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THOUGHT
FOR
CHRISTIAN
LIVING

Today's Quick Word Luke 16:14-15

By Bruce Christian

LUKE 16:14-15 - *The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.*

The Pharisees, the 'respected' religious leaders of Jesus' day, are the prefiguration of the humanism that dominates the world's thinking today. Their attitude to life typifies the generally accepted way of thinking in our own society.

Jesus had just challenged them with the real implications of the First Commandment, which they prided themselves in keeping to the letter. He had said, "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." (13). But, instead of listening and taking his word to heart, they 'sneered' at him. The word used means to 'hold up one's nose in derision'; to 'scoff'.

No, the Pharisees made 'human wisdom' - what was deemed 'acceptable' in the eyes of the world around them - the basis on which they assessed what was 'right' and 'wrong', and this meant belittling God's revealed TRUTH in his Word.

Is it not the case today that, if WE want to speak out in the

public arena about things like abortion, euthanasia, homosexual practice, gender dysphoria, etc, 'public opinion', as championed by the media at large, will not allow us to use the teaching of the Bible as the grounds of our argument, requiring us instead to present arguments based only on 'acceptable', 'scientific' human reasoning and logic. The teaching of Holy Scripture is 'sneered at', rejected as irrelevant for modern man, who 'justifies himself in the eyes of men' and takes no notice of what Jesus said.

Jesus explained why this is so. He refers to SATAN as 'the PRINCE of this World' (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11), ie as the one who has the dominant influence over unregenerate Man. He describes him as "a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (See John 8:38-45 for the full account of Jesus' description of Satan to the Pharisees). It is no wonder that Jesus says of human 'wisdom', which gets its inspiration from 'the Prince of this world', in this way: "What is highly valued among men is DETESTABLE in God's sight." So, let us be neither surprised or intimidated by the way our society reacts/responds to our proclamation of God's truth, and let us stand firm on God's Word at all times and in all circumstances.



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Today's Quick Word 2 Chronicles 2:5

By Bruce Christian

2 CHRONICLES 2:5 - *"The temple I am going to build will be great, because our God is greater than all other gods." - Solomon*

Whenever I feel a bit frazzled and discouraged, wondering whether my efforts are really worthwhile and productive, or just part of the 'daily grind' on the treadmill of life, I find it helpful to read and reflect on Paul's word to the believers in the Church at Colosse: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." (Colossians 3:23-24).

It is good to be reminded just why we do anything at all in this weary world. There were times, too, when Solomon himself felt the same way: "Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done

and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 2:11)!

Nevertheless, when it came to the building of the LORD's Temple, which his father, David, had commissioned him to do, he was in no doubt about the value of this task because of just WHOM it was for! He was 'working for the LORD, not for men', and the end product must reflect the unequaled GREATNESS of his God.

If we view ALL our efforts in this light it will give us the emotional energy, the spiritual fervour, and the necessary courage to press on, regardless of the cost, and no matter how menial the task might seem to us or to others.

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Today's Quick Word Habakkuk 2:1

By Bruce Christian

HABAKKUK 2:1 - *I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.*

The part we have to play in the outworking of God's Plan of Salvation throughout our time-space world is quite different from the one allotted to Habakkuk and his fellow-Prophets. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write infallible Scripture (cf 2 Peter 1:20-21), whereas we are entrusted with the task of going out on our 'beautiful feet' and sharing the Good News that is written in Scripture wherever and whenever we can (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15; 2 Timothy 4:2; etc, etc)!

Nevertheless, there is an important lesson to be learnt from Habakkuk: he 'stood, watched and waited on the LORD' for instruction on how best to communicate with the people to whom he was sent. This sounds to me a lot like what we do in our 'daily devotions': we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we read and meditate on a portion of God's Word, and we ask the Holy Spirit to give us the wisdom we need, to direct our steps for opportunities to share the Gospel, and to go before us preparing people's hearts/minds to receive God's Word and to respond to it.

Habakkuk was given a difficult task in a hostile environment

then, and ours is no less so today! Habakkuk's hearers were full of complaints about God's 'providence' in their lives (their God, the LORD, was about to all but destroy them and everything they held dear!). Is it not the same for us? Why is God allowing so many people to die from the Corona Virus? How will our economy ever recover from the impact of it on our way of life into the future? What does the future look like for our grandchildren, as governments continue to legislate for things that are contrary to Scripture, and doing it in a way that is making it more and more illegal for us to actually teach what the Bible says and to make known the wise, compassionate teaching of Jesus in a world that is lost and hurting?

Let us not despair, but let us follow Habakkuk's example and "look to see what [God] will say to [us], and what answer [we are] to give to this complaint." And let us resolve with the faithful Prophet: "Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the [humanistic worldview] invading us. Though the fig-tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Saviour. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights." (3:16b-19).