

A Personal Countdown to the End of Your World

This past week while praying I was impressed with these two phrases from Scripture: “...as if had been a light thing...” and “...my people love to have it so...” As I continued in a longer than usual season of prayer, these two phrases kept coming to mind. I would like to share with you the phrases as found contextually in the Bible. The first one is found in I Kings 16:31, in reference to King Ahab, “*And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.*” The second passage is drawn from the prophet Jeremiah. To give you an idea of my application I am including three other verses from the same chapter to give insight, Jeremiah 5:25-26, 30-31: “*Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you. For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?*”

Ahab, king of Israel considered committing and continuing in sin to be a “light thing,” so much so that he married one of the most wicked women in the earth, Jezebel and committed idolatry by worshipping Baal. In other words, he approached his evil doings in a casual, trifling, flippant manner, as something that carries little weight, unimportant and not to be taken seriously. In Jeremiah 5, the prophet declares the people have been robbed of good things because of their sins and the men of God that were supposed to be giving truth and direction were giving out lies and deception and the people love to have it so!

1. Do not take unbelief lightly.

A few years ago I was visiting in the home of some newly-weds. They had been reared in a Bible-believing church and atmosphere. Both of their parents were good Christians and their pastor had even preached in our pulpit. Although they had been reared in a strong Christian environment, they received their education from one of our secular universities here in Texas and their faith had been shaken to the core. They now doubted the existence of God and while in conversation, they began to dissect their old faith and why they no longer believed. Toward the end of their conversation they both began to speak most disparagingly of prayer and people who believe in prayer. Amidst their mockings and criticism, in my heart and mind I visualized the falling of their house of faith. A tornado takes the roof off immediately and the walls collapse in an instant. Whereas, if you drive through old neighborhoods, you see where neglected houses come apart after years of neglect -- roof tile by roof tile -- and paint begin to peel from the walls until the boards beneath begin to rot little by little. Finally the county comes out, inspects, and a sign is placed reading: “condemned.” The young couple did not suddenly embrace this unbelief; it happened little by little.

Like a house falling apart by disrepair, I was witnessing the demise of their house of faith.

Hebrews 11:6 says, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* As I contemplated the world this young couple that had abdicated their faith were now living in, pity began to emerge. I felt no contempt, but deep sorrow. If they continue in this vein, that means children living in their home shall be reared without prayer and the touch of miracles that come through prayer. They will miss the manifested presence of God in their midst, the Unseen Guest at every meal, and the Silent Listener to every conversation.

2. Do not take disobedience to God lightly.

A reprobate is a morally unprincipled person living under condemnation. The apostle Paul, when discussing people whom God gave over to a reprobate mind, said in Romans 1:29a, *“Being filled with all unrighteousness...,”* then he goes on to list twenty-two different sins committed by these perpetrators. In summation, God says through Paul, *“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them”* (Romans 1:32). Please make note, God says they not only do the wrong with knowledge that it is transgression, but take pleasure in doing so! Those were the closing words of Romans chapter two. In the very next chapter, Paul opens with these words, *“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man...”* (Romans 2:1). In other words, man may take it lightly and casually because he personally finds pleasure in these deeds, yet God in full authority as Deity declares man inexcusable!

You will rarely find any statements more sobering in the Bible than Proverbs 29:1, *“He, that being often reprovèd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”* Our word “reprobate” is derived from the Latin, *reprobatus* (reproved, condemned), the opposite of *approbatus* (commended, approved). A reprobate is basically one who has not responded to reproof. Therefore, after many reproofs, God is saying in Proverbs 29:1, if you don’t hearken to My voice you will quickly and without hearing a warning be destroyed. You will not know when God’s judgment is coming because you have lived so long with a deaf ear to His still small voice. Near downtown Houston there was a man who lived all his life near the train tracks. He was so used to hearing the train, that one day, being pre-occupied, he walked out in front of the train to his death, unaware of the approaching train because he had learned to turn the sound off. Oh, how much more dangerous, spiritually speaking, when we flippantly ignore and finally turn off the voice of God in our life!

3. Do not think things can remain the same if we continue to take lightly what God takes most seriously.

In Jeremiah 5:31 it says, *“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?”* When we begin to love what God hates and hate what God loves a paradigm takes place, but not for good. Jeremiah tells us in six verses before the one we just quoted, *“...and your sins have withholden good things*

from you” (Jeremiah 5:25). This is antithetical to Romans 8:28 that promises, “...*all things work together for good to them that love God...*” (Romans 8:28a). When a person doesn’t love God and stays that way, good things are withholden from him. In finality, God asks, “...*and what will ye do in the end thereof?*” Here is a sad personal countdown in the life that takes disbelief and disobedience toward God to heart. God is saying in the end, you have no comfort, assurance or peace. Don’t wait until it’s too late; turn to God now through Jesus Christ our Lord!

-Pastor Pope-

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