

Navigating Uncertain Times with the Rudder of Peace

“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.” -2 Thess.2:1-2

In this passage the word *shaken* means “to become emotionally unsettled, to be deeply distressed, or upset.” And the word *troubled* means “to be in a state of fear associated with surprise—to be startled.” The apostle Paul is writing to assure the Thessalonian church that God’s end-time plan will indeed play out according to his gospel. And though there were those who would seek to trouble them by airing their own differing opinions and perspectives publicly God was ultimately the Great Overseer of world affairs.

This same exhortation applies to us today. Many, many people in our society are upset, unsettled and fearful with all of the great changes taking place and the rapid pace at which these changes are happening. From COVID-19 to the political arena to economic concern to the infringement on basic constitutional rights such as assemblage, freedom of speech and religion our society is reacting and responding in whichever way seems right in the moment.

Jesus told us that as the time of the end (the end of this age, not the end of this world) draws near these types of things would happen on a global level. Societal, economic, political, health-related, religious, ethnic and even the natural order of things would be shaken. “*All of these things must take place,*” He said (Mt.24:6). Jesus prophesied that as these things began to unfold simultaneously on the earth the hearts of many would fail them for fear (Lk.21:25-26).

But fear does not have to be the case for His church. We are to remain hopeful knowing that though troubles must come, “*Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.*” - Ps.34:19. God has a redemptive plan for the nations of the earth and in this plan all things work together for the good of those that love Him and are called according to His great purposes.

Neither the democratic nor the republican party is the great hope of the church -nor is any earthly government. We do not need to fear when the economy is recessive or when men and women in authority seek to abuse their powers. These things aren’t pleasant to be sure, but they are not to be the basis for our peace.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” -Phil.4:6-7

As a new year begins one thing is certain. Media personalities, business, health, celebrity and governmental people will continue to air their opinions and perspectives, offer solutions, introduce new policies and debate about which way is the right way forward. Some of this will be helpful and some will not. There will continue to be disagreements over these issues and proposed solutions, rapid change is inevitable, and men’s hearts will still be tempted to dwell in fear. But this is not to be the narrative of the church. The brilliance of God’s kingdom shines brightest in the darkness (Is.60:2) and the darkness will not overcome those who love God and follow Him with all of their heart. Amen!

