

FBC POWELL, 6-9-19 AM NOTES
"Guidance for Living in a Fallen World"
1 Peter 3:8-14
#12 in Series, "Standing Firm in the True Grace of God"

"We live in a day where everything that is not nailed down is coming apart and the devil is pulling up nails as fast as he can."
— Adrian Rogers

Ephesians 4:18 (NASB) "Being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart."

2 Corinthians 4:4 (NASB) "In whose case the **god of this world** has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

1 John 5:19 (NIV) "We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one."

Romans 1:16 (NASB) "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NASB) ⁹ "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

I. In a Fallen World, We Must Support the Believers (vv. 8-9)

"The problem today is that the church is too worldly, and the world is too churchy." —Vance Havner

A. We Support with Unity (v. 8a)

B. We Support with Compassion (v. 8b)

Romans 12:15 (NASB) "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

C. We Support with Love (v. 8c)

D. We Support with Courtesy (v. 8d)

E. We Support with Humility (v. 8e)

Philippians 2:3 (NASB) "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves."

F. We Support with Forgiveness (v. 9)

II. In a Fallen World, We Must Subdue the Tongue (v. 10)

James 1:26 (NASB) “If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart, this man’s religion is worthless.”

James 3:6 (NASB) “And the tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell.”

James 3:9-10 (NASB) ⁹“With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; ¹⁰from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.”

Proverbs 12:19 (NASB) “Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment.”

Psalms 141:3 (NASB) “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.”

III. In a Fallen World We Must Spurn Evil (vv. 11-12)

IV. In a Fallen World We Must Submit to Suffering (vv. 13-14)

1 Peter 2:21 (NASB) “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.”

A. Avoid Suffering if You Can (v. 13)

B. Accept Suffering if You Cannot Avoid It (v. 14)

John 10:32 (NASB) “Jesus answered them, ‘I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?’”

John 16:33b (NASB) “...In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

Sermon 12: Guidance for Living in a Fallen World

1 Peter 3:8-14

I will never forget a statement I heard from Dr. Adrian Rogers concerning the rapid decline of accepting objective truth and biblical morality in our culture. He said, “We live in a day where everything that is not nailed down is coming apart and the devil is pulling up nails as fast as he can”. Dr. Rogers died in 2005. If he could see what has happened in the fourteen years since his death, I think that he would be shocked at how fast morality and biblical ethics are being

jettisoned and things that were not even spoken about in public are now “normal” in our culture. To be specific, I am referring to issues such as:

- Abortion (even at partial birth when the baby could survive, they are killed by a physician)
- Gender being defined by what a person feels instead of their biology
- Gender that is now seen as being “fluid” (changing back and forth as male and female depending on how the person feels on any given day)
- Sex education in public schools in many states that ignores and often contradicts biblical truth.
- Parental rights being taken away so fast that it makes us dizzy

While Tennessee schools are somewhat behind in the new trends in sex education (and thank God that they are), from history we know that what happens in the more liberal states often filters down to more conservative states. Today, stating what the Bible clearly proclaims is often determined by some in places of authority as being “hate speech”! But perhaps the most alarming change in our culture is that whole denominations that were recently considered mainline have forsaken clear biblical doctrine and joined the moral revolution to fit in with the culture.

For several decades we have seen the slow drift away from orthodox Christianity, but what is shocking today is how fast biblical truth is being ridiculed and then rejected. To use Dr. Rogers’ illustration, there is only a shrinking few things left in our culture that is still nailed down, and the Devil is still busy pulling up nails.

This really shouldn’t surprise us. We live in a “fallen world.” What does that mean? In Genesis 3 when sin came into the world through Adam and Eve (often called “the fall”), it affected everything – even creation. Man’s spirit (that part of us that enables us to know and have communion with God) died to God and as a result we cannot know God and have fellowship with Him apart from a “re-birth.” We are told in Ephesians 4:18: that because of the fall into sin, we were all “...darkened in [our] understanding...” That means that apart from a new birth, we are blinded to truth (“darkened in our understanding”) because of the spiritual deadness that came as a result of mankind falling into sin.

One of Satan’s titles is “the god of this world”. 2 Corinthians 4:4: “in whose case *the god of this world* has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” We read in 1 John 5:19 (NIV): “We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.” We could state that last truth as “the whole world is fallen”. This is not pleasant truth, but it is truth, and we need to understand it.

The title of today’s message is *Guidance for Living in a Fallen World*. As Christians, we are expected to do more than whine and complain about our culture. Our task is to allow the Holy Spirit of God to enable us to live in accord with the Scriptures no matter how unpopular that is to the culture, and no matter how much it seems that we are always swimming against the current, and no matter the personal cost to us. However, that isn’t all that we are to do. We are also called, *not* to *shun* the lost world but to *share* the truth of the Gospel with this lost and fallen world. Instead of hating those who do not know our Savior, instead of hating those who want the “right” to take away the lives of precious children while in what ought to be the safest place on the planet (the mother’s womb), instead of hating those who call themselves gay, transgendered, or homosexual, instead of despising those and others who are pushing for the

eradication of all biblical influence in the public square, we should be praying, crying out to God that the powerful Gospel of Jesus would change them as they repent and believe on the Lord Jesus to save them. Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel [are you], for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

I think that one of the most encouraging, hope giving passages in the New Testament is 1 Corinthians 6:9-11:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

1 Peter 3:8-14 gives us guidance as to how Christians are to live in a fallen culture like the one we live in today.

I. In a Fallen World, We Must Support the Believers (vv. 8-9)

What is described in verses 8-9 provides a stark contrast to what the world has to offer. This is so important! One of the major problems today is that there is little contrast, little difference between those who don't know Christ and those who *say* they do know Him. The old evangelist Vance Havner said it well: “The problem today is that the church is too worldly, and the world is too churchy.” That is the reason the church is so powerless in our culture.

How are we to support the brethren – other believers?

A. We Support with Unity (v. 8a)

Nothing grieves God and turns off those who don't know Christ like conflict (disunity) in the church. It gives those who don't know our God a false justification in their choice to have nothing to do with the church. Most every town in the Bible belt has stories of police being called to a church business meeting. If you studied the history of churches in our culture, I am afraid that you would find a sizable percentage of the churches were formed out of a split with another church.

The word translated “harmonious” in verse 8 is translated “unity of mind” (ESV). Biblical unity does not mean that everyone in the church always agrees with one another. Unity is not unanimity (agreed on by everyone). Unity is when we agree on the fundamentals, the non-negotiables, and respect one another when there is disagreement on secondary issues. What do we mean by a “secondary issue”? First, it doesn't mean “unimportant”. It means that many who know and love Jesus, and the Bible, differ on the exact meaning of passages of Scripture. An example would intricate details of Christ's second coming (the fact of Jesus' coming again is fundamental, but some of the intricate details of His coming are not agreed on by godly Bible scholars), the frequency of the Lord's Supper, what translations of the Bible are used, etc. I think you get the point.

I would rather play “tag” with a grizzly bear than to be responsible for destroying the unity of God's church over secondary issues or personal preferences.

B. We Support with Compassion (v. 8b)

That word “sympathetic” means to “to feel with”. It is translated compassion in most translations. In the Roman Empire, compassion was not highly esteemed, but in the church, it is essential. We are told in Romans 12:15: “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” That’s what compassion looks like.

C. We Support with Love (v. 8c)

“Brotherly” is translated “brotherly love” in the ESV. There are several Greek words that are translated “love” but this word refers to family or brotherly love. The world is looking for and longing for that even though they may not know how to put it in words.

D. We Support with Courtesy (v. 8d)

The word translated “kindhearted” refers to courteousness. Courtesy is putting others above yourself. As an unbeliever views the church, what do they see? Is it “that church that fusses all the time” or “that church that is known only for what it is against”? How sad if that is what characterizes any church. The world should see a church that supports one another rather than tearing them down, a church that is characterized by unity, compassion, love and courtesy.

E. We Support with Humility (v. 8e)

The phrase “humble in spirit” is one word in the Greek. Paul used a form of this same word in Philippians 2:3: “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with *humility of mind* regard one another as more important than yourselves.” Let me give you a test to see if this “support with humility” is true of you. Do you come to church with a mindset of seeking someone who is hurting that you can encourage, lift up, and pray for, or do you *only* come for what you can get out of it?

F. We Support with Forgiveness (v. 9)

This is such a rich verse! Because we live in a fallen world, we must constantly be forgiving one another. I grieve when I see people hopping from one church to another when they get offended. There are some legitimate reasons to leave a church. When a church is not regularly preaching and teaching the Word, when there is no opportunity to be equipped to minister to others using the spiritual gift God has given to you, when sin is ignored by church leadership, and other such actions or inactions. Listen carefully, someone slighting you, speaking hatefully to you, or failing to carry through on a promise to you because they forgot it, and getting your feelings hurt are not reasons to leave a church. They are opportunities to learn to forgive as Jesus forgave others and forgave you. How are you going to learn how to forgive if you’re not wronged? Let me ask you a question. Do you desire to be a part of a church that enables you to become more and more like Jesus? I certainly hope you said “yes” to this. Let me tell you how the Lord is going to provide opportunities to do this. He is going to allow you to be treated bad, insulted, overlooked, and let down. How do you respond? Do you leave and go to another church? The same type things are going to happen. God is patient in fulfilling His purpose that you learn to forgive, bless, and love those who have wronged and slighted you. Read verse 9 again!

II. In a Fallen World, We Must Subdue the Tongue (v. 10)

This verse is taken directly from Psalm 34:12-14. Someone said that the most dangerous thing on earth is kept in a cage behind the teeth. The “tongue” is of course referring to our *speech*. Our

tongue (words) can be an instrument of blessing or it can get us in a heap of trouble. The tongue is often uncontrolled and prone to sin. There are so many passages in the Bible concerning the tongue. James especially has so much to say about the tongue.

James 1:26: “If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart, this man's religion is worthless.”

James 3:6: “And the tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell.”

James 3:9-10: “With it [the tongue] we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.”

There are lots of passages in Proverbs about our tongue or our speech: Proverbs 12:19: “Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment.” We could spend the rest of the message just quoting what the Scriptures tell us about the tongue – our words. I think that my most used passage on the tongue is Psalms 141:3: “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.”

III. In a Fallen World, We Must Spurn Evil (vv. 11-12)

To spurn something is to reject it. That phrase “turn away” means to avoid, but it also has an emphasis of loathing evil or sin. It pictures someone meeting evil on the path and going out of their way to avoid it. It carries the idea of treating sin like a contagious fatal disease.

The word picture in verse 12 is of God peering down from Heaven intently listening to our prayers which are effective because we have turned from, spurned, rejected evil. God delights in answering the prayers of those who have spurned evil.

IV. In a Fallen World, We Must Submit to Suffering (vv. 13-14)

This is one of the main themes in 1 Peter. An example is 1 Peter 2:21: “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.” What follows is some really practical counsel about suffering.

A. Avoid Suffering if You Can (v. 13)

That word “zealous” means to burn with zeal. In other words, we are to be fanatics about doing good. The word translated “good” focuses on meeting the needs of others. One of the most effective ways to share the Gospel is through what is called “servant evangelism.” We’ve all heard the saying that people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. That can be pushed too far and be used as an excuse for not sharing the Gospel, but it is true that the Holy Spirit uses acts of compassion (zeal for doing good) to bring an openness to the Gospel. That is why I love the “Disaster Relief” ministry.

B. Accept Suffering if You Can’t Avoid It (v. 14)

Being compassionate and zealous for good is no guarantee against suffering. All we have to do is to look to Jesus. John 10:32: “Jesus answered them, ‘I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?’” Jesus said to His disciples in John 16:33b: “... In

the world you have tribulation but take courage; I have overcome the world.” Jesus was goodness personified and He was despised and rejected and eventually crucified!

Conclusion

We truly live in a fallen world. What are we going to do about it? Are we just going to complain or are we going to do something about it? We in this room can't change the world, but we can see God use us to change many. I am resolved to quit complaining about where this world system is going and focus on being an instrument God can use to share truth with people one at a time.

NASB (New American Standard Bible)

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