

513 A Gospel to Proclaim

As we cope with the steady diet of gloom served up in the news bulletins and newspapers, it is helpful to remember that the purveyors of this gloom spare not a thought for Almighty God and His holy Word. By our giving serious, prayerful time to reading our Bibles while being consciously in the Lord's presence, following that example from last time of John Coleman in his Iranian prison cell, the current gloominess is seen from the Lord's perspective rather than our own. The tragedies, threats, dangers and crises of these days, while real, are reduced to their true context when considered in the light of God's Word.

The Lord tells us through His prophet Isaiah, "For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways, saith the Lord. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55.8-9, KJV). The Lord is in charge; He knows what He is doing; He is taking this world to the times and events which He has made known to us in His Word; and the current gloom, much of it having been caused of course by human sin and folly, is wholly under His power and is occurring by His allowance for His own gracious purposes.

Yes - "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed ..." (from Psalm 2.2-3); those "kings and rulers" being the mighty ones of such systems as the World Economic Forum, the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, the World Economic Forum, G7, Cop27, G20, and so on. Some will be wilfully working against Almighty God in their quest for a man-made global utopia, (known as "the Great Reset"), while others are simply ignoring Him, but the effect is the same – Almighty God is being mocked. That is never a good idea – "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision ... Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Psalm 2.4; 59.5-8 / Galatians 6.7).

So with a steady eye on the Lord and on His Word we are given a proper understanding of the current situation in this fallen world, a world in which we still "have a Gospel to proclaim", as we sing in Edward Burns' fine hymn. In "the post-Christian West" such Gospel-proclaiming is particularly tough work, often with meagre results, but as always in our Christian walk we are granted God-given encouragements.

First, Gospel proclamation has always been tough, for Man's natural heart is sinful, and his innate pride causes him to trip over Christ as "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence" (see Luke 19.14 / I Peter 2.6-8). Despite these difficulties, and whatever our spiritual gifts may or may not be, we have a part to play in "holding forth the word of life" (egs., Psalm 14.3 / Mark 5.19 / Acts 4.18-20 / I Corinthians 9.16 / Philippians 2.16).

Second, and herein is great assurance in our "holding-forth", God the Father possesses, right now, many people who do not yet have faith in His Son Jesus Christ, yet whose lives the Father has already given to His Son. There are numerous references in John's Gospel to these people, including: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out ... of all which he (the Father) hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day ... No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day" (from John 6.37,39,44 (& 65); and see also 17.2b,6,8*,9,11b,24*; and John 10.27-29; and Ephesians 1.1-14// (* The Father gives to Jesus not only people, but words and glory)).

So! - in a congregation or a school assembly, in a street of neighbours or passers-by, in a supermarket or on a social media platform, or wherever else, there are God-marked-out people who have either not yet been called, or who have not yet responded to God's call – not quite the same thing. Whatever the spiritual situation of such individuals may be, we sow the seed of the Word as and when appropriate, knowing that some seed will indeed fall by the wayside, as has always been the case (eg., Matthew 13.4ff). But by the Holy Spirit graciously using our simple sowing, other seed may well fall on the good ground, so that the receiver is thus "saved by grace through faith" by the Holy Spirit, becoming God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works ..."! - (from Ephesians 2.8,10).

Our responsibility is thus to be faithful Gospel-proclaiming, holding-forth seed-sowers, to the mighty or the lowly, whatever the mood of the times may be. How the Lord makes use of those seeds is up to Him, not us, for, thankfully, His thoughts and ways are far, far higher than ours.

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