 year end celebration this could be!

Ask Yourself:

- (1) Do I have faith to believe that God has the power to change lives?
- (2) Do I have the courage and boldness to step out of my comfort zone so He can use me?
- (3) Will I be sensitive to the leading of His Spirit?

He has the power to bring meaning out of chaos and peace out of strife in the lives of those to whom we minister.

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