

The Restoration of all Things

(ideas from The World and Everything in it broadcast, Feb 27, 2015, interview with John Stonestreet)

Introduction

There seems to be no end- bad news headlines-

- >another state redefines marriage,
- >mass-murder suicide in Missouri,
- >IRS targeting of conservative groups,
- >loss of religious liberties,
- >brutal murder of Christians by ISIS.

As we listen to the news there is the sense that all is not well in the world-

things are going in the wrong direction.

As Christians we must ask ourselves the question- is this the end of the story?

Rom 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

We are reconciled through His death- not the end of the story- we are being saved by His resurrection life alive in each one of us.

We were created to live and to live fully for God. Christ in us, our hope of glory, our hope of being able to walk in the fulness of who we were originally created to be. (Col 1.27-28)

Interview w/Andrew Klavan- Christians in- arts ...

We are made to be so much more than we are and we are so much less than we can be. Andrew Klavan

God has a plan for each of us to be fully who we were created/designed to be in Jesus Christ.

The Restoration of all Things

World does appear- be moving in wrong direction. Certainly much in the news to support this feeling. For many- resulted in- sense of hopelessness. Many Christian's look at-world w/sense of despair
Despair- is the absence of hope.

Rom 15:4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Rom 8.25)

We are to persevere- hold onto to hope in Christ.
Persevere- to be steadfast despite difficulties, to stand strong over a period of time.

If we are not careful we can look at what is happening in the world today- as if-

- >the redefinition of marriage,
- >lost of religious liberties,
- >brutal persecution of Christians-

-as if these will change the outcome of the Christian story- Good News.

The outcome of the Christian story is that ...

- >Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and
- >He is restoring all things to Himself

This outcome is unaffected by what is happening in the world around us- no matter how bad.

Christians have not right to despair, because despair is a sin. And Christians have not reason to despair, quite simply because Christ has risen. Richard John Neuhaus, Lutheran Pastor

Whatever cultural issues we face, we must believe the work of Christ and not lose hope.

We must stand both ...

- >uncompromisingly as far as the Gospel, but
- >we also stand hopeful because of- Gospel.

1 Peter 3:14–15

¹⁴But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled,

¹⁵but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

Must be hope- hope comes from- Rom 15.4.

In the middle of all the issues our nation/world faces we need to have a Kingdom perspective.

2 Corinthians 5:18–20 (Act 3.21, Col 1.19-20)

¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

The ultimate Kingdom perspective is that ...

- >Christ is restoring all things to Himself and
- >we are invited to be a part of that process.

I think back to what it must have been like to have gone through- great depression, WW1/2. People lived in a cultural moment that shaped how they viewed life- many despaired. We also live in a very difficult cultural moment, but we must be careful not to allow this particular cultural point in human history ... define for us the story of the world.

Illustration: Lord of the Rings- first book- kill Gandalf- why?- as if that is the end of the story. Not the end of the story there is a renewal of Gandalf who becomes more powerful in the rest of the story because of his resurrection. John Stonestreet

This is very similar to the Gospel- this cultural moment, point in history- not- end of the story. The end of the story is that ...

>Christ- reconciling all things to Himself and
>we are called as ministers- reconciliation.

This helps us to look beyond the bad news and celebrate the Good News.

We need to understand the evil/brokenness around us from a Biblical worldview.

This is a time to be challenging one another to faithfulness and to practice good works.

Matt 5:16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Jn 17.4)

Our Salvation is free but we glorify the Lord by doing the works of the Lord.

Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,

which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Interesting comment- Chuck Colson- last speech-

We are also seen as wanting to impose our views on people. Do not let them tell you that. We do not impose anything. We propose. We propose an invitation to the wedding feast, to come to a better way of living. A better way of life. It's the great proposal. Chuck Colson

John Stonestree made the observation that there are many "re" type words in the Bible ...

renewal, restoration, repentance, reconciliation, reformation, resurrection.

These all imply a recapturing of an original created purpose that God had for mankind.

God is in- process- reconciling everything to Him.

What is our salvation for?

We often talk about what our salvation is from- sin and death, but what is it for, what is it unto.

It is unto new life, it is unto restoration, renewal, resurrection- world being reconciled to God.

There are many Christians around the world doing remarkable things for Christ- in ...

education, government, arts, business, etc.

God is using Christians- restore things to Himself even in a culture which feels like we are losing.

Never underestimate the power of impacting local culture- that place where God has planted you.

Perhaps- cannot do much about what- happening in DC- we can do something about local

politics, schools, businesses, brokenness.

We are to be restorers of God's purpose in people's lives and in our communities.

Conference- Restoring All Things Conference- deal w/following questions- what is ...

>good in our culture that we can promote, protect, and celebrate?

>missing in our culture that we can creatively contribute to our culture?

>evil in our culture that we can counter?

>broken in our culture that we can restore?

There are many stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary works by the grace of God.

Rom 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Challenge

Find Bible verse about hope- read and reread and memorize- start with Rom 15.13.

Prayer Time

Pray for persecuted Christians throughout the Middle East- brutally killed by Islamic terrorist.

ISIS is driven entirely by Islamic theology- the way they kill/war – prescribed in the Koran.

ISIS does nothing Mohammed did not first do 14 centuries ago.

No moral equivalency between- Crusades/Jihad.

Islamic conquests began 400yrs before-Crusades

Crusades lasted a short time and were primarily defensive to free Christians in the Middle East.

Jihad has been going on for 1400 years.

Islam is responsible- deaths of over 270M people.

Syria/Iraq- ISIS is systematically exterminating whole, ancient, Christian civilizations.

I do not say this to produce hate/despair- there is a place for righteous anger/righteous action ...

Matthew 5:44–45

⁴⁴“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Mike Bickle- IHOPKC- pray for Franklin Graham. Graham has taken- bold- stand against Islam.