

Sermon Notes





REFLECTIONS

Is the world really in trouble? It would certainly seem that it is foundering in hopelessness and violence. However, do you remember the song we often sang in our childhood, “HE’s got the whole world in His hands”? Well the message within the song is still the truth of the matter. God does have the whole world in His hand. In spite of the upheavals in the governments of men, the wars and conflicts stirring around the globe, and the cry for peace and safety that falls on deaf ears, we can rest assured that God has not relinquished His power to mere men. He is instead a God of longsuffering who gives mankind adequate time to either accept His Son or to reject Him and face eternal judgment.

When men reject God, He allows them to pursue their own destruction. Paul explains it this way to the Church in Rome. *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, ³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.* (Romans 1:28-32 NKJ) Here we’re given a clear picture of the pathways and behaviors of men who have declared that God doesn’t exist or have any role in the affairs of men. Such men have always been the perpetrators of war, violence, and murders and as a result of their works we find our world in great trouble as they, in their arrogance, try to rule the planet.

Man’s history has been full of evil works since the fall in the Garden of Eden. Since Cain killed his brother Abel, men have been filled with hearts that spawn violence in their quest for power. God has not forgotten their evil and the suffering of the innocent at their hands. He has promised that man’s blood will be avenged by His hand of judgment in due time and, in His Word, He has already given us the sequence of events that will end the age and bring about His long-awaited judgment for sin. We are to walk by faith in His finished plan

of redemption in the meantime. Looking at the headlines in the news it is easy to become overwhelmed with the cacophony of pain, suffering, and violence. Politicians no longer remember the foundational ideas that our nation was built upon and, instead, they use their office as an excuse and opportunity to enrich themselves and their allies. In spite of their efforts we know, by faith, that God is still on His throne.

The Church has over the centuries enjoyed prestige and suffered persecution. She has been elevated and then debased. Believers have been great leaders and suffered death and persecution as entertainment for the masses. The writer of the book of Hebrews describes the kinds of suffering that believers have suffered. (Heb. 11) He then gives us the challenge as disciples to live as they did; with endurance. *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* (Hebrews 12:1-2 NKJ)

When we consider the example of those who, in faith, endured the unspeakable efforts of the enemies of God to silence their voices of praise and worship, it tells us that we have been the recipients of a special time and place in history. We have not yet had to face the kinds of persecution described in Hebrews. We have had the freedom to gather and uplift the name of Jesus in comfort. We have been able to see and hear His message on television and radio. As a result we have become “soft” and perhaps even lost our passion for God and His Word. It seems that whatever has little or no cost tends to lose its importance. King David when seeking to purchase property for giving sacrifice to God, was offered it at no cost to him. He replied... *"No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing."* (2Samuel 24:24 NKJ)

While it is true that our world is in trouble, we can rest assured that God’s kingdom is secure and that our eternal future in Christ is guaranteed in Jesus. With our redemption sealed in Jesus, we now can face uncertainty, and yes, even persecution, with confidence in Him who has purchased us with His blood. In spite of the world’s situation, we can walk by faith in Christ and boldly declare that we are safe in the arms of Jesus, no matter what may happen. **Pastor Doug**