

Be Saved from this Perverse Generation

Part 2

Scripture; Acts 2:40

Scripture reading; Ephesians 4:17-23

INTRO:

I have here a book, which I received from my grandfather after he passed away some time ago already. As a mechanic, he would have purchased this book possibly in his late 20's or 30's at the earliest, as the book was printed in 1959. It is titled 'Fix Your Chevrolet' and is a 'how to' book, with detailed illustrations and written instructions, in showing owners on how to repair and maintain their Chevy car or truck of that time period.

It would have been a very handy book to have had in its day, as it shows the owner everything, from how to adjust the valves, carburetor, and brakes, to rebuilding the engine, and overhauling the transmission. Nowadays we have to have labels telling us not to drink the fluid that is in the battery. Yes, our phones are getting smarter but somehow people are not. But even though the book is only 64 years old it is about 90% out of date with today's modern vehicles. Its 'how

to' instructions are almost completely out of date for today's applications.

But I also have another book, one given to me by someone very special and dear to my heart. This one was printed in 1995, but was originally written some 2000 years ago, and the first half some 1500 years before that. It also is a 'how to', book, teaching us how to be saved, how to live right, how to please God, how to get to heaven, and is filled with all kinds of illustrations and instructions for your life.

A book that is still 100% applicable and relevant to our day and age and will be so for all eternity. It is a book that should be treasured above all others for in it are the words of life, and just one line from this book or one verse can be enough to set our hearts and minds in the direction of God's will for us. Words like 'Be saved from this perverse generation'.

In the last message and in this one, we will be looking at the verse in Acts chapter 2 verse 40 where it says;

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

These are the Apostle Peter's last words from his sermon in Acts chapter 2.

Last week we looked at points one and two of this message. The first was, why we need to be saved from this perverse generation, and then second, that we must be willing. That we understand why we are no longer to be willing participants in the sinful pleasures of this world.

And now in this third and final point we want to look at 'how', we must be saved from this perverse generation, understand how this is to be achieved in the Christian life.

III. WE MUST KNOW HOW

When the verse says; And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, it means that there are words and instructions not recorded from Peter's sermon. It means that there were more words spoken to the people on how to be saved from this perverse generation than what the author Luke has given us in the chapter.

In the last message we covered the fact that he 'must' have told them why they must be saved, he 'must' have told them that they must be willing to be saved, and he must have told them 'how' to be saved, for no command of any kind can be properly fulfilled if the instruction of 'how' is never given.

Listen to the words of God to Noah in Genesis chapter 6 verses 13 and 14;

And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

14 "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.

And then verse 15 starts off with;

"And this is how you shall make it:

And God then gives Noah the plans and dimensions in the following verses. In Exodus chapter 25 verse 8, God speaks to Moses and tells him;

"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.

And then right away in verse 9 He says;

"According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it

Throughout all of scripture when the Lord tells us to do something, He also gives instructions on how to do it. Sometimes the 'how', is part of the command or verse itself, and need no further instructions. As in the words 'you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal' and so on.

But sometimes we need to look to other scripture to find the instruction of 'how', in order to fulfill the command, He is giving us. As when Paul says in Galatians 5 verse 16;

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

How do you walk in the Spirit? We need other scripture to help us and explain to us such a command. Again there is nothing that God instructs us to do without giving us the means in knowing how to do it. If it is not directly stated in the immediate context as in the illustration of Noah and the ark or, with Moses and the tabernacle, or as in the ten commandments, it will be found somewhere else in scripture to show us how to obey it.

Almost everything in our world is built on this concept, in one way or another we are given instructions on ‘how’ to do things in life.

Everything from building a house to baking a cake, to fixing a car, there has to be instruction on ‘how’ to do it.

A blueprint for a house, a recipe for a cake, a manual for a car, some of them we may have committed to memory but somewhere was the initial instruction on how to do it.

In the scripture we are looking at here this morning we have a command with no immediate instruction. It simply says that Peter;

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

The only command we are given from the text is that we are to ‘be saved from this perverse generation’ and the how is not recorded as it simply says ‘with many other words he testified and exhorted them. Perhaps the writer could not keep up with Peter’s sermon, perhaps the writer already knew that this was recorded elsewhere in his writings, or perhaps Jesus already gave them the teaching elsewhere regarding this command.

So with that in mind we must find other scripture or other passages that tells us or shows us ‘how’ we are to be saved from this generation, as it is not given to us in the text of what Peter spoke.

Now when I came to this point I realized that there could be different aspects to Peter’s command. Since there is no reference to the words spoken in the immediate context, we must piece together what the how of these verses may have been.

On one hand, he could be referring to this generation as being the lost gentile world with its forms of idol worship and sinful living. This is what I mainly focused on in the previous message. Using the words of Peter when he says in 1 Peter 4:2 and 3;

2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

This would be a reference to our own past lifetime as Gentiles when we lived a life of sin before our salvation.

On the other hand, Peter could be referring to the Jewish religious leaders or the Jewish system of his day, referring to the ones who stirred the crowds in order to have Jesus crucified, that the religious leaders and Judaism itself is the perverse generation.

Peter could have spoken about the fact that the Jews needed to be saved from their perverse generation of Judaism, that the old is not compatible with the new. That the Jewish system will not be compatible to the new way of Christianity, as Jesus himself told the woman at the well, saying;

~~Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.~~

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

John chapter 4 verses 21, 23 and 24

And here is the thought that came to my mind regarding Peter's words, it can be both.

This could be why nothing was recorded from Peter's sermon regarding this part of the text. Since we already know that we all are to be saved from this perverse generation, that we all need to conform ourselves to that of Christ through sanctification.

We can do this even if we come from totally different backgrounds according to the word of God. If you turn to Ephesians chapter 2 in your bibles. Listen to Paul's words of these two paths or these two people coming from different backgrounds in forming one faith, from Ephesians chapter 2 verses 14 through 18;

14 ¶ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both (Jew and Gentile both) one (that is Christians), and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,

16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

There is one purpose in sanctification, and that is to become like Christ. And it is neither by the old Jewish system of religion, nor by the Gentile idol worship that this is achieved.

Each one must be saved from their own perverse generation. As Paul says, ‘so as to create in Himself one new man from the two’. Not making one new man by combining the two, that is Jew and Gentile, but one new man out of the two.

For if Peter had stated that the Jews need to be saved from their perverse generation, it wouldn’t have been applicable to the Gentiles, and if Peter had spoken to the Gentiles, that they needed to be saved from their perverse generation, it wouldn’t have been applicable to the Jews.

God is great in power and wisdom isn’t He?

If we look at Acts chapter 2, in verse 38 Peter tells them;

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This is a universal message to all mankind, Jew or Gentile.

As Paul says in Romans chapter 1 verse 16;

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

The gospel is for everyone, Jew, Gentile, it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes as Paul said. But everyone's path of sanctification from their own perverse generation will be a different path. For the Jew it will be a path from the religious traditions and teachings they still hold onto. For the Gentile it will be from everything else that is part of our perverse gentile world.

And so when Peter says 'be saved from this perverse generation' and the 'how' is not recorded, it may be, that because this book would be used for over the next 2000 years and over a vast variety of people, it would be left to the rest of scripture in explaining what each of us needs to be saved from, in our own sanctification.

Peter's message to the crowd on sanctification, although not recorded, probably did refer to the laws of the Scribes and Pharisees and their prestige of self-righteousness. But you see, we are not Jews; we are not under the religious rigor and rules of what the Scribes and Pharisees imposed on the people; We are not under the teachings of waiting for the Messiah and don't need to be saved from 'that' perverse generation, a generation that is still waiting for the Messiah to come.

We are Gentiles, we are Gentiles in a world of lost Gentiles following not the religious sect of the Scribes and Pharisees of Jewish religion, but that of a lost worldly perverse mindset of this Gentile world. We live in a generation that needs to hear that the redeemer of all mankind 'has' come to this earth, and has paid the price for our sins with His own blood.

This is why the word of God is so wonderful, had Peter's words been recorded in such a manner, that we need to be saved from the Jewish traditions, then much of the new Gentile churches, and new Gentile Christians would have been somewhat lost with the 'how' of Peter's command.

In Acts chapter 18 verses 5 and 6 we actually hear of Paul's account of giving up in trying to reach the Jewish population with the gospel, it reads;

When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.

6 But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

Now if we go back to sanctification, it is that lifelong process of conforming ourselves to that of Christ in no matter from what background we come from. In our catechism we have the question and answer like this;

What is sanctification?

Answer;

To be sanctified is to be freed from the dominion of sin, and to persevere in well-doing

In Pastor Phil's notes on the catechism he says this and I quote;

The doctrine of sanctification is the most crucial doctrine in our every day life. It is here where the rubber meets the road, so to speak. It is here where God sets about to accomplish His greatest work in man... When we deal with the doctrine of sanctification we are speaking of the process by which man is set apart from sin to God. In justification I am declared positionally righteous. In sanctification I am to become practically righteous, that is righteous in actual practice in life.

EOQ

And that is why we must be saved from this perverse generation that is in the world, that we become practically righteous in this life for God.

And how do we do that? As we know Peter's instructions were not recorded and the author did not give us any instructions from what was said, it will be up to each of us to find out what Peter was referring to. Jews will need to go to other scriptures to find out how to be saved from there perverse generation. The Gentiles will go to other scriptures to find out how to be saved from there perverse generation, some of them will be similar some will be different.

And as I said earlier, perhaps this is why the words of Peter are not recorded, because the words he spoke to the crowd at that time may

not have been applicable to us in the here and now of the church age in North America, about as far away from Jerusalem as you can get.

Well actually the complete opposite side of the globe from Jerusalem is somewhere in the south pacific, between Peru and Australia, but actually longitude wise it is only a few degrees from the Alaskan - Yukon border. So either way, we are far, far away from the place Peter spoke, and yet his words are to be completely applicable to our time and place.

And it then leaves it open to the leading of the Holy Spirit to find the application of Peter's words with scripture appropriate to us as Gentiles living in this Gentile part of the world. A world filled with all kinds of worldly pleasures and sins and the need to be saved from our own perverse generation. And with that we finally come to the 'how'. For if Peter says we are to be saved, as a present tense sanctification, then the rest of scripture will then tell us how to be saved from this Gentile world and be set apart to God.

And the first thing I want to address is the fact that, it will probably not be easy. In an article I quoted some time ago, written by J. C. Ryle titled 'The Christian Race' in the paper "Herald of His Coming", he talks about the laying aside of every weight of sin from Hebrews 12:1, and living righteously for God, he says this:

By this he means that we must give up everything which is really hurtful to our souls. We must act like men who throw off all their long and flowing garments, and encumbrance, when about to try their speed in running. We must cast away everything which hinders us upon our road towards heaven - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; the love of riches, pleasures, and honors, the spirit of lukewarmness and carelessness and indifference about the things of God, all must be rooted out and forsaken if we are anxious for the prize.

We must mortify the deeds of the body, we must crucify our affection for this world; we must look well to our habits and inclinations and employments, and if we find anything coming in as a stumbling block between ourselves and salvation, we must be ready to lay it aside as if it were a millstone about our necks, although it cost us as much pain as cutting off a hand or plucking out a right eye. Away with everything which keeps us back; our feet are slow at the very best, we have a long course to run, we cannot afford to carry weight, if we are really contending for everlasting life. But above all we must take heed that we lay aside the sin which doth most easily beset us.

Because ...there are particular besetting sins, of which each separate Christian can alone furnish an account *with*; each single one of us has some weak point, each one has got a thin, shaking spot in his wall of defense against the

devil, each one has a traitor in his camp ready to open the gates to Satan, and he that is wise will never rest until he has discovered where this weak point is. This is that special sin which you are here exhorted to watch against, to overcome, to cast forth, to spare no means in keeping it under and bringing it into subjection, that it may not entangle you in your race towards Zion.

It will be hard. The devil knows all of our weaknesses, all of our soft spots, all of our weak areas of defense in our lives. And he has been at it for a very long long time. If you leave here this afternoon thinking ‘I’m going to set my life straight and cut out these things of the world from my life’, be assured you will probably meet the devil head on before the sun sets on this Sunday afternoon, in battling that temptation, in the things that draw you to the world. But even if he tempts us, and tells us to join in the pleasure just one more time, we should remember the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 13;

... God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

and then using the words of Peter saying ‘we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles...’ and then flee from the devil and run to God.

We are never promised that this Christian walk will be easy. The cost will be high, the path hard, the trials and temptations sometimes almost too much to bear, as Paul tells Timothy in 2nd Timothy 2 verses 3 saying; You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

It will be hard, but not impossible.

L.F.E. Wilkinson says;

To be willing to accept crucifixion with Christ; to leave all yourself, your plans and your longings, your abilities and your possessions, all of them at the cross so that you only trust and love and live for Christ, hurts a great deal.... It requires an absolute venture of faith; but beyond it, God says, "much fruit." And the way to it is "into the ground and die"—it is the only way.

And if I could call that step number one, in the ‘how’ of Peter’s command it would be this; ‘we must die to self’.

We must be crucified with Christ when it comes to the pleasures of sin in our lives. If you were expecting a list of ‘how to’ scriptures, it will

not be here, that's what you have your bibles for. This message is to point your heart in the right direction and then let God and His holy word do the rest. For if you truly wish to be free and clean from sin, this book has all the answers. But if you do not, God will not force you, He may convict you, but He will not force you.

We not only must come to the cross to lay our burden down, but we must nail our sin to the cross as well, as Paul says in Romans chapter 6 verse 6;

knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

As Warren Wiersbe said 'how can we enjoy that which made Jesus suffer and die on the cross?', 'our Lord came to deal with sin and to conquer it forever',

How can we expect lay our burden at the cross and then walk away with our sin still in hand? Paul says to the Galatians in chapter 2 verse 20;

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live

by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

If we are truly crucified with Christ, our sins stay at the cross.

Step two, stop loving the things of the world, and I think John gives us the straightest, plainest answer in how this is to be done, in not loving the world and its ways, 1st John 2 verse 15 through 17;

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

And now someone will ask ‘well, what is all of the world?’

Answer; anything, Jesus own words from Matthew 10:37 are these;

"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Anything in this world that we allow to take precedence over Jesus is to love the world more than Him. It is anything you love more than Christ, and that love can take the form of time, of money, of commitments, of business, of entertainment, and in the case of the perverse even family, can be the things of this world. How are we saved from this perverse generation, by loving God and not the things of this world.

And how do we gauge ourselves, in knowing if we love God more than the world? Ask yourself, how much time do I spend reading the bible? How much time do I spend in prayer?

What takes priority of Sunday mornings, is it Sunday school and church service, or other activities in the community?

What does your Wednesday evening look like, an hour or two of bible study and prayer time, or an evening relaxing on the couch after a long day of work?

What are your conversations like? Is it always about work and worldly things or is it about Gods word and the wonders of His love, of the great and mighty things He has done, is doing, and will do in the end? Is it about carrying each other's burdens in that we help each other and lift each other up, as we all become like Christ?

With that in mind we could go to step number three, and we could go over to 1 John chapter 3 and read verses 2 and 3;

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

We are to actively and continually be in the process of cleansing ourselves from things of this world.

‘How’ are we saved from this generation, from this worldly influence that is all around us? Buy purifying ourselves, ridding ourselves of the things that defile us in the world, bad jokes, bad music, bad movies, bad language, bad magazines, bad novels, bad clothing, bad fashions, bad things we can consume, all kinds of things that defile us and make us more like the world when we partake of them. Just read God’s word with an open and honest heart and He will show all of this to you.

Because I could talk about one thing over here, but it may be an area that is not your area of temptation or sin, and the message will not really apply to you, or if I talk about the sin you are struggling with, it may not apply to the rest of us. I think that is why our verse says;

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

Be saved from this perverse generation is the common denominator in this equation, the many other words are for you to find in the rest of this book, the ones that apply to your life, to your sin.

We could make that step four, and that is, filling yourselves with the word of God. Just listen to the first line of the hymn 'Take time to be holy, hymn 223 in our hymnals, it says this; 'Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord, abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.' There is so much scripture that directs us to be holy, directs us in becoming pure, becoming like Christ, that we could spend the entire afternoon reading and discussing it, filling our minds with God's word as to know how we ought to be.

Colossians 1:9 and 10 say this;

9 ¶ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

When we increase in the knowledge of God we will continue to grow, continue to understand what God wants us to be and what we are to become. And all of these steps, are just the initial steps, to start us in the direction of being saved from this perverse generation.

If anyone struggles with wisdom or discernment, or with the fight that is with the things of the world, then go to the word, pray to God, ask God for wisdom, for He says whoever asks will receive. As the author of Hebrews says in chapter 9:14;

how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

And that could be step five. For when our conscience is clean and made right, then the rest of our mind and body will follow. When we begin to see with a clear conscience, how the things of this world has affected us in our judgment, in our actions, in our desires, and wants, and we then begin to see them through the eyes of God, we begin to see how it has grieved Him. How the things we have enjoyed made Jesus suffer and die on the cross. And it is only by the grace of God that He gives us the ability to do so. Titus 2:11 and 12 says;

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

And 2nd Timothy 1 verse 7 says;

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Not fear, but power, but not only power but of love and of a sound mind, to overcome the things of the world. That the things of this world may not entangle you in your race towards Zion as J. C. Ryle said. Because is that not our aim, is that not our eternal vision, that heavenly Zion? Are we as the song says, ‘marching to Zion, beautiful beautiful Zion’, are we marching to Zion with intent, with a purpose, with a focused aim and direction to God?

Or are we trudging along, dragging our feet, trying to get the most out of this fleshly world before we are made to stumble over into the next. J. C. Ryle said ‘our feet are slow at the very best, we have a long course to run, we cannot afford to carry weight,’ so let us rather

say with him ‘Away with everything which keeps us back!’ and march forward to Zion, to that beautiful city of God.

CONCL:

And so in conclusion, Acts chapter 2 verse 40 says;

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

Peter tells us, that we are to be saved from this perverse generation, and from the rest of scripture we see we are to actively pursue the righteousness of Jesus, we are to conform ourselves to Him every day of our Christian walk.

We see from the words of scripture why we must be saved from this generation; we see that we must be willing to be saved from this generation. And lastly and probably most importantly, this book will show us ‘how’ we can be saved from this perverse generation, saved in that sanctification process of this Christian walk, as you walk away from the world. It will not always be easy, most of the time it will be hard. But it is to be a continual process for the believer in Jesus Christ.

1st Thessalonians 5:23 says;

*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely;
and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved
blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Completely sanctified, is that not our ultimate goal? That our whole spirit, our whole soul, our whole body be blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? To be able to meet Jesus in the air as a bride, prepared for her wedding, all white and clean free, of any spot or wrinkles.

To be as Peter says in 2nd Peter 3:14;

*Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent
to be found by Him in peace, without spot and ,blameless;*

And may the Lord be with each and every one of us as we walk in this life not looking and longing for the things of the world, but that we would look and long for the things of God, and be saved from this perverse generation.