

Trends

A survey of 3,000 Americans in 2014 and 2016 found:

- ☛ More than two-thirds (69%) believe "the smallest of sins" do not deserve eternal damnation.
- ☛ Over half of US adults (58%) believe worshiping alone or with one's family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church. Only 30 percent disagree.
- ☛ A majority of US adults (59%) believe the Holy Spirit is a force, not a personal being.
- ☛ A majority of US adults (60%) agree that "religious belief is a matter of personal opinion [and] not about objective truth"—and 1 in 3 evangelicals (32%) say the same.

—via Christianity Today

Mark 9:43-44: "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched — 44 where 'Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.'"

News & Notes

Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She's an encouragement to all!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

Pray for the African appeal for funds to buy Bibles, songbooks and support faithful preachers' travel expense. Donate if you're able! 1 Jn. 3:17

Another 6.9 earthquake hit the southern Philippines. There have been over 3,000 tremblers since this terrible disaster first hit October 16th. Remember, we are "tools of God's providence" for those in need! Jas. 2:14-17; 1 Jn. 3:1-7

Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?!

Anyone need prayers? Let us know so we can announce it and post it.

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Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



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"Such a Time as This"

John Edwards

With letters sent throughout the kingdom of Ahasuerus "to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day" (Est. 3:13), Mordecai said to Esther, "... who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Est. 4:14). During these challenging, uncertain times, when millions of people are under stay at home orders and things are changing rapidly every day, here are some spiritual things to consider "for such a time as this":

Life is uncertain. The wise man said, "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1). Remember what James said to those who say, "To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain" (Jas. 4:13)? "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (Jas. 4:13-14). Such a time as this points out what we do not know, and the need to say, "If the Lord will."

Help comes from the Lord. Such a time as this is but an expression of our need for God who can do more for us than earthly persons. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:1-2).

Nothing new under the sun. 'Tis true what Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 1:9-10 — "... there is no new thing under the sun." There have been pandemics before, as well as sickness, death, earthquakes, famines, floods and the like. As bad as it is, it has been much worse! Imagine such a time as this: a seven-year famine and all countries going to Egypt to buy corn (Gen. 41:57). No rain for 3 ½ years (Jas. 5:17). All you have is "an handful of meal" and "a little oil in a cruse" (1 Ki. 17:12). "Great famine in Samaria... So we boiled my son" (2 Ki. 6:24, 29). "No peace, but great vexations upon all inhabitants of the countries" (2 Chr. 15:5). "Great dearth throughout all the world" (Acts 11:28).

No cause for panic. Many today are gripped by fear. Anxiety and worry

weigh a person down. “Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop” (Prov. 12:25). Read Matthew 6:25-34 to learn, “Take no thought for your life.” The birds are still singing and the flowers are still blooming. “Be not dismayed whate’er betide, God will take care of you,” we sing. “Be careful for nothing...” (Phil. 4:6).

Pray. Rather than fear and anxiety, “...in every thing by prayer and supplication...let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6). The Lord taught, “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk. 18:1). Paul instructed, “Praying always...” (Eph. 6:18).

Give thanks. Notice how Paul said to pray — “with thanksgiving” (Phil. 4:6). We are taught to give thanks in all circumstances (1 Th. 5:18). There are so many things to be thankful for, in such a time as this!

Be forbearing and longsuffering. At such a time as this, when people are fearful and afraid, depressed and stressed, it’s easy for folks to act and speak in ways they would not otherwise. We need a good dose of Colossians 3:13 — “Forbearing one another” — and 1 Corinthians 13:4 — “Charity suffereth long, and is kind.” No need to fall out with brethren who seek to serve the Lord in these challenging times.

Help others. Some are doing very well. Others are barely doing. Have a wide-open hand (Dt. 15:7-8), remember the principle set forth in 2 Corinthians 8:14-15, and look on the things of others (Phil. 2:4).

Be right with God. If your heart is not right with God, you need to make it right. As one who has never obeyed the gospel of Christ: Hear the word (Rom. 10:17), believe (Heb. 11:6), repent (Acts 17:30), confess Christ (Mt. 10:32), be baptized (Acts 2:38) and be faithful (Rev. 2:10). As a Christian who has sinned: repent, confess and pray (Acts 8:22; 1 Jn. 1:9).

The Reign of the Messiah

Craig Thomas

Psalms 2 is a “Messianic Psalm” that describes, among other things, the reign of the Messiah (Jesus Christ). The so-called “Christian world,” for the most part, describes Jesus as a Mr. Milquetoast sort of character. Such a character is timid, unassertive, undemanding, overly accommodative, unduly tolerant, compromising, etc. The Messiah is nothing of that sort! He rules “with a rod of iron” and will “dash” His enemies “to pieces like a potter’s vessel.” (v. 9) This does not mean the Messiah is a capricious and vicious despot. That is totally untrue! However, He does require our absolute obedience (Heb. 5:8-9; Lk. 6:46; Matt. 28:20) and absolute allegiance (Lk. 9:23). In order to please Him we must “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Matt. 5:6) and “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). Most of the human race is unwilling to do so. In the words of the Psalmist, these folks chafe at the Messiah’s demands for faithful obedience. Their attitude says, “Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.” (Psa. 2:3; cf. Jn. 3:19-21) What is the LORD’s response to their unwillingness to submit to His rule? “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision.” (Psa. 2:4) Why? He knows they will

pay the ultimate price for their foolish obstinance: eternity in hell! (2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:15). The Messiah paid the ultimate price to redeem us; yet the vast majority reject His amazing grace. What a tragedy! Surely righteousness and justice demand a high penalty for our rejection of His amazing love! (cf. Rom. 5:8) We need to come to an appreciation that what the Messiah asks of us in return is in our best interests A-L-W-A-Y-S! (1 Jn. 5:3) Submitting to His rule brings forgiveness, hope, peace and tranquility to our lives (Eph. 1:7; Heb. 6:19-20; Matt. 11:28-30; Phil. 4:7). Unfortunately, most of the humanity will reject their Messiah and end up with eternal regret in eternal fire (Matt. 7:13-14). Let us not be fools and reject Him. Let us take the advice of the Psalmist when he said,

*“I I Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
I Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish in the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”*
(Psalm 2:11-12)

Me Against the World?

Craig Thomas

Have you ever felt the world is against you? David surely did and expressed it in Psalm 3. Many believe David wrote this Psalm during his son Absalom’s rebellion (2 Sam. 15-18). Imagine your own kin turning against you to the point they are hunting you down to kill you! David was a righteous man; he was a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22). The fact he was forced to flee was interpreted by his enemies as God abandoning him (“There is no help for him in God.” v. 2). The unrighteous do not understand how God works. God is not like the genie in the bottle who, at the snap of our fingers, is summoned by our command. Neither is He like the fire hose we see in large buildings with the sign “Break glass only in case of emergency.”

Several days ago, we noted God A-L-W-A-Y-S hears and answers the prayers of the righteous. However, He answers our prayers on His timetable and does not always answer in the way we think it should be done. Recall the apostle Paul’s prayer for the removal of his “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor. 12:7-10). In essence the LORD said, “No, I will not remove it.” However, He promised Paul He would help him successfully deal with it (“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’” 2 Cor. 12:9) David so eloquently accepted that same principle.

In v. 3 he recognizes God’s loving care. In v. 4 he pleads with the LORD to shower that care upon him. In v. 5 he exercises patience (cf. Psa. 27:14) and the LORD “sustained” him. We know from 2 Samuel that Absalom continued to pursue David; so, David’s prayer was not immediately answered. In times of great trouble do we have that strong a faith? In the remainder of this Psalm David praises the LORD as he is infused with confidence of the LORD’s tender and complete care. David was totally convinced that “Salvation belongs to the LORD. Your blessing is upon Your people.” (v. 8) Do you and I have that kind of faith?