

TURNING THE TIDE

The morals and values of this nation have changed! Many don't consider the USA a Christian nation. As president Obama has repeatedly said, "Whatever we once were, we have changed."

What happened? How did we get this way? What will this country look like for the next generation?

It's easy to be pessimistic about our country's spiritual state – is there any hope at all?

Can I make a difference?

Some Startling Stats: * 70% of young people are leaving the church as they mature.

Why? They see hypocrisy in the church's message.

* Our president calls the USA a Christian nation, a Muslim nation, a Hindu nation and a nation of non-believers.

* Billboards are going up around our nation encouraging people NOT to believe in God.

→ Also, consider the "separation of church and state," the actions of the ACLU, the ouster of prayer in public schools, *Roe v Wade*, Gay marriage becoming legalized and more prominent, removal of 10 Commandments from courtrooms, the attack on Christmas, etc.

You CAN make a difference!

I. Understand the enemy's STRATEGY!

→ Don't fight the symptoms alone ... go after the source!

→ While Satan has attacked Christianity's foundation, the church has largely refused to fight!

Q: What is Christianity's foundation? GENESIS 1-11

II. It is not enough to BELIEVE FOR MYSELF ... I must IMPACT OTHERS!

→ Being a Christian is not a PRIVATE affair!

→ For fun: what aspects of Christianity can you practice alone? (prayer, Bible-reading, worship)

Now ... consider the corporate nature of our faith:

* Baptism * Preaching * Missions * Confession * Laying on of hands

* Edifying * Rebuking * Training * Giving * Service

How to Make an Impact

1. Don't RIDE THE FENCE!

* Joshua 24:14-15 (explain background: preparing to live in the land)

> We have to make a choice ... there is NO NEUTRAL GROUND!

> Q: How do we sometimes try to find neutral ground?

> Q: What is another name for neutral ground? COMPROMISE

> ex: *Theistic evolution; separation of church and state*

* Matthew 6:24

> Can you think of examples of serving 2 masters?

* in this verse, the opposing master is MAMMON.

* Other masters which compete for our servitude:

- social acceptance - popularity - status quo

2. Don't FEAR THE FIGHT!

* Joshua 1:6-9 – “Be strong and courageous!”

→ v.9 – “Don't be TERRIFIED; Don't be DISCOURAGED”

* Why? The LORD your God will be with you!

* A lesson from Joshua's strategy for conquest:

→ Jericho: A NON-MILITARY Strategy (Joshua 6:1-5)

→ Ai: A SOUND MILITARY Strategy (Joshua 8:1-2)

** Key: Sometimes God asks you only to walk and shout ... sometimes to fight.

As we prepare to fight ... we only need to do what He tells us ... we don't have to fight IN OUR OWN STRENGTH!

* Luke 21:14-15 (see also Mt. 10:19-21)

> Q: How can this verse be misinterpreted?

> We need to be students who PREPARE ourselves to answer!

* 1 Peter 1:13 – Prepare your MINDS for action!

-- lit. gathering up your flowing robes so you can run

* 1 Peter 3:15

* If we're WILLING to fight (not afraid) and PREPARED to fight ...

Jesus will help us fight SUCCESSFULLY!

3. Don't HIDE THE FLAME!

* Matthew 5:13-16 – We are called to be SALT & LIGHT

* Q: What are practical ways we might put our flame under a bowl?

... and what happens to a flame put under a bowl?

* Matthew 28:18 – Go ... and AS YOU ARE GOING ...

> We don't have to ... CHANGE OCCUPATIONS

RUN FOR OFFICE

STAGE A DEMONSTRATION ... though God might call us to these!

* However, we need to INVITE & EXPECT & then RECOGNIZE opportunities to SHINE!

> ex: Evolution – always point it out ... **always!**

How many opportunities to impact the foundation of our society have we let slip away because we didn't seize the moment due to (1) fear, (2) fence-riding, (3) lack of knowledge / preparation or (4) lack of recognition?

CLOSING: How do you eat an elephant? The same way you change a culture.

→ You have to take the first bite ... you have to enter the arena

→ One bite at a time ... one soul at a time

→ You can't stop eating ... you can't stop impacting