

12. A Message Worth Sharing (3Q 2020—Making Friends for God)

Biblical Material: 2 Pet. 1:12, 16–21; Rev. 19:11–18; Rev. 14:14–20; Eccles. 12:13, 14; Rev. 14:6–12.

Quotes

- People who do not know the Lord ask why in the world we waste our lives as missionaries. They forget that they too are expending their lives ... and when the bubble has burst, they will have nothing of eternal significance to show for the years they have wasted. *Nate Saint*
- People who don't believe in missions have not read the New Testament. Right from the beginning Jesus said the field is the world. The early church took Him at His word and went East, West, North and South. *J. Howard Edington*
- God is pursuing with omnipotent passion a worldwide purpose of gathering joyful worshipers for Himself from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. He has an inexhaustible enthusiasm for the supremacy of His name among the nations. Therefore, let us bring our affections into line with His, and, for the sake of His name, let us renounce the quest for worldly comforts and join His global purpose. *John Piper*
- The nations are not gathered in automatically. If God has promised to bless “all the families of the earth,” he has promised to do so “through Abraham’s seed” (Genesis 12:3, 22:18). Now we are Abraham’s seed by faith, and the earth’s families will be blessed only if we go to them with the gospel. That is God’s plain purpose. *John R.W. Stott*
- Someone asked, “Will the heathen who have never heard the Gospel be saved?” It is more a question with me whether we—who have the Gospel and fail to give it to those who have not—can be saved. *Charles Spurgeon*
- One faithful witness is worth a thousand mute professors of religion . . . Our faith grows by expression . . . we must share it—we must witness. *Billy Graham*

Questions

Why is the message worth sharing? How do we make sure it's not about ourselves? How do we gain a better perspective on what is truly valuable in this world? In what way does Christ's love for us “compel” us to share this with others? While this world is a lesson book for the Universe, how do we make sure it's God who is vindicated and is the central character?

Bible summary

We have not followed “made-up myths”—God’s message is absolutely trustworthy! (2 Pet. 1:12, 16–21). God will be vindicated and his truth will be victorious (Rev. 19:11–18). God’s harvest will definitely come (Rev. 14:14–20), as will the end-time judgment (Eccles. 12:13, 14; Rev. 14:6–12.).

Comment

God is on trial, and it's our privilege to speak for him, and to reveal in our actions the kind of person we believe him to be. In Acts 2, Peter lays out the evidence that has convinced him. It is an intense appeal to look again at God. Peter confronts his hearers with their false picture of God, and what they have done to Jesus—so much so that they are pierced to the heart. Their cry is, “What should we do?” This realization of how far they have gone from God, and

how much they wish to return, is for all of us. God's message is to "change your minds" and come back to him, our loving Father. In this we also demonstrate the truth about God and his character, the wisdom of his actions, and his complete trustworthiness.

In this context the Great Controversy perspective is all important. For without it we do not see the wider implications of Satan's rebellion, the Fall of Adam and Eve, of even salvation and resurrection. Only as we understand that God is answering the charges of the Devil in all of this do we gain a true insight into God's motives and actions. He is not concerned about himself, for that is not his character. But he is concerned to demonstrate the truth in contrast to the Devil's lies because otherwise his created beings are damaged and lost. That's why Jesus said he is the way, the truth, and the life—because it is absolutely and emphatically true!

So when it comes to us and our representation of God and his truth, we need to make sure we have the right understanding of God and a deep love for who he really is. The truth as it is in Jesus means "putting off" the old self. We all recognize the old self in terms of our wrong thinking and self-centered viewpoint. The new self is not robot-like submission to God, or absorption into him, but the way we were supposed to be—living beings rightly motivated and following what is good, for others as well as for ourselves.

Paul says we are created to be like God. Think about what means for a minute. Then consider what Paul immediately identifies as a hallmark of this recreated self: honesty and truthfulness. That is so important in God's universe—it comes top of the list! No anger, because that gives the devil access. No stealing, no bad speaking; no bitterness, slander, malice. All of these concepts are self-preoccupied, looking to serve and please ourselves at the expense of others. Such things are completely unacceptable in the plan of God for his truly free universe where every being acts out of a sense of love and concern for the other. Kindness and compassion are what matters, with an attitude of forgiveness, remembering how God has forgiven each of us. Such changes in thinking and behavior do not come "naturally" to us, we come to God himself for healing so that we can become "like God in true righteousness and holiness." This is our message to the world!

Ellen White comments

Long has God waited for the spirit of service to take possession of the whole church so that everyone shall be working for Him according to his ability. When the members of the church of God do their appointed work in the needy fields at home and abroad, in fulfillment of the gospel commission, the whole world will soon be warned and the Lord Jesus will return to this earth with power and great glory. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14. {AA 111}

Standing but a step from His heavenly throne, Christ gave the commission to His disciples. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth," He said. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. Again and again the words were repeated, that the disciples might grasp their significance. Upon all the inhabitants of the earth, high and low, rich and poor, was the light of heaven to shine in clear, strong rays. The disciples were to be colaborers with their Redeemer in the work of saving the world. {DA 818}

You may feel that you have accepted the truth, that you understand it, and you may stop there and go no further. It is one thing to accept and hold the truth, and another thing to have the truth as it is in Jesus. {CTr 80.5}