

The Blameless and Harmless

Today on "It's a Good Life" we look in the book of Philippians, Chapter 2, and we start reading there with verse 12 down through 16.

¹²Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. ¹³For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Now, Paul the apostle here is speaking to the Philippian church. He's telling them that they are responsible for their own lives, that they are to do what is right. And we're going to read that in just a moment as we keep reading down through these verses.

Verse 13 says, *¹³For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. ¹⁴Do all things without murmurings and disputings: ¹⁵That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; ¹⁶Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*

Paul the apostle is giving some good advice to the church at Philippi, but he's also giving that advice to us today through the Word of God. If I would look at this today and look at verse 15, I would title this, "Be Blameless and Harmless in the Midst." In the midst of what? In the midst of a perverse country, in the midst of a perverse world. Our nation inherited the enviable title of a Christian nation, but this country has become more crooked daily.

There's a little poem that says this: "There was a crooked man who had a crooked smile who

made a crooked fortune in every crooked style. He lived a crooked life as crooked people do and wondered how it turned out that his sons were crooked, too."

Now, the old saying is, "You're going to reap what you sow." The old saying also is, "Payday someday." We're just about there in our country of being given the payoff. We need to get busy for our Lord. We need to be, as Christians, blameless and harmless in the midst of a perverse nation.

The unique inheritance given to us was that of being called a Christian nation. We're reminded of the devout formation of the Mayflower Compact. If you don't know this, if you don't know anything about it, then go back and read history. We're also reminded of the first Thanksgiving Day, the prayerful preparation of the Constitution, the prayers of George Washington, the prayers of the early leaders of our country.

This inheritance of being called a Christian nation was enriched by the Great Awakening in the eighteenth century and then the second Great Awakening in the nineteenth century, but I'm sad to report that there was no great awakening in the twentieth century and in the twenty-first century only a few outcroppings here and there.

Our generation has largely forfeited its distinction as a Christian nation. We've had more wealth, knowledge, power, leisure, and luxury than any other people. We've drifted to spiritual neglect, self-indulgence, and permissiveness and have become one of the most criminal nations on Earth with crookedness, vice, drunkenness, drug addiction, and broken homes at an all-time high. Our Sunday

observance, stewardship, integrity, and morality have reached an all-time low, and I'm speaking to church people today. Our generation is in the process of making a choice, which can be its salvation or its undoing.

The text points the way that Paul the apostle has written for us in the Word of God. The way has been pointed. In a lobby in a beautiful motel near Shreveport, Louisiana, there was a table covered with roadmaps for the convenience of its guests. On the wall above the table was a small sign and it said this: "For the highway to Heaven, turn right and go straight."

We've turned to the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and we look to Him to one day take us to glory, whether we be taken out of this life by death or whether He comes back for us in the clouds when He says, "Come up hither." We're looking for that day. But that doesn't give us the right to go crooked in this perverse generation that we live in. We don't want to go crooked. We want to go straight as the children of God, not to be saved, but because we are saved.

Our text in Philippians Chapter 2 implies there are three options between which we may choose today. First is conformity to the lifestyle of a crooked and perverse generation. The chief goals in America today, according to a recent French observer, are success, privilege, money, power, and security. Another person from France, an appraiser, concluded that America is great because America is good. If she should cease to be good, she would cease to be great. And I would remind you, we're just about there.

The prevailing philosophy seems to be this: Everybody's doing it and to get along you have to go along. Well, that's social economics. In other words, do whatever it takes for the outcome. Well, folks, that's not the way of God.

He says be not conformed to this world, according to Romans 12:2. Touch not the unclean thing, according to II Corinthians 6:17. Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, II Corinthians 6:14. Abstain from all appearance of evil, I Thessalonians 5:22.

I get a little sick and tired of these yellow-bellied, spineless, pantywaist, thumb-sucking compromising preachers who will not stand up for God and His Word. We need to stand up today and raise the banner high for our Lord Jesus Christ.

There's a choice to be made. The first choice may be conformity to the lifestyle of a crooked and perverse generation, and I pray that you're not doing that today. The second choice could be this: isolation from a crooked and perverse generation.

The first impulse of many true believers is toward isolation. In other words, to avoid contamination. They think if you go out into the world and you witness for the Lord you're going to get contaminated. Perhaps this is due to self-righteousness, which says, "I'm holier than thou. I'm better than these people. I don't have to share anything with them. I don't have to tell them about Jesus Christ."

On the other hand, perhaps this is due to timidity. "Well, I just don't think I'm called to do this. I just can't speak very well. I'm real bashful." Get out of being bashful and tell people about Jesus Christ because one of these days we're going to see Him face to face and I want to hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Today, the divine pattern calls for wholesome involvement and outgoing concern for the people of this world, for those who are unsaved. Jesus mingled with the multitude. Jesus commanded, *Go ye into all the world,*

not just to those who are kind and lovable and saved, but go into all the world and preach and teach the Word of God. Mark 16:15 says that.

And Jesus prayed for us, those who are saved, that we not be taken out of the world, according to John 17:15, that we would be sanctified, in other words, united and perfected. That leads to the next point.

The next thing that a person can do, a saved person, is sanctification in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. As we look at some of the churches today, there are real problems. The church doesn't need a message that is relevant to the world. It needs Christians who are relevant to the message. The daily lives of Christians should exemplify the changeless truths of the Gospel.

Some have compared the church to lilies and blisters. Some church members are like lilies. They toil not, neither do they spin. Some are like blisters. They never show up until the work is over. We need to get busy for our Lord Jesus Christ and let people know that we're different and they can be different, as well, by going straight in this perverse generation that we live in.

There have been many spiritual helps given for going straight and it's been provided. In Psalm 119:105, it says, *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

And there's also, I would remind you, rules for the road as we travel. Psalm 37:5 says, *Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

And there's a personal guide. John 16:13 says, *Howbeit when he... and that's the Holy Spirit... the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself;*

but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

You say, "Well, I'm a Christian but, you know, I just don't have the power." Don't make God a liar, because He said on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit would come to indwell believers. He said you would receive the power to go into all the world and tell people about Him, about Jesus. Jesus Christ said that the Holy Spirit would come into you and you would be able to tell others about Him.

The Bible goes on to say that, if you have not the Spirit of God, you're none of His. In other words, you have never been born again if you have never received the Holy Spirit. I'm not talking about some extraordinary thing that takes place except for that of salvation, and that is extraordinary. I'm not talking about some feeling. I'm not talking about something that somebody says you've got to pray through for. I'm talking about receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior and then the Holy Spirit of God comes to live within you and gives you the power to be witnesses unto Him into all the world.

He also gives you the power to go straight in this perverse generation. The most convincing proof of total commitment is consistent Christian living in the home, in spiritual and social behavior, in business, in Christian fellowship.

In I John 3:14 it says, *We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.* We also love the people of this world. We also help them find Jesus Christ as their Savior. We don't hide our heads in the sand and say, "Well, things are going to be better because somebody else is going out and doing the work."

We need to let people know that we're saved. We need to let people know that we're on our

way to Heaven. We do that by letting them see our lives, by letting them know that we're not going crooked in this perverse and crooked generation, but we're going straight. We're helping them find Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior by our Christian living, by being Christ-like.

If you've never trusted Jesus as your Savior, you need to get saved today. There is no excuse for you not being saved. There's no excuse for you going to Hell. You need to trust Jesus Christ right now. You need to trust what He said in the Bible. To as many as receive Him to them gave He the power to become the sons or children of God. He says, *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

And that's you today. You have no excuse because you have the witness of God all around you.

And you've heard this today, Christian, that you need to be walking right so that other people can see Jesus in your life.

Get saved.

And Christian, live like it, because you are saved and on your way to Heaven.

You've been listening to *It's a Good Life Radio*. To request a free transcript of this program, you can write to Dr. Woodard at 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731.

Visit our Websites, www.LRWM.org or www.ItsAGoodLifeRadio.com. We know you will be blessed.

This program is listener-supported. Support your local church first. Any gifts to support this ministry can be sent to:

LRWM
497 Judith Avenue
Fruitland Park, FL 34731

Until next time, this is Doug Anderson reminding you it's a good life living for the Lord. May the Lord bless you richly is our prayer.