

Radio Broadcast for September 17, 2017

The Last Age

Psalm 118.24

It is fashionable in some circles of religion to bemoan the evil of the day with many preachers announcing that they consider their day to be the most evil day in the world. But, this does not always bear close scrutiny. For example, 100 years ago, the United States was involved in a war that would last another year. The total dead from that war would be 18 million military deaths and 23 million civilian deaths. The Century would see another war like it plus the rise of Nazism and Communism which would add many millions more dead to the tally of war and tyranny. But, even though in the first part of this century we have been engaged in a war for many more years than the total years of WW1 and WW2 combined, the total military and civilian dead is about 300,00. We do not diminish the horribleness of 300,000 dead, but it is nowhere like the 41 million total dead from just WW1.

Advances in medicine have added years to our life expectancy. I recently read that the number of people who live in abject poverty has been reduced by 80% in the last 30 years.

But this is not to say that there is no reason for concern. One can hardly be a believer in the Lord Jesus and not be troubled by the direction our culture is taking here in the USA. Like Lot of old, our souls are vexed by the wicked conduct of the people of our age. The generation of my parents, the WW2 generation, were appalled to see my generation, the baby boomers, have so little regard for decency that we laid aside the need for marriage. We, as a generation, fought for the so-called right to not be married while cohabitating and to be fully respected in our decision. But now we see people of the same sex **INSISTING** they have the right to marry and using the force of

the law to demand that even we who are opposed to it on grounds of conscience must lay aside our conscience and service their abominable weddings if we are in such a business.

In our nation, we see the rule of law breaking down and some of our most-cherished rights being legitimately threatened. Lawless mobs protest everything and use fear to silence those with whom they do not agree. There is a concerted effort to paint our law-enforcement professionals as the true enemy and, by fear of prosecution, render them weaker in their defense of our safety.

And worst of all, in our nation, the name of Christ is regularly blasphemed by many who profess his name. Many bemoan the shrinking number of professing Christians but I would prefer irreligion than the sort of Christianity we see taking the forefront. What they call worship is nothing more than spectacular theatre, a demonstration of fleshly talent that certainly moves the emotions but is devoid of any real truth. Stadiums are filled with people who seem to think that gain is godliness. As one noted evangelist has said, they have made churches to seem like Six Flags Over Jesus. My heart is both grieved and enraged by what I see some do in the name of Christ.

I could cite more that seems to make our day a very dark and terrible time. But, according to the Scriptures, you and I who trust the Lord Jesus live in the best day the world has ever seen. I refer you to the words of the Psalmist in the 118th Psalm, verse 24, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Nearly 30 years ago I went to a church in TN to preach at their Bible Conference. It was pouring rain as I ran to get in the building before I was drenched. When I got inside I said something to the effect of, "What a nasty, rainy day." Some man standing just inside the door said in a very serious and somewhat scolding voice, "This is the day

the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it." But, this blessed verse of Scripture has nothing to do with a day such as is found on the calendar and has nothing to do with the weather or socio-political movements or any such thing. In fact, the verses just preceding tell us exactly what day the Psalmist is referring to:

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

The New Testament makes it clear that this is a reference to Christ:

First, Christ is the stone the builders rejected. Jesus was sent by the Father into the world to seek and find His sheep. But, He came into His own and His own did not receive Him. In his own hometown of Nazareth, they first rejoiced when they heard him claim to be the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. But when He pointed out God's sovereign prerogative to bestow His blessings on whom He will, they tried to stone Him to death. Throughout His prophetic ministry the builders - those religious leaders who SHOULD have greeted Him with open arms and bowed to Him as their Lord and God - these builders rejected Him and withstood Him at every turn until finally they were able to engineer an overthrow of justice and have Him crucified. They crucified the Lord of life and rejected the Messiah God sent to them.

But that is not the day to which the Psalmist refers as the day the Lord has made. Rather, it is this: The rejected Stone has become the head of the corner. After Jesus Christ was crucified and the "builders" thought they were rid of Him, God raised Him from the dead. God did this for in His death, Christ fulfilled all He came to do. He redeemed God's people. He brought in an everlasting righteousness by which the people of God are justified in God's sight. The grace is for the sinful. But Christ, by His death, had put away the sins that He

bore; He actually finished the job of dying for them. And having put those sins away, God brought Him out of the grave, for the grave is no place for a righteous man!

But, while this is a foreshadowing of the glorious day of the Psalmist, it is not the day he wrote of. Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father and sat down, God saying to Him, "Sit here until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." And from that time on this world has been experiencing this day which the Lord has made, and we who live in His glorious day have every reason to rejoice and be glad in it no matter what happens on any given calendar day.

You and I are privileged to live in the last and best age of this creation's existence. In at least two places, (1 Corinthians 10:11, Hebrews 9:26) the Scriptures tell us that Christ's appearance and work 2000 years ago ushered in the final age of earth's history. We have no way of knowing how long this age will last: God could end it today or let it run another million years if it pleases Him. We do know that, by His own authority, God has already set the date of the end according to His own purpose. But we also know with equal certainty that it is not for us to know that date.

But, knowing that this is the last age, we can also say that it is the best age for the following reasons:

1) It is the age - the day - of God's own making. It is true that every age is God's making. But it is this age to which all other ages were straining. Christ's ascension to the throne of the Universe is God's own doing and it has brought forth this glorious day of salvation and grace, this glorious day of the reign of Jesus Christ. Some say that we wait for some day in the future for the reign of Christ. But on Pentecost, Peter's message was summarized in these words: This

Jesus whom you crucified, God has made to be Lord and Christ: This stone you rejected is now the head of the corner!

2) The light has never been as bright as it is right now and will never get any brighter than it is right now. It is religiously fashionable to bemoan one's own day as the darkest day on earth and I did mention the horrible abuse of the name of Christ in our day and age. But we are assured from the Scriptures that the light has shined into the darkness of this world but the darkness could not overcome it. Men may love darkness rather than light, but their love of darkness will not put out that light. Men may walk in darkness, but that is not for lack of light. Men may not see the light, but that is not because there is no light: it is because they are blind. Jesus Christ is the light; He is the full revelation of God to this world. God has spoken in His Son and He will not speak again until His voice brings this creation to its end. We live in the noon time of spiritual enlightenment. We have more light than the people of any previous age. We need not look for more light for the full light is here. We must not wait for more light, for no more light is coming. This is the best and brightest day.

3) The door of salvation is opened wide will never be opened wider than it is right now. Today is the day of salvation and the time of God's acceptance. I am a firm believer in all those doctrines regarding the total depravity of man and the sovereignty of God in all things, including salvation. But I also know that God has not told us to act upon the doctrine of His sovereignty but to act upon His promises by believing them. He has promised to save all who come to Him through Christ. Let no one deprive you of taking full advantage of all that God has for sinners in Christ Jesus. Let no one convince you to delay calling upon the name of the Lord as though some future day will put you in a better position to do so. There will never come a better time to trust Christ than right now. There will never be a better opportunity to lay hold of God's salvation than right now. God's door will never open wider for you and your religious

works and experiences will never put you in a better position than you are right now to call upon Him and receive His full salvation. I tell you with all sobriety that if you trust Christ and receive His salvation, it will be because God was pleased to work in you to will and do of His good pleasure. But if you perish through unbelief, there will be no one to blame but you.

4) There has never been and never will be a more profitable time to serve Christ than right now. This is "His day" in the fullest sense. God has determined to save an innumerable host from every kindred, tongue, tribe and nation and He is doing it right now! For at least four millennia the truth and the gracious work of God was confined to very few. But, with the coming of Christ and the giving of the Holy Spirit through Him, God is working miracles of saving grace every day. Yes, miracles more astounding than raising Lazarus from the dead are happening every day. People who were dead in trespasses and sins are being made alive to God. Rebels against God are being reconciled to Him. The bonds of Satanic deception are being broken and people are being set free from the darkness and bondage of human religion - every day. And God is pleased to let us participate in that work by testifying to His truth for the glory of His name. Can there possibly be a better or more worthwhile endeavor to undertake?

This is the Day the Lord has made and we are privileged to live in this glorious day. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!