

Monday, June 1, 2020

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him."

Malachi 3:17-18

Just when I was running out of things to say to bring comfort in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, society has come through in providing even more need for us to keep our hope and our focus on the Lordship and the eventual "Coming" of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I used to have a hard time imagining what life must have been like at the time of Noah and the Great Flood. As it says in Genesis 6: 11 – "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence." It's hard to believe the degree to which evil has infiltrated the human race. Of course, I am referring to the ridiculous anarchy that has been unleashed over our nation's cities for the past several days!

In my frustration, I have been wanting to know who I can call to tell them some of my ideas of how the government might put a stop to this craziness. But it is not in my hands. We need to wait, I suppose, for those who have the authority to decide what they are going to do about it. As I have said before, social commentary is not the purpose of these little "devotionals." The purpose of these writings is to set our sights on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, as we are told in the Book of Hebrews.

The context of the reading from Malachi, printed above, is this: "And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper, but they put God to the test and they escape." (*Malachi 3:15*) Thousands of "evildoers" have been "getting away" with all the evil they have been unleashing on society. They are literally being "allowed" to wreak havoc and chaos on what is meant to be a civilized nation. What is going to be done about this?

This is the very question that was being asked of God in the reading from Malachi. Why is evil allowed to prosper in the world? God does give an answer to this question in Malachi. He says that the Day will come when He will gather His people together – those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior – and there will be a clear distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

As I watch the craziness that is going on, I need to learn to not only wait for the authorities to determine that "enough is enough," but also to wait for God to determine when "enough is enough." In other words, I need to wait with patience and faith for the Day when God will put a stop to ALL of the craziness that goes on in this world – stuff that's been going on since the day that sin came into the world. I also need to recognize the fact that if I, a sinful human being who deserves eternal condemnation myself, can become angered by what goes on in the world, how much more is God wanting to put a stop to it.

That Day will come. God is fully aware of everything that is happening in our world. In fact, He sees all of it. He sees what's in the heart of every person. And He has made a promise that the Day is coming when He will act. And a distinction will be made between those who have served God and those who have not. Jesus is Lord. The Book of Revelation ends on a very high note of hope and joy: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. Amen."

God's peace!
Pastor Jim