

July 4, 2021

Galatians 6:14-16

“Some Truths About This Day”

- I. Our Text
- II. Who We Are and Where We Are.
- III. Here For a Purpose.

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Galatians 6:14-16

Dear Friends in Christ,

The moment I realized that I had the July 4th sermon I thought, "Well, what are you going to do with this?" The pastors haven't talked to anyone, inside or outside the church, who isn't anxious and fearful about what has happened, what is happening, and what's is going to happen to this country, as well as the world.

In the course of writing this sermon I reread a statement by former Michigan congressman, Edgar J. Frederick, who died in 2016: "We are a nation with crises, but we only dully perceive their import. We spend much of our time in government today debating whether to travel first or second class on the Titanic." I would say we hit the iceberg quite some time ago.

And then I recalled the account of an American History teacher who posed the following question to her class: "A distinguished foreigner was a big help to the American colonists during the Revolutionary War. Can anyone tell me his name?" One boy blurted out, "God!" This country has been profusely blessed by God with His Word, abundance and varieties of food and material goods, physical and medical comforts. Unfortunately, God has become an unrecognized foreigner.

And I cannot shake the words of British historian, Arnold J. Toynbee who died in 1975: "Of the twenty-two civilizations that have *appeared in history, nineteen of them collapsed when they reached the moral state of America.*" (*Emphasis On Faith And Living*, June 15, 1979, p.3)

I really couldn't decide how I wanted to entitle this sermon, so I'm simply going with . . .

SOME TRUTHS ABOUT THIS DAY

I. Our Text.

In our text the Holy Spirit had Paul set forth several truths to help us in our journey through this world:

But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

First, in spite of all the hopes and dreams of this world, at the forefront of life is this understanding: "...far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Why? Well, boast as much as many will about what they have, or what they do, all of it will go away and be forgotten forever - just as you and I will go away and be forgotten forever, unless God intervenes. Why? Because "The wages of sin is death...(Rom 6:23a) And that includes the death of everything. John writes, "And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." (I Jn. 2:17) And what is the will of God? Jesus answered: "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (Jn. 6:40) Believes what? That Jesus gave His life to pay for the wages of our sin, which are physical death followed by eternal punishment; believes that He secured eternal life and joy for us. But, you know all this, right?

Second, Paul says, "the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." To be crucified is to die. In other words, this world is not the goal. This isn't to excuse us from caring for and helping others, or reflecting the love of God. It's focusing on Jesus' words: "I came that they (which includes us) may have life and have it abundantly." (Jn. 10:10) And that, because as Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." (Jn. 18:36)

Third, our text closes with, "For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel (that is, the people) of God." In Christ, we are a new creation which is rooted in these words of Peter: "(God) has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance...kept in heaven." (I Pt. 1:3-4) Dear friends, the only inheritance we have of this world is the grave.

II. Who We Are and Where We Are.

But there are several other truths about who we are and where we are in relation to our eternal homeland. We want to remember the words of the Apostle Peter: "But you are a... holy nation, a people for his own possession..." (I Pt. 2:9) As I stated at the beginning of the sermon, so many are anxious and fearful about what is happening and going to happen. That brings us to where we are. It's been stated a multitude of times. Many of you are very familiar with this:

"and because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold (Look at what's happening all around us). But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Mt. 24:12-14)

It would appear that the Gospel has been proclaimed as a testimony throughout the whole world. At the same time, we are to remember these words of Jesus:

"Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore, you must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Matt. 24:42-44)

He spoke these words to the first disciples some 2,000 years ago. They were to present His Word to the church for all times, thus they are ours to take with us each day. The fact is, the Lord confronts earthly longing; earthly sentimentality. Through the Word He reminds us;

"For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him (Jesus) then let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name." (Heb. 13:14-15)

And through the Word, the Lord impresses upon us this truth:

"But our citizenship is in heaven, from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subdue all things to himself.
"Therefore...stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved." (Phil. 3:20-4:1)

You see, once again, in Christ, God has "caused us to be born again to a living hope...!" We are eternal citizens of Heaven. Those who confess Jesus to be the Lord and Savior comprise a holy nation; God's possession. He owns us. He has taken us to be His. Everything we have of and that excites us about this world will be swallowed by the grave! And guess what? They won't be missed!

III. Here For a Purpose.

And so, life isn't about "living it up" or getting the most out of this world. It's the fact that God has called us to be His and has left us here for a purpose, as the Word says, "...that you may declare the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (I Pt. 3:9b)

Dear friends we are here for a purpose: to love all people as God loved and loves us in Christ. We care because "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son..." Again, this is the "agape" love; love for the unlovable, the world. This doesn't mean we agree with everything a person thinks and says and does. It means we know the love of God in Christ for poor, sinful and undeserving people like you and me. We want others to know that same love and the promise of eternal life in Christ. We want them to know that real quality and stability to life is to know what God has given humankind in His Word, the Scripture. This is why you and I are still here: *to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called (us) out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

As always, we thank God for the multitude of blessings He has given us in this earthly country. God enable us to stand with His Apostle Paul; with these words of our text: "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal 6:14)

As we journey through this world, God give us strength and courage to keep all these truths in the forefront of our lives. These are the truths about this day and every day.

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott