

Neville Peter: Our Greatest Need (13/4/19)

Introduction:

There was a popular song released in the 1960's entitled "What the world needs now." The song described the need of a world in absolute turmoil - love. Fast forward to the 21st century and the world needs now what it needed then - love.

"For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape." **2 Thessalonians 5:3**

- Sudden destruction comes upon "them." This tells us that it *did not* come upon 'us.'
- "As labour pains upon a pregnant woman."

When Neville's wife was pregnant the contractions would come and she would groan with pain. The the pains would ease and she would fall asleep. Sounds like our world today doesn't it? Groaning amid the turmoil of terrorism, natural disaster or political unrest. But then, just like a woman who is in labour, the groaning stops and the world falls asleep again. After 911, there was a sudden influx in churches attendance around the United States, but over time they went to sleep. Interestingly enough, during the time when the influx occurred, there was an increased engagement with and following of leaders like Obama, Trump and Pope Francis (who is the most influential person in the world on Twitter).

God is the source:

"He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." **1 John 4:8**

- To know God is to know love.
- God isn't loving. He is love!

Because our world doesn't know God, it cannot know love.

Jesus describes the world in the last days:

"And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold." **Matthew 24:10-12**

- Hatred reigns, because lawlessness reigns
- Lawlessness is "casting off restraint"
- Love has boundaries intrinsically. When God sets boundaries for us it is *because* He loves us.
- Society feels that we need 'love' without God's righteousness. but how is that working out for us?
- Most of us are satisfied with our own goodness. But it doesn't truly satisfy!

Our natural condition:

"But we are all like an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." **Isaiah 64:6**

- Because we aren't grounded in God's "true righteousness."
- What would heaven be like if we took our own 'righteousness' there?
- It would be an eternity of this horrible place! Would you settle for that? No, of course not! Then why do we expect God to settle for it?

"There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, yet is not washed from its filthiness."

Proverbs 30:12

- We see ourselves as pure. But when we are not washed, we are actually filthy.

What is the solution?

"A ruler who lacks understanding is a great oppressor, but he who hates covetousness will prolong his days." **Proverbs 28:16**

- Trusting in our own heart is foolish. But walking wisely brings deliverance. But how can we walk wisely?

Heeding Counsel:

"The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel *is* wise." **Proverbs 12:15**

- Heeding counsel is wise, but doing what is right in our own eyes is foolish. We must heed counsel about our true condition and trust in God's own wisdom.
- Jesus came to the Jews and they told Him they didn't need Him - they had Moses. Sound familiar? He told them they'd believe Him if they believed Moses. When counsel comes to us that is in line with Bible we are often tempted to think that we don't need that counsel because we have the Bible. But often we often aren't listening to the Word of God and that is the exact reason He sends us other messengers!

"Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? *There is* more hope for a fool than for him."

Proverbs 26:12

- There is more hope for a fool than for us when we trust our own evaluation.

"Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." **Matthew 5:6**

- If you desire righteousness, He will fill you.
- If you are filled with the righteousness of Christ is there any room for unholy affections or your own righteousness.

The promise that God has given is the He will fill us. If we fall down

Isaiah:

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts." Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."

Isaiah 6:1-7

Paul:

"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Romans 7:24
True love is to believe in God's love as the real deal. This, believed, is the truth that will save us from ourselves.

Continuing:

"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."" **John 8:31,32**

- If we continue in God's word we will know the truth.
- The truth about God and ourselves. This truth will set us free to be holy, loving, kind, selfless.

"They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?" Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever." **John 8:33-35**

- The human response to Jesus is to identify with some kind of faction. i.e. liberal or conservative.
- They claimed that they had never been in bondage - in spite of their constant bondage. Reality had been distorted.
- But Jesus promised that they could be free from sin - if they would be willing.
- Jesus wants us to be a son so that they could abide forever.

"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." **John 8:36**

- Jesus wants to set us free indeed.
- We can be free! Free to live a holy life! Free to be filled with God's love and righteousness! Free to be a light to this dark world!

Appeal:

God's plan is that we might know Him and thus know love!

"You can't have love without righteousness, and you can't have righteousness without love."