

March 30, 2014

TIME OF REFLECTION

“Faith is not based on ignorance but on knowledge. Understanding is joined with faith...unbelief in all men is always mixed with faith.”

~John Calvin (1509-1564), French-born reformer

“It is not that U.S. Christianity is being secularized. Rather more subtly, Christianity is either degenerating into a pathetic version of itself or, more significantly, Christianity is actively being colonized and displaced by a quite different religious faith.”

~Christian Smith, noted contemporary sociologist

“We modern people believe in absolute freedom. Many of us don’t believe in God at all. Many of us don’t believe in a God that you can know. Therefore, we believe in no God or no God you can really know because we believe in freedom. If there was a God we could know, who told us how we had to live, and who gave us the rules, and the regulations, well, then we wouldn’t be free but because we believe in freedom and because we don’t believe in the traditional view of God...we are free.”

~Albert Camus (1913-1960), French Nobel Prize winning author

“What I always thought growing up, which I think a lot of people feel, was that the Bible was like a rule book and if I stepped left or right, a lightning bolt might hit me. But actually it’s a love story.”

~Television producer Mark Burnett in *Time* interview March 10, 2014

“The extension of the good news in the power of the Spirit is the theme of Acts....As Jesus had been anointed at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and power so his followers were now to be similarly anointed and enabled to carry on his work.”

~F.F. Bruce (1910-1990), New Testament scholar

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “The Kingdom of the Conquered King” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Acts 28:16-31 (NASB)*

¹⁶ When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

¹⁷ After three days Paul called together those who were the leading men of the Jews, and when they came together, he began saying to them, “Brethren, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. ¹⁸ And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death. ¹⁹ But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation. ²⁰ For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel.” ²¹ They said to him, “We have neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren come here and reported or spoken anything bad about you. ²² But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere.”

²³ 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

Acts 1:6-8

⁶ So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; ⁸ but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

Acts 5:30-32

³⁰ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. ³¹ He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. ²⁴ Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe. ²⁵ And when they did not agree with one another, they began leaving after Paul had spoken one parting word, “The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, ²⁶ saying,

‘GO TO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY, “YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; ²⁷ FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES; OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.”’

²⁸ Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen.” ²⁹ [When he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.]

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