

*May 4, 2014*

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## TIME OF REFLECTION

“One of the peculiar sins of the twentieth century, which we’ve developed to a very high level, is the sin of credulity. It has been said that when human beings stop believing in God they believe in nothing. The truth is much worse: they believe in anything.”

~Malcolm Muggeridge (1903-1990), English journalist

“We were keeping our eye on 1984. When the year came and the prophecy didn’t, thoughtful Americans sang softly in praise of themselves. The roots of liberal democracy had held [and] we...had not been visited by Orwellian nightmares. But we had forgotten that alongside Orwell’s dark vision, there was another...equally chilling: Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*. Contrary to common belief even among the educated, Huxley and Orwell did not prophesy the same thing. Orwell warns that we will be overcome by an externally imposed oppression. But in Huxley’s vision, no Big Brother is required.... As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think.... Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity.... Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture.... As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny ‘failed to take into account man’s almost infinite appetite for distractions.’ In *1984*, Orwell added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we fear will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we desire will ruin us.”

“When two human beings get together, they’re co-present, there is built into it a certain responsibility we have for each other.... You can’t just turn off a person. On the Internet, you can.”

— Neil Postman (1931-2003), New York University professor and author of *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*

“As Michel Foucault pointed out in his detailed study of the mechanisms of power, nothing suits power so well as extreme individualism. In fact, he explains, political and corporate interests aim at nothing less than ‘individualization,’ since it is far easier to manipulate a collection of discrete and increasingly independent individuals than a community.”

~ *The New York Times*, December 16, 2012

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## *Worship through the Word*

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**SERMON** – “The Method of Gospel Ministry” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

**SERMON PASSAGES** – *selections from Acts (NASB)*

*Acts 17:2-4* – Paul in Thessalonica

<sup>2</sup> And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.”

<sup>4</sup> And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women.

*Act 17:16-17* – Paul in Athens

<sup>16</sup> Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. <sup>17</sup> So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.

*Acts 18:4-5, 11* – Paul in Corinth

<sup>4</sup> And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. <sup>5</sup> But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

<sup>11</sup> And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

*Acts 19:8-10* – Paul in Ephesus

<sup>8</sup> And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup> But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup> This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

*Acts 28:23-24, 30-31* – Paul in Rome

<sup>23</sup> When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. <sup>24</sup> Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.

<sup>30</sup> And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, <sup>31</sup> preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.