

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 41 (October 8-14, 2017)

This week, we will continue to explore God's message to a world that is upside down. The prophet Isaiah says, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20).

Sunday, October 8 (read Ephesians 4:20-24)

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. (Ephesians 4:20)

In Peter's first sermon, he proclaimed, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Many churches, however, have emphasized baptism while totally omitting **repentance**. The former without the latter is worthless! I certainly hope that you were taught "to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (v. 22b-24). The world wants salvation without any submission to the authority of the Bible as absolute truth! I pray that you "did not come to know Christ that way" (v. 20)!

Monday, October 9 (read Ephesians 4:25-28)

"In your anger do not sin:" Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Because we are members of one body (v. 4-6), we need to be honest with our neighbors (v. 25). Jesus taught that geographic neighbors are not in view here, but rather, anyone who is in need of our assistance (Luke 10:29-37). Verse 26 is one that you already know, but I want you to look at it carefully. Anger, in and of itself, is not sin, but it can give the devil a foothold that will lead to sin if it is not addressed immediately (v. 26-27 printed above). I know that you have been taught that this means not to go to sleep while you are angry, and that is good advice if you can accomplish it. Certainly you will sleep better! However, I think it has a deeper meaning. Many people, who are still angry over something that has happened to them in the past, are near the end of their lives. If you are one of them, I beg you to follow the instructions of the Bible and "Let it go!" Anger will not fit through the narrow gate of Heaven!

Tuesday, October 10 (reread Ephesians 4:25-28)

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. (Ephesians 4:28)

Much of today's anger among our youth involves the redistribution of wealth, otherwise known as socialism. They do not think it's fair that some people in America have more than enough while others are poor. They even say that **God** installed communism in the early Church (see Acts 2:42-47). While the early Church did operate under a community wealth system, they had a rule that separated it from socialism or communism: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Also, their giving was strictly voluntary (Acts 5:3-4), never coerced, following the example of unselfish giving set by Jesus (2 Corinthians 8:9). God's plan is, and has always been, that every able-bodied person must work and contribute to the needs of those who **cannot** work; therefore, there were no needy persons in the early church (v. 28). In America, an entire generation has been taught to believe that it is entitled to a free education, housing and health insurance. No wonder they are letting the sun go down on their anger! No wonder they want to silence the Biblical worldview! That is not how God has ordained for needs to be met!

Wednesday, October 11 (read Ephesians 4:29-32)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. (Ephesians 4:31)

The Christian community far too often smiles at the sins of the tongue (v. 29). We don't consider them to be "bad" sins. The truth is, many of the causes of anger can be traced back to the tongue, particularly in the protests and counter-protests in America. People scream and yell at each other until violence breaks out. Don't miss the fact that those who use their tongue for anything but wholesome talk grieve the Holy Spirit (v. 30). Contrast the list of things that you need to get rid of (v. 31) to the command in verse 32. If someone has done more harm to you or to your race or your gender than you have done to Jesus, then hold onto your grudge and anger. If not, let it go!

Thursday, October 12 (read James 1:19-21)

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. (James 1:19-20)

God gave us two ears and one mouth and tongue for a reason. We should listen twice as much as we talk! We have to know by now that our words do have consequences, particularly those spoken in anger. If we are honest with one another, we can all testify to words spoken to us or by us years ago that still have an impact on our lives. My goal in writing these devotions as well as in sending out 201 Scripture texts each day is to plant the Word of God in you. Not only does His Word guide you to a Holy life and assure you of your salvation, but also, it can build a Biblically correct worldview to help you stand against the politically correct worldview from the media (v. 21). You are not serving God when you hold onto anger against those whom He has created, even if, in your own eyes, your anger is justified.

Friday, October 13 (read Proverbs 24:21-22)

Fear the Lord and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious, for those two will send sudden destruction upon them, and who knows what calamities they can bring? (Proverbs 24:21-22)

The Lord has established governments for the purpose of rewarding and protecting the obedient, as well as for punishing the lawbreakers (see Romans 13:1-7). "Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves" (Romans 13:2). Because of this, I can say with confidence that most of the groups who gathered in Charlottesville in August **to protest** do not have the approval of God. One group is calling for "white supremacy" and death to the Jews, in defiance to Galatians 3:26-29. Another group is anti-government and anti-authority in disregard for Romans 13:1-7. Yet another group is calling for the death of policemen as well as others in authority, also in defiance to Romans 13:1-7. Can you trust God's Word enough to follow His will and His ways? Those who do will live longer physically and spiritually!

Saturday, October 14 (read Proverbs 14:12; 16:25)

There is a way that seems right to man, but in the end it leads to death. (Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25)

God feels that it is so important for you to follow His Word and His ways instead of the teachings and ways of man that He says it twice in these texts from Proverbs. As we have seen in Charlottesville, following man's ways can lead to death, because it always involves anger and disrespect for the authorities that God has established. There will always be those who come to **destroy** others who have differing opinions, even though most of the protesters are peaceful. The loss in Charlottesville hits close to home for me, because Heather Heyer (the young lady who was killed) grew up under my ministry. I grieve for her and Susan, her mom, but I also grieve for many others who have lost their lives in other protests around the country and world. What should we do when we disagree with folks on the other side? That will be our subject in next week's devotions.