

LIVING OUT OUR CALLING IN A CRAZY WORLD, PART 1

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INTRO:

- Every now and then, I feel I need to pivot with my lesson routines. It's never an easy decision for me, and this past week became one of those times.
- We have important things taking place in our world. We have new announcements about being prepared for emergencies, all eyes are on our nation's midterms, and we have breaking news being drummed into us on podcasts and radio shows - - these things have all escalated in the past couple of weeks.
- **I can see it's making people anxious.** I've received all sorts of Facebook messages, texts, and emails. I've had several conversations and phone calls.

NOTE: One would have to be utterly clueless to not see the chaotic, crazy, and dangerous times we live in:

- Churches and Christians are being attacked all over the world. Many believers are being martyred. Overwhelmingly, these attacks are motivated by leftist and Islamist ideologies – and anyone that says otherwise is not doing responsible homework.
- Israel voted in its first national election since the trauma of October 7, 2023. And her most recent elections were corrupted by huge fraud from the progressives and Arabs.
- The US has warned Gulf states to brace for an 'intense' Iran war after midterms. That could be in 2-3 days. Iran is committed to their agenda to utterly 'destroy Israel.'
- Trump is pledging to push for IDF withdrawal from Lebanon if Beirut joins Abraham Accords. That's a bad move for him from a Biblical standpoint, BTW!
- France, Spain, and Italy are being taken over by radical progressives and Muslim immigrants. France is basically an ongoing bonfire now, and all that stuff is coming to this nation soon if things don't turn around quickly here.
- There are valid concerns that the conflict in eastern Europe and in the Mideast could become 'nuclear.'
- Legitimately elected leaders in Europe and South America are fleeing for their lives as patently corrupt socialist politicians engage in lawless behaviors to stay in power.
- Meantime, there are mounting numbers of experts telling us AI will hack and drain our bank accounts, take over the world, and cause millions of people to die.

NOTE: NONE of these problems – **and so many others just like them** – are going to be resolved with any human leadership. All of them suffer from sin and depravity.

- Our own government is a corrupt system where 'good' is being suppressed and 'wrong' is being elevated. We're only a half-step behind the EU's example.
- Whenever responsible and law-abiding policies are implemented in our nation, it's called an "assault on democracy." But whenever progressive policies erode a culture or a society, it's called "protecting our freedoms," or "restoring the rule of law."
- Because the left cannot win with their values under the proper rules of politics, they change the referee. And believe me - - if they get into power again, they'll rewrite all the rules in their favor so they will never have to lose that power again.
- None of what I'm saying here is motivated by 'politics.' That's an easy kneejerk critique. Instead, I'm motivated by the truth. None of it is hard to see.
- Those that don't see what is happening in our world fail to see it for what it is because **they don't WANT to see it.**

Now - today is **Part 1** of **'Living Out Our Calling In A Crazy World.'** Next week will be **Part 2.**

It is my hope and my prayer that these will be two compelling lessons which will challenge us to recognize that difficult times and worldwide chaos **do not** suspend our Biblical calling in Jesus Christ. In fact, events in our world make that calling more important than ever.

As Christians, we are not supposed to retreat in fear, to become consumed or unduly distressed by the world's troubles, or to lose sight of our mission. We are called to remain faithful, to be spiritually grounded, and to be actively engaged in the work God has given us.

QUESTION: "WHEN THE WORLD IS FALLING APART, WHAT IS OUR CALLING?" What are we supposed to do? How are we to act? What is our assignment that we've been given when circumstances around us are changing, but God Himself has not changed?

A. LET'S START BY TAKING A *BIBLICAL* LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE

1. The Bible calls these days we live in *'perilous times.'*
    - ***Cf. 2 Tim. 3:1 – "****But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come"* (the verses after that provide a detailed list of all the ways mankind will deteriorate in his conduct and choices).
    - HOWEVER, we need to take stock of something: Paul wrote this message to Timothy, his young protégé – someone who was a Christian leader.
    - It was written about false teachers and about "pretend Christians." It is, in many ways, a sobering commentary on the state of the greater church we see today.
    - This passage in ***2 Timothy*** has much to say about those who CLAIM to hold to the truth of God's Word – but show instead **by their choices** they are departing from it instead. **"Actions speak louder than words."**
    - It's one of multiple passages in the Bible that show the trend of our times will be a downward one - - **and that descent includes the church.**

- The bottom line is things will not get better – they will get worse. Life will not get easier; it will get harder. This will be a persistent problem.

2. Let's consider some other passages. In ***Matthew 24 / Mark 13 / and Luke 21*** – we have the parallel Gospel accounts of the Olivet Discourse.
    - They all are accounts of a lengthy teaching Jesus gave on The Mount of Olives, and the Holy Spirit considered it important enough to repeat it 3X.
    - Jesus' primary focus in these passages was on end times issues, and He spelled out a downward trajectory – **not** an upward one.
    - He described a future time of chaos, and this is IMPORTANT - - it's a time that is **still** future to us.
    - While the focus of the Olivet Discourse is on the seven-year Tribulation leading up to Jesus Christ's Second Coming, the context of these passages makes it plain we **will begin to see** a convergence of problems in our time.
    - The cycles and intensities of these problems will continue to increase dramatically – most of you already recognize this.
    - Now - despite what some folks claim, we are NOT in the Tribulation now.
    - But – all the CRAZINESS of our times are just the earliest hints of what's still coming. All the issues **we see now** are just the warm-up act.

B. (HERE'S A QUESTION): "HOW DO WE LIVE OUT OUR CALLING IN THIS MESSED UP WORLD?" - "WHO DO WE NEED TO BE?" "WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?"

NOTE: I want to consider two different angles on this question:

1. **First** – what does the Bible SAY about our calling during these difficult times?
2. **Second** - how does the Bible QUALIFY a believer in terms of their behaviors, attitudes, and choices during these challenging issues?

NOTE: To do this, I want to glance at some passages in God's Word which describe things the Bible specifies as **virtues or attributes** for you and I - - - **right here, right now.**

The Bible says these are qualities which demonstrate our SINCERE faith - - **especially** during all this chaos. I have **SEVEN** attributes which ought to define our calling in these crazy times:

1. First, we are called to UNDERSTAND.

a. As the Bible lays it out, there is a specific sort of 'understanding' which is a mark of spiritual maturity.
    - ➢ We demonstrate our maturity when we <u>seek to understand the times in which we live</u>. This is a FACT according to God's Word.
    - ➢ Put another way, there is no merit in being wishy-washy. There are no positive strokes for anyone who remains confused and uninformed, who keeps their head in the sand, or who swallows the media's lies.

- There are no trophies awarded to believers who say, "The Bible doesn't mean what it says," or "We are not expected to know."

b. To help us with this issue of 'understanding,' let's look at the *"sons of Issachar"* (**AI**–suh-kaar). In ***1 Chronicles 12:32,*** it reads as follows:

*"….of the sons of Issachar **who had understanding of the times**, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command."*

- Now, this OT passage is not about end times matters, but it DOES give us some principles which apply to how we ought to be living right now.
- In this passage, David is mustering an army that will serve him loyally.
- God has already promised David that he will rule over Israel, but the times have gotten delicate, dangerous, corrupt, and confusing.
- The nation's previous king, Saul, was corrupt and maniacal. There was a lot of craziness surrounding his actions in the waning days of his reign, and after his death.
- The processes of David assuming the throne of Israel was littered with challenges. ***1 Chronicles Ch. 12*** lists those men who volunteered from each of the tribes of Israel to serve in David's army.

c. You might recall that Issacher was one of Jacob's 12 sons – he was the 9th son overall.
   - So, these '*sons of Issacher'* were a portion of all those that volunteered to serve David in his army.
   - **They were going through the same challenges as everyone else was.** They were seeing all the craziness that was happening just like everyone else was seeing it.

d. **BUT,** this bunch from Isaacher **was not like** the others. In ***1 Chron. 12:32,*** the men of Issachar are commended for several things that set them apart:
   - **First,** it says they *"understood the times"* – despite all the chaos and craziness going on, these guys were more discerning than the rest.
   - Were they living today, they would not pivot around what Glenn Beck and Fox News was saying.
   - They would not get alarmed at 'fake news,' NOR would they buy into the deceptions of mainstream media.
   - **Second,** it says they *"knew what Israel should do."* These men – because of their understanding and discernment – knew what good decisions looked like.
   - They also knew what bad decisions looked like. There was no IDEAL decision, but these men were still firm in their convictions.
   - **Third,** they had strong leadership, and they were unified in their views.

- They are one of the few tribes on this list that came to David with strong and stable leadership in place.
- **Lastly,** they were all family men. They all brought their 'relatives.'
- In short, they had influenced their own families to see and know what was right. They had taught others what it meant to 'understand.'

e. If we apply this same quality of understanding that we see in these men of Issachar, we can see that during OUR challenging and crazy times….
   - **We are supposed to be** people who have understanding – our calling is to know what is really going on, and what we need to be doing.
   - **(And) we are supposed to be** people who **know** these issues and changes. We must know **how** these things will affect others around us.
   - **(And) we are supposed to be** people who identify and rally around **strong** leaders - especially strong spiritual leaders. You are known by those you follow and listen to.
   - These leaders must **also** be those who have understanding. They must be **unafraid** to speak the truth, and they must be unafraid to act on that.
   - **(And lastly) we are supposed to be** people who positively influence those who are **closest** to us. Our virtues should show the way to others.
   - So - - the first aspect of our calling is to cultivate "understanding."

2. The second aspect of our calling is 'watchfulness.' We need to be properly WATCHING.

NOTE: But let me add another angle here. This type of watchfulness is not a passive thing; it is **active**. It comes with **personal responsibility**, and that's where our 'calling' comes in. Here are two passages which illustrate this:

a. We learn in ***Ezek. 33:3-9*** that being a watcher means you must be one who warns (I won't read this passage now, but if you have your Bibles you can glance at it as I make my points).
   - If you **really** think you are a watcher or a 'watchman' – that's a term that gets tossed around a lot these days – then you are one who is **actively** and **responsibly** alerting others.
   - The point is you're speaking out. You are **not still or silent**.
   - A TRUE watcher cannot stay still when they see WHAT is happening - - and they see WHY it is happening.
   - We are **supposed** to warn others, we are **supposed** to speak the truth, and we are **supposed** to point out the dangers.
   - It's not good enough to just watch for ourselves. We need to be watchmen for the sake of **others** too.

NOTE: Here's a sobering point. This point of being a responsible watcher illustrates one of the greatest failures of the modern institutional church today.

For the most part, the modern church has largely abandoned its duty to be a watcher – it seldom warns others (in a right Biblical way) of things and events taking place in our times. I recall the COVID-19 fiasco as one case in point. By far, MOST churches supported the lies and government mandates.

b. A second passage which underscores this active nature of being watchful is ***Mark 13:35-37.*** This is a familiar passage which instructs us to be alert and aware.
   - In ***Mark Ch. 13,*** Jesus' return is likened to being like the master of the house that could come back at any moment.
   - Knowing this, we are called to **remain watchful**. This is that responsibility part which requires us to stay constantly **alert**, constantly **anticipating**, and constantly **prepared**.
   - There is no space for slothfulness or apathy here. We must be in a constant state of awareness and readiness.
   - BTW, being 'watchful' is not a suggestion. **It is a command.**

3. **So, we have 'understanding' and we have 'watchfulness.' Here is a third element about our calling during these crazy times, and it's probably one we don't typically think about. We are called to be 'vexed**.'

NOTE: Now, 'vexed' is an old English term - - but to be 'vexed' means to be upset, provoked, tormented, and greatly displeased. It does NOT mean to be volatile and alarmist.

To understand that we ought to be 'vexed' at the things going on around us, we can consider the example of Lot in ***2 Peter 2:7-8.*** It reads as follows:

"…and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless. (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, ***vexed his righteous soul*** *from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)"*

a. The big point of these two verses is this: a mark of being mature, righteous, and faithful in our calling is to feel greatly displeased and bothered by the sin and corruption that is taking place in our world and in the culture around us.

IMPORTANT: Again, this is not a justification to be angry and bitter. It's not an excuse to yell or curse at the TV, or to kick the dog, to drink in excess, to overreact to politics, or to unload on your spouse.

b. This is not an encouragement to march and protest, to scream in rage and shout ill-informed shallow slogans, to boycott and picket, to burn and destroy, or to do anything like that.

- We have more than enough black-hooded, purple-haired, violent, and ignorant people that act this way **routinely and predictably.**
- Being 'vexed' here means we SHOULD feel a deep visceral anguish.
- We SHOULD desire justice. We SHOULD feel distraught when what's wrong is right, and what's right is wrong.
- We OUGHT to feel provoked in our spirit at the mounting depravity we see around us.
- We SHOULD feel despaired as though we are aliens and unwelcome strangers in a world that's gone "completely bonkers." Because it HAS!

NOTE: I need to be rather direct here to illustrate my point (so bear with me):

- We have too many people in the church today who have become tolerant of frank lies, deception, fraud, lawlessness, corruption, and ineptness.
- We have many people in the church who defend breaking the law to excuse illegal immigration, who support the dissolution of national sovereignty, who want to defund those who preserve law and order, and who look down on those who didn't take the jab.
- We have far too many in the pews today who support the radical agendas of BLM, CRT, BDS, LGBTQ, and the misguided agendas of multiple other causes.
- We have way too many people in the church who have adopted a depraved view of human life. They feel it's OK to end a baby's life, it's OK to end an older person's life, and it's OK to believe in multiple genders.
- We have a serious problem of having of too many pew warmers who doubt the truth of God's Word when it conflicts with their personal choices, or when it confronts their affections for a 'social Gospel.'
- Too many 'Christians' feel affirmed when their ideas conform to mainstream media -- or when they align with the lukewarm church which Jesus says He'll reject.
- (And alarmingly), we have FAR too many people in the church today who are cultivating dangerous, ignorant, and ungodly prejudices against Israel and the Jews. The Bible is clear that such sentiments are an indication of a BIG spiritual problem.

NOTE: By the way (and going back to my first point) - **none** of these examples I've just mentioned demonstrate that one properly **understands.** Instead, they show one **does not**.

All these things are extremely concerning, because they show one is not *"….vexed in his **RIGHTEOUS** soul by the lawless deeds he sees and hears"* ***(again, from 2 Peter 2:8).***

4. **Here's the next good quality for us to cultivate in all this craziness, and this part of our calling may surprise you – it is 'resistance.' <u>Or "those who resist."</u>**
   NOTE: The Bible laid claim to this idea of 'resisting' long before any progressive crowd ever flung up their fists and shouted that word. In ***Daniel 11:32,*** it says:

"With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, <u>but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.</u>"

a. This passage describes those who lived during the reign of the very corrupt ancient Seleucid leader, Antiochus Epiphanes.
b. Antiochus Epiphanes is the most detailed Biblical TYPE (or representation) of the future antichrist.
c. Many things about him and about his reign will also be true about the antichrist (but obviously, the antichrist will be FAR worse)
d. Now, this verse says something **important.** It says, *"Those who know their God will **firmly resist him**"* (that is – they will resist his corruption, his values, his system, and his rules).
e. History shows this is what happened. The faithful Jews who refused to comply with Antiochus Epiphanes's social engineering agenda and his corruption were massively persecuted (many were killed).
f. The same is true today. Those who STILL *"know their God will firmly resist"* corruption. They will stand against our deceptive social engineering schemes.
g. They will speak out against globalist efforts, against religious persecution, and against attacks on common sense and law and order. They will do what they can, and that also means they will VOTE **against** these things.
h. They will resist all processes which seek to pull people away from God's laws, away from Godly living, away from Godly values, and away from Godly truth.
i. This is part of being 'salt' (which preserves) and 'light' (which exposes).

NOTE: Again – we are seeing far too many churches and Christians today who are greatly misguided on these matters.

- According to its 2025 / 2026 'American Worldview Inventory' study, the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, led by George Barna, has concluded that only **11% of adults that attend evangelical Protestant churches** claim to have a biblical worldview.

NOTE: The trend we are seeing instead in the greater church today is this: they feel it's their duty and responsibility to conform to – and even to support - a woke and godless agenda. This trend is **rapidly** swallowing up churches today. The many studies are very sobering....

j. These kinds of 'Christians' and churches are showing they do not have proper understanding. They are not 'vexed' because they don't have a right spiritual foundation.
k. They are lukewarm instead, and ***Revelation Ch. 3*** says that is a temperature setting God will '*spit out.*' Jesus says He will reject those who are like this.
l. The Bible makes it clear that a mark of being in a right relationship with Jesus Christ means one **cannot** stay silent and still. They will be 'vexed.'
m. (And so) they will resist; they will act. They will speak. They will stand up for what is right. They will 'preserve' as salt, and they will 'expose' as light.

n. They will do these things - - even at great personal cost and sacrifice.

5. **Now, here's a tough one. Here's another element about our calling in all this craziness. It is this: we must "endure patiently."**

NOTE: ***Rev. 3:10*** makes this point. It's the letter to the church in Philadelphia, and it reads as follows:

"Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth."

NOTE: This is lifted from one of the letters to the seven churches. Those passages are a glance at historical churches **at the same time as they are also a prophetic commentary on church history.** Among other things, ***Rev. 3:10*** is a pre-tribulation Rapture passage.

But – here's the point I want to emphasize for you and I **right here, right now**. On one side of the coin there is a proper and responsible way to **resist**, to **watch**, to **understand**, and to be **vexed**. We've seen the Bible presents those attributes of our calling as GOOD things.

But on the other side of the coin, we are ALSO called to ***'patiently endure.'*** It's not just **'endure;'** it is ***'patiently endure.'*** That makes it much harder. This is a tough balance that we need to pursue.

a. This is the same principle we see illustrated later in ***Rev. 14:12*** where we see the saints of the Tribulation timeframe being instructed to *"patiently endure"* - - even as they are being worn down, killed, and oppressed.
b. The key issue of *"patiently enduring"* comes down to one thing: preserving a proper **eternal** perspective.
    - Yes, there is all the confusion, and corruption.
    - Yes, there is all the persecution and loss of rights.
    - Yes, there is all the insanity, craziness, depravity, and immorality.
    - But in ALL of that, keeping a proper **eternal** perspective is STILL the order of the day for TRUE believers.
c. We need to *'patiently endure.'* **I cannot overstate this.** This is a hallmark quality of showing a true and Godly calling.
    - Make no mistake - there are things we are instructed to do, things we are instructed to say, and things we are instructed to not give up.
    - **But,** over all of that, we must temper those exhortations with a personal commitment to *'patiently endure.'* It's all about the longer haul….

NOTE: In the end, the Bible makes the point that this is an issue of the heart. This point HERE is a matter of personal maturity and self-control.

- When you look around and spot those saints who are patiently enduring struggles and trials, you are seeing a key mark of one who is under the control of the Holy Spirit.
- The times may be rough – the elections may be fraudulent – our borders may be porous – 'pandemics' may be test runs for a future agenda – the boys' bathroom may have a tampon dispenser – and many churches may be extensions of a social engineering agenda - - - BUT, it doesn't matter.
- We are STILL called to maintain an perspective that extends beyond our present trials and challenges. **This moment too is part of eternity.**
- When we have that PROPER eternal perspective – we can *"patiently endure."*

6. **Now, here's an attribute of our calling that we ALL need to pursue. I've alluded to it a few times, but now I'll focus on it. This one is about "speaking the truth"**

NOTE: It's a fact that as end times take further shape and definition, truth will become increasingly unpopular, and those that speak the truth will face greater persecution.

NOTE: In the book of ***Daniel,*** we are told the final antichrist will *"throw truth to the ground,"* and he will *"cause deceit to prosper."*

There is ABSOLUTELY no question we are starting to see those early dynamics forming now.

a. But the Bible esteems those who boldly speak the truth – especially the truth about the Gospel and the person and work of Jesus Christ.
b. And with respect to this aspect of our calling, and insofar as the developing end times are concerned, speaking the truth ALWAYS comes at a cost.
c. In passages like ***Rev. 1:2 and 9; 6:9, and 20:4*** we read about those who are killed during the Tribulation for *"the Word of God and the testimony they had maintained."*
d. (And) in ***Dan.11:33*** we read about those who demonstrate they are wise by undertaking the task of instructing others in the truth.
e. In both ***Revelation and Daniel*** – these people are killed and persecuted for doing – and SAYING - what is right.
    - Once more, I must raise my alarm about the greater church. The modern church today often sidesteps speaking the truth because that choice comes with consequences.
    - Many – probably MOST – churches today carefully craft their sermons. They brand their 'What We Believe' tab on their website to disguise hard truth - - and to avoid offending those who don't **want** the truth.
    - Many Christians today steer clear of speaking the truth because they are afraid of what others will say, and what will happen to them.

- **Make no mistake**, these are difficult times – and they are going to get MUCH harder.
- However – we must remain committed to speak the truth so the Gospel is clearly proclaimed - - so that others can be properly instructed.

7. **The last element of our calling that I want to look at is that of being awake and sober**. ***1 Thessalonians 5:4-6*** puts it this way….

"But you, brothers, are not in the darkness so that this day should overtake you like a thief. For you are all sons of the light and sons of the day; we do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not sleep as the others do, ***but let us remain awake and sober****…."*

a. This passage is straightforward: **IF** you are a **true** believer in Jesus Christ, you are one of the *'sons of light'* (this is not a gender issue).
   - You're a *'son of the day.'* That means you are supposed to **BE** several things.

b. And this passage in ***1 Thessalonians*** makes a few of those things clear:
   - You are to be **awake** – that means you cannot be drowsy or asleep with respect to the times. It means you are NOT supposed to be unaware.
   - You are also to be **sober** – this is not a comment about 'happy hour.' It means you must be self-controlled in response to all the crazy things taking place.
   - You are to live and function with **full vision**. Your views need to be Scripturally grounded, and they need to be accurate.
   - This is not a time to become a radical or to lose your perspective. It is not a time to let your foundation in God's truth be chipped away.
   - This is not a time to be uncaring or apathetic about what is going on. This is not a time to be persuaded to go in directions you should not go.
   - This, instead, is a time to be **awake**, to be **sober**, and to be **well-grounded** in looking about.

SO, WHAT'S THE CONCLUSION?

- In the pages of God's Word, we have received divine instructions on how to develop and demonstrate our calling in all the craziness we see.
- We simply **cannot** be products of this age and this culture. Jesus hands out no rewards for floating down the river with all the other dead fish, or for leaping off the cliffs with the rest of the lemmings.
- Rather, we are to see the events taking place around us with clarity, purpose, and resolve.
- It's important that that sort of vision translates DIRECTLY into our proper attitudes and actions. We cannot stay still or silent. The Bible does not endorse this.
- Most of all - - we are to demonstrate the God-given peace and comfort that comes from preserving and cultivating an eternal view that is based on our hope in Jesus Christ.

NEXT TIME: In **Part 2,** I want to focus on the ways our identity and allegiance must remain firmly established in Jesus Christ. That will be an **application-heavy** lesson on these issues.



Solid Bread Community was started with a passion to teach the truth of God's Word – every part of it, as it was divinely inspired to be understood.

The rules are simple. First, teach what IS there. Don't pretend the Bible is not saying what it is saying.

Second, don't teach what is NOT there. Don't force a passage to mean something it really doesn't.

And – number three, if the Bible states it plainly, we should too.

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