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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

1 Timothy 6:1-6
Lesson #18
Social Contentment
08/27/2023

1

mental handicaps crippled veterans unjust wars dying children

racial discrimination

social abuse "I am Immanuel, I know." impoverished widows

broken families innocent prisoners orphans sexual abuse

It's just not fair!

NO JUSTICE. FEAR NO PEACE.

The human dilemma

2

We respond in a godly way when we are NOT:

1. ALONE
2. ANXIOUS
3. ANGRY

NO PEACE LOVE NO JUSTICE

3

1. We are not ALONE
"Immanuel" tells us that peace start with knowing that God is with us as broken people in a broken world.

"The greatest poverty is to be nobody to anybody."

"I have spent my life trying to be one with the poor."

Mother Teresa

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1. We are not ALONE
"Immanuel" tells us that peace starts with knowing that God is with us as broken people in a broken world.

John 1:9
"This was the true Light that, coming into the world, enlightens every person."

Galatians 6
"2 Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ... 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

5

1. We are not ALONE
"Immanuel" tells us that peace starts with knowing that God is with us as broken people in a broken world.

Implications

1. Those who are facing hard times need to draw comfort and courage from Christ's Spirit as they respond in the way Jesus did. Col.1:11
2. We may not share the same hardships but we all have experienced failure, injustice, and suffering. We can model what it means to "walk by faith and not by sight". Our afflictions and comforts are to equip us to encourage others. 2 Cor.4:16-18

6

1 Timothy 6

“1 Let all who are under the yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine may not be spoken against. 2 And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. **Teach and preach these principles.**”

In a culture that reduces ethics to social justice, applied through political action, **this seems not only inconsistent, but a hindrance to any meaningful social reform.**



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How should we interpret 1 Tim.6?

- In the early 19th cent. south it was used to endorse slavery.
- Today, there are four different approaches:
 1. **An embarrassment.**
It is seen as an unenlightened, pre Christian teaching.
 2. “Slave” is taken to mean (simply) “servant”.
 3. It would be corrected by a broader and more enlightened reading of scripture over time.



4. The Biblical answer may lie in the context that follows (vs.3-6).

8

1 Timothy 6

“3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, 4 he is conceited and **understands nothing**; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction between men of **depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.** 6 **But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment (peace).**”



What is it that is misunderstood?
The WAY of the CROSS.

9

2. We need not be ANXIOUS
The Word & Way of the Cross render us Aliens who are not attached to this world's fears and false hopes.

John 14:27

“Peace I leave you, **My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you.** Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful.”

God's peace stands in dramatic contrast to the world's hope for peace through altered circumstances.

10

1 Corinthians 7

“20 Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called. 21 Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. 22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman;... 24 **Brethren, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called.**”

James 1:9-12

“But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away.”

11

Jesus' Incarnation, target audience, choice of disciples, crucifixion, and call to discipleship are consistent.



Kingdom Power
The Way of the Cross
through worldly weakness

12

Sacrifice is at the core of the Gospel.



Romans 12:1-2

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice**, acceptable to spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, **so that you may prove what the will of God is**, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”



13

Our baptism is about sacrifice, power, and hope.

Romans 6:4

“Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”



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2. We need not be ANXIOUS
The Word & Way of the Cross render us Aliens who are not attached to this world’s fears and false hopes.

Implications

1. Those who are facing hard times need to renew their commitment to **take their baptism seriously and affirm their alien status with a pledge to displace fear with love as Jesus did. Heb.13:5-6**
2. We all are Aliens in this world and can **model how to face anxiety** in the face of hard times. We can show others how to “take our baptismal covenant” seriously. **Rom.12:1-2**

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3. We need not be ANGRY
Our witness to the peace of God is our contentment in the face of hardships.

1 Corinthians 1

“²⁷ but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and **God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,** ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, ²⁹ that no man should boast before God.”

1 Timothy 6:4-6

“Those who “understand nothing” suppose that godliness is a means of gain. But godliness actually is a means of great gain, **when accompanied by contentment.**”

16

The Way of the Cross
was viewed as foolish and insulting in the first century, as in ours.

1 Corinthians 1

“²² For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a **stumbling block**, and to Gentiles **foolishness,** ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the **power of God and the wisdom of God.** ²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

But some see it as godliness.

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1 Cor. 13:4-7


Love is a response to

patient trials
kind insults
not jealous success of others
does not brag success of self
is not arrogant power & authority
not unbecoming freedom
not self seeking competition
is not provoked confrontation
holds no grudges injustice
does not rejoice failure of others
rejoices in the truth gossip & slander
bears all things losses
believes / hopes all things discouragement
endures all things delayed hopes

God's Spirit anoints, NOT our circumstances, but us in our response to them.


18

Those who are "IN CHRIST" by faith are strong in the way they mock the world's strength.




Social injustice, and suffering are invitations to be Christlike in the way we respond to hardship with sacrificial love, unassailable hope, and inexplicable peace, like Jesus.

"You can do this if you abide in my Spirit."



It's just not fair!



"I am Immanuel, I know."

19

God does not promise fairness, but He does promise fruitfulness if we abide in him.



The difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones rests in how we see and use them.

20

Disciples walk by faith not sight.

Social injustice is **NOT FAIR**, but it can be a **FRUIT BASKET**.



We are to take our baptism seriously, knowing that God does, as he calls us to walk in his Spirit.

We are called to **SACRIFICE, WITNESS, and PEACE LIKE JESUS.**

21

3. We need not be ANGRY
Our witness to the peace of God is our contentment in the face of hardships.

Implications

- Those who are facing hard times need to seize the day and not give into anger, fear, or despair, but **turn the circumstances into an opportunity to develop and demonstrate godliness** in a way that compels the world to inquire about the origin of your peace. **1 Pet.3:15**
- Each of us can **model** what it means to displace anger with love, and affliction with opportunity. **2 Cor.1:3-11**

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Paul, James, & Peter shared Christ's Spirit.

2 Corinthians 12

"⁹ And He has said to me, "**My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.**"... ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; **for when I am weak, then I am strong.**"

James 1

"² **Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,** ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance."

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1 Peter 2

"¹⁸ Servants, be **submissive** to your masters with all **respect**, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. ¹⁹ For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? **But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.**"

Following Jesus' example is our calling.

"²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since **Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,** ²² who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; ²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but **kept entrusting Himself to Him** who judges righteously;"

24

How do the “Have nots” bear fruit?

Showing peace in the face of trouble.

LIKE JESUS

How do the “Have lots” bear fruit?

Being “one with” the “have nots”

LIKE JESUS

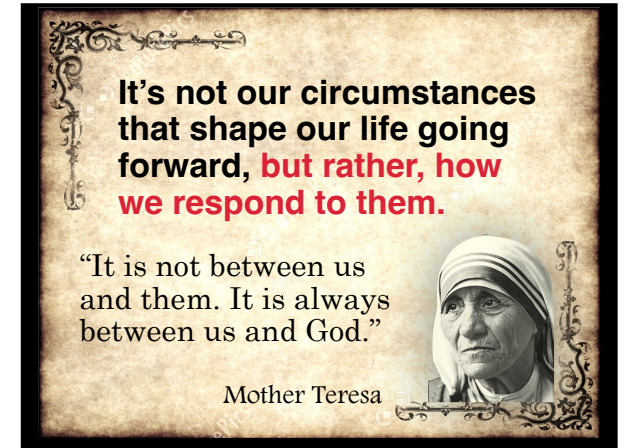
25

Like the Great Physician, we should not neglect medicating the pain of injustice while we treat the root - misplaced hope.

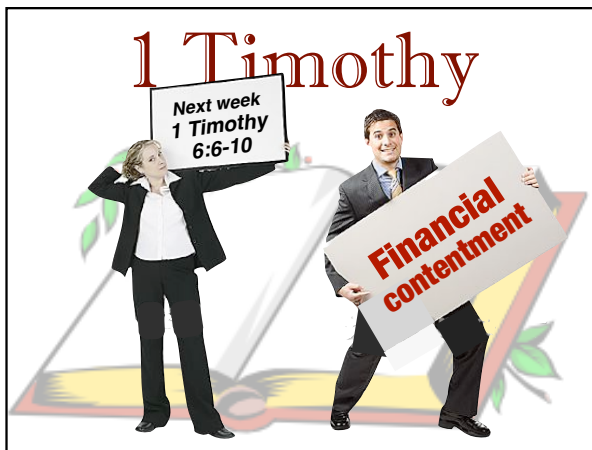
We must show that lasting peace will come through our union with Christ, and not by changing our circumstances or our net worth.

This is the WAY of the CROSS!
This was Jesus’ model for us!
This is the point of 1 Timothy 6!

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