

“STAND UP, DON’T GET LOST IN THE CROWD”

Sunday, March 16, 2008 “Palm Sunday”

Text: 2nd Timothy 1:7-10

HAVE A POSTER/PRINT BOARD SET UP, WITH MARKER AND ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION;

- HOW MANY CHRISTIANS DO WE HAVE HERE THIS MORNING? RAISE YOUR HANDS, I WANT TO SEE YOU.
 - HELP ME OUT NOW....HOW DO PEOPLE KNOW YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN? (WRITE THE RESPONSES)
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CELEBRATION OF THE DAY...THE RIDE TO JERUSALEM

PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO LINE THE STREETS WHEN JESUS MADE HIS ENTRANCE BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT THEY BELIEVED IN HIM.

BUT WHEN CULTURAL PRESSURES WERE APPLIED, AND DOUBT CREEPED INTO THEIR THOUGHTS....THOSE SAME PEOPLE **GOT LOST IN THE CROWDS.**

THAT WOULD BE A VERY HUMAN RESPONSE, WOULDN’T IT?

IT IS VERY SIMILAR TO WHAT WE SEE HAPPENING IN THE POLITICAL WORLD TODAY...PEOPLE ARE LINING UP WITH THEIR CHOSEN “SAVIOR IF YOU WILL”....NOT IN A SPIRITUAL SENSE, BUT IN A SOCIO-ECONOMIC, WORLD VIEW SENSE, AND THEY WILL STAY WITH THAT CANDIDATE **UNTIL SOMETHING CHANGES THEIR MIND**...COULD BE PEER PRESSURE...COULD BE FAMILY PRESSURE...COULD BE SOME FORM OF MEDIA PROPOGANDA....THEN THEY WILL ‘CROSS OVER’.....

AS PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, GOD’S ONLY SON SENT TO SAVE US...AS PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE HE IS ‘THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE’...**BECAUSE WE HAVE THE HISTORICAL FACTS TO SUPPORT OUR BELIEF**...THEN WE NEED TO MAKE **OUR STAND, AND NOT GET LOST IN THE CROWD.**

NOW LET'S CONSIDER TODAY'S TEXT AND WHAT PAUL IS WRITING TO TIMOTHY WHOM HE HAD BEEN MENTORING IN THE MINISTRY, AND WHO WAS PASTORING A CHURCH AT EPHESUS....

LET'S LOOK FOR A MOMENT AT TIMOTHY....SEE IF THERE IS ANYTHING IN HIS LIFE THAT YOU CAN RELATE TO;

- HE FELT OVERWHELMED AT TIMES WITH VARIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES.
- HE HAD A SOMEWHAT RESERVED PERSONALITY.
- HIS CONVERSION TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH WAS SOMEWHAT GRADUAL.
- BECAUSE HIS BIOLOGICAL FATHER HAD DIED HE WAS RAISED BY BOTH HIS GRANDMOTHER AND MOTHER, BOTH WHO HAD VERY SINCERE FAITHS.
- HE WAS NURTURED IN THE FAITH BY ANOTHER MALE FIGURE....IN THIS CASE IT WAS PAUL.

CAN YOU IMAGINE BEING NURTURED IN THE FAITH BY PAUL WHO WAS NOT SHY ABOUT SHARING HIS LOVE OF CHRIST, AND THE DEPTH OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST?

PAUL PROBABLY SAW WITHIN TIMOTHY THOSE QUALITIES THAT HE RECOGNIZED WOULD ENABLE TIMOTHY TO BE A GREAT PASTOR....A LEADER IN THE FAITH.

MAYBE THE ONE THING THAT PAUL DIDN'T COUNT ON WAS HOW TIMOTHY WOULD RESPOND WHEN HE LEFT HIM ON HIS OWN.....

THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS WAS NOT AN EASY CHURCH.

EPHESUS WAS ONE OF THE CHIEF COMMERCIAL CENTERS OF WESTERN ASIA MINOR....IT WAS CALLED THE "CROWN JEWEL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE".

EPHESUS WAS OPULENT, PROSPEROUS, RICH AND WEALTHY.

BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION TO CHRIST BY PAUL, THE PEOPLE OF EPHESUS WORSHIPPED AT THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS....IT WAS MASSIVE, AND THEY WORSHIPPED THE GODDESS OF FERTILITY DIANA.

AND BECAUSE OF ITS GREAT WEALTH, AND ATTENTION TO WORLDLY NEEDS, WORSHIP BECAME VERY PAGANISTIC FOCUSING ON WORLDLY GODS.

FALSE PROPHETS WERE PREACHING WORLDLY MESSAGES....TRYING TO GET PEOPLE TO TURN AWAY FROM THEIR JEWISH HERITAGE, AND TEACHINGS.

BUT IN THE MIDST OF IT ALL, A CHRISTIAN CHURCH WAS BIRTHED....

IT WAS BIRTHED BY THE GRACE OF GOD, AND BECAUSE PAUL WOULD NOT SUCCUMB TO THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE RICHNESS OF WORLDLY THINGS.....

HIS VOICE FOCUSED ON THINGS BEYOND THE TEMPORARY PLEASURES OF THE WORLD...HE FOCUSED ON WHAT WAS YET TO COME....

PAUL DID NOT ANTICIPATE THAT TIMOTHY WOULD SHY AWAY FROM CONFRONTATION.....

HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE THAT TIMOTHY WOULD BE ON THE VERGE OF DISAPPEARING IN THE CROWD.....

MAYBE TIMOTHY WAS AFRAID TO STAND UP FOR WHAT HE BELIEVED IN BECAUSE HIS MENTOR, PAUL, WAS IN PRISON IN ROME.

DO YOU THINK SOME DOUBT BEGAN TO ENTER TIMOTHY'S THINKING?

LISTEN AGAIN, AND TRY TO FEEL THE EMOTION IN WHAT PAUL IS WRITING TO TIMOTHY....KEEP IN MIND THAT PAUL IS IN PRISON FOR HIS BELIEFS...HE IS NOT EMBARRASSED ABOUT THIS...NOR IS HE SORROWFUL....HE WANTS TIMOTHY TO KNOW HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO STAND UP, AND BE STRONG FOR HIS FAITH IN CHRIST....NO MATTER WHAT THE COST.....

THREE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS....

(FROM THE MESSAGE)

2Ti 1:7 God doesn't want us to be shy with his gifts, but bold and loving and sensible.

2Ti 1:8 So don't be embarrassed to speak up for our Master

(GOD'S WORD)

2Ti 1:7 God didn't give us a cowardly spirit but a spirit of power, love, and good judgment.

2Ti 1:8 So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord

(COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE)

2Ti 1:7 **For God gave us a Spirit who produces not timidity, but power, love and self-discipline.**

2Ti 1:8 **So don't be ashamed of bearing testimony to our Lord**

CAN YOU FEEL THE STRONG EMOTION IN WHAT PAUL IS WRITING.....

CAN YOU SENSE THE DEPTH OF HIS FAITH....AND THE CHALLENGE TO TIMOTHY?

FOLLOW THE WORD OF GOD FROM OLD TESTAMENT TO NEW.....THROUGH VARIOUS INTERVENTIONS AND THROUGH THE CHOSEN LIVES OF PEOPLE GOD CALLS FORTH, GOD REQUIRED THEM TO STAND UP, SPEAK UP, AND BE VISIBLE.....

GOD IS CALLING US, WE WHO HAVE ALREADY PUBLICALLY PROFESSED OUR BELIEF IN JESUS *TO STAND UP.....AND NOT GET LOST IN THE CROWD.*

THINK ABOUT THIS AS IT MAY, OR MAY NO APPLY TO YOU.....

A RECENT STUDY BY GEORGE BARNHA SHOWED THAT 90% OF THOSE WHO PROFESS A BELIEF IN CHRIST NEVER TELL ANYONE ELSE ABOUT HIM.

WHAT DID PAUL SAY? **“GOD DID NOT GIVE US A SPIRIT OF TIMIDITY...BUT A SPIRIT OF POWER!” (VERSE 7)**

FURTHER, ANOTHER STUDY ASKS THE QUESTION, “WHAT IS IT ABOUT OUR LIFESTYLE THAT INTRODUCES PEOPLE TO JESUS CHRIST?”

IN OTHER WORDS, **WORD AND LIFESTYLE MUST GO TOGETHER....**

YOU CAN BE A REALLY NICE, GOOD HEARTED PERSON, BUT YOUR LIFESTYLE ALONE ISN'T GOING TO TELL PEOPLE THAT THERE WAS A DAY WHEN A PERSON WHO LOVED US SO MUCH RODE INTO A CITY TO HIS CERTAIN AND PAINFUL DEATH, TO SAVE US FOR AN ETERNITY....A PERSON NAMED JESUS....WHO IS OUR SAVIOR.

IT TAKES THE SPOKEN WORD OF A PERSON WHO HAS THE COURAGE TO STAND UP FOR WHAT THEY SAY THEY BELIEVE IN.

TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE RIDE OF A KING...AND THOSE WHO ARE
WILLING TO STAND UP....

LET US PRAY