

Teaching E-mail

53. When a Man's Ways are Pleasing to the Lord (October 1, 2011)

Dear Friends,

We've been working steadily to produce several more segments in our **Way of the Lord** series. These latest ones focus on a grievous misrepresentation of the Gospel message, namely that while many are glad to call Jesus their "Savior", few have little desire to serve Him as their **Lord**. These segments will key in to how the toleration of demonic strongholds, the influence of toxic memories, and the outworking of passive aggression among those who call themselves "Christian" have fostered a deceptive belief system: that there's neither call nor need for Jesus to be **Lord of their life**.

God's Word was given to humanity to reveal His glorious nature, His plan for redemption, and His good and holy way to live. Sadly, numerous religious doctrines and traditions have nullified the Bible's repeated intent that those who come to Jesus in repentant, obedient trust would live with Jesus as **their Lord**. We'll demonstrate not only how Roman Catholicism in particular decimated Scriptural truth over the centuries, but also how Protestantism in general fell so short in restoring these essential foundations. We are as grateful as you are that the Bible — our sole standard for Truth — is now in the language of so many people, and that His glorious grace alone makes Jesus known as the only Source of our salvation (Ephesians 2:4-9). Yet so many other key points which would lead to the **Lordship** of Jesus in the lives of those who claim to belong to Him have

been neglected. Have you considered that the blatant disregard for Scriptural foundations which emphasize the **Lordship** of Jesus may be the *root cause* as to why this nation's enemies have harassed us this past century?

*"When a man's ways
are pleasing to the LORD,
He makes even his enemies live at
peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7)*

If God will make the enemies of someone *who pleases Him* live at peace, He certainly would do this for a nation that pleased Him. Over and over for the past 100 years of our country's history, each generation has mourned multiple thousands of men and women slain in battle. You might think that it's because we're righteous that we've gone to war so often. But we'd like to offer this for your prayerful consideration: **that the root cause behind so many enemies rising against the US is that we've collectively been unrighteous in God's sight**. As a whole, we and our ways have displeased Him. Compromise with unholy, worldly ways and values now dominates much of western Christianity, perpetuated by a clergy system that has too often ignored essential truths in His Word. As the prophet lamented about Israel of old which today's man-pleasing, self-idolizing religious systems parallel: *"The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks in them will know peace"* (Isaiah 59:8).

The "unrighteous roots" of the root cause run deep.

In the decade prior to World War I, Christianity had become so liberal that any call for repentance and believer baptism had almost disappeared from public preaching. To counteract this sorry trend, the Fundamentalist movement arose. While Fundamentalists rightly pushed for a more literal understanding of the Bible, they relied heavily on Greek rhetorical arguments to get their point across. Yet reasoning and argument changes no one's heart. What impact would have resulted if instead they'd countered theological liberalism with the mighty power our Lord Jesus gives His own through His Spirit (Ephesians 6:10)?

Let's look briefly at how *philosophical-rhetorical* argument for the faith was used by Fundamentalists in a legal debate — and failed. During the so-called "Scopes Monkey Trial", the biblical truth of Creation was argued against the theory of evolution in a court of law. Both sides employed Greek rhetoric and polished oratory, the common practice of the secular court system, in order to determine "truth". Tragically for the generations to come, the reality of Creation which the Spirit of Christ might have made known in power through His servants was by-passed in favor of a counterfeit theory postulated by those who were blind to the Creator of all things.

Throughout congregations liberalism reigned; people preferred a "god in their own image" because they weren't encountering the power of Lord Jesus in His own. Holy fear of the only God of the universe was then and is now a hid-

den secret. As the "toleration proponents" proclaim, Why change if I'm OK/you're OK just as we are? Entertainment rather than exhortation to holy living became the pulpit norm for many. (Has anything really changed?)

Is it possible God used World War I as a means of chastisement for misrepresenting His holiness through carnal values and self-seeking lifestyles?

After that "War to end all wars," the decadent, pleasure-seeking "Roaring 20s" became a national penchant to pursue everything sinful (see Luke 12:18-21). "Live for today" was a national way of life, a presumptuous, self-centered pursuit that prepared the way for the soon-to-come Humanist Manifesto .

Is it possible that God sent the Great Depression to bring people to repentance?

Sin-nature driven people are slow to learn. Mainstream Americans refused to repent, turning instead to the government through the New Deal and social legislation to get them out of the Great Depression. Psalm 94:8-11 aptly describes the consequences of stubborn resistance. **Is it possible God permitted World War II to chastise this nation and others as godless as ours?**

Immediately following World War II this nation was mired in a devastating police action in Korea, followed by the Vietnam Conflict, the Panama crisis, the Gulf hostilities in Iraq, and then Afghanistan. In *none* of these deadly, morale-devastating campaigns was the US attacked by these other nations. (And how many terrorist actions and plots directly against this country have come

from nationals of our *supposed allies*?) Through the Freedom of Information Act it's become public that the CIA, through deceit, got this land embroiled in many of these conflicts. How often has that same organization backed evil dictators who heavily oppressed their people even as they themselves enjoyed opulent lifestyles? Those the CIA once considered "allies" are now blacklisted as tyrants: Sadaam Hussein, Ghaddafi, Mubarak.

It's no coincidence that beginning with the era of the Korean police action, this nation dramatically increased in rebellion toward God, toward parents, and toward all other forms of authority. (Are you old enough to have lived through the tumultuous 1960s and 70s?) Over the decades this rebellion has intensified and expanded. The Bible and prayer have been thrown out of public education and much of the public arena. And, as research from Barna and others has made abundantly clear, the moral standards and values of those who consider themselves to be "Christian" are no more righteous than those of unbelievers.

Can it be that God has had to keep His heavy hand on us even more so that this nation, once the envy of all, might humbly repent? As with Israel of old, our collective sin reeks to heaven. Fifty-three million babies have now been murdered in their mothers' womb. The aliens who live among us, many laboring in the fields to keep produce aisles filled, quake in fear of deportation. Fatherless children populate the gangs that keep the gun smugglers and drug cartels humming. Have we collectively closed our eyes and ears — and our

hearts — to the warnings our Father has been sounding all around us?

God uses people to reflect His loving kindness, yet we've engrained in our young an oblivious self-absorption unconcerned with the needs of others. It's far more convenient to send \$10 to help the precious suffering people in Somalia than it is to humble ourselves before the One Who created us all. Have His collective called-out ones obeyed His commands through the power of His Spirit any more than the populace at large: *"This is what the LORD says: 'Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place'"* (Jeremiah 22:3). This nation as a whole has violated so many in need, yet pride and lust for personal prosperity keep us from turning from our sin and crying out to God for forgiveness in Jesus.

The incredible blind foolishness that's being played out in this nation's capital has not come about by chance! Father is making clear that man-centered, ear-tickling lip service from pulpit and pew are repugnant to Him. We would do well to heed the warning of Jesus in Luke 6:46-49. The root cause of this nation's woes, including our economic and natural catastrophes, is turning our back on the God of the Bible (Isaiah 59:12,13). Out of His Father love, He is chastising us that *we might repent* (Hebrews 12:4-13). Tragically, those who are prophetic are not pointing out the sins of this nation, nor are people willing to listen. Hosea's warning is well-spoken concerning the road ahead: *"The days of punishment are coming, the days of reckon-*

ing are at hand... Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired man a maniac. The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman ... yet snares await him on all his paths, and hostility in the house of his God" (Hosea 9:7,8). Will God have to deal with us all the more rigorously to get our collective attention?

The root cause behind God's chastisement of this nation is the same root that keeps so many self-identified "Christians" from exposing the root cause of powerless religiosity in their own lives. "Christians" who do not live with Jesus as LORD of their lives hold to the same worldly values and compromised morals as the unbelievers around them. Is it any wonder that His holy name is being defiled among the Muslim nations when those who claim to be His people relish unrighteousness? A word of encouragement and purpose stands ready if you are free from your sin nature's control and know Jesus as LORD of your life. A desperate world — including your relatives and neighbors and coworkers — are waiting: *"Open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by trust in Jesus" (Acts 26:18).*

Trusting in His faithfulness,
Mike & Sue