

Intro: Months ago when we started this series of “Living Up In A Down World” I had no idea just how upside down life would be when we got here. Since we started this series we have experienced our world spiraling out of control!
~Probably the most unusual and divisive presidential primary season in history of our country (nothing yet!)
~The two Presidential nominees, from each party, saying and doing things that are astounding
~San Bernardino (14/22) and Ocala(49) Terrorist attacks (not even counting attacks in other countries)
~Baltimore, Chicago other major cities explode with violence
~Watched as Gay marriage has been legalized and Gender identification so confused NO one knows BR to go to!
~Just this week we have seen two more Law Enforcement deaths, one in Minnesota and another in Louisiana
~Then, Thursday night we watched as a demonstration exploded into horrific violence on police officers..5 and 7

So it truly does lead us to the topic we have been talking about...

How in the World do we Live UP in Such A DOWN WORLD?

Does the bible have anything to say to us about navigating the troubled waters we find ourselves in as a nation, and personally

1 Peter 3:8-16 Pg

It does, and Today I want to look with you at the final section in our series “Living Up In A Down World”

As we have worked our way through the different sections we have been saying the same thing over and over again.

Peter is writing to a group of people JUST LIKE US!

- They are “Aliens and Strangers” in the world in which they find themselves
- They struggle on a daily basis with the demands of a lifestyle and a culture that exerts tremendous negative pressure
- In order to “get it right” they have to reorder our priorities, and stand against a FLOOD of insanity, sin, trouble
- When they don’t do that correctly all of life gets out of balance...and nothing works the way it should. (Esp Spiritual)

This morning we look at the final...and most important of priorities in our system and series.

We have talked about everything else...and so today I want to look with you at the piece that makes all the rest of life work
I want to Talk with You about Putting God at the Center of your Life...to help you Live Up In A Down World!

1. FOCUS ON YOUR GOAL.

3:8-9

Because what you want...the GOAL that we all share, Is a GOOD life! Vs 10ff

- Love Life: Lit = *Desire to love and enjoy life?*
- See Good days Lit = *Desire to see good days?*

So, How are you going to go about getting there!

- Watch mouth Lit = *Stop your mouth!*
- Turn from evil/do good Lit = *Go out of your way to avoid evil...Deviate from the path that leads that way*
- Seek Peace/Pursue Lit = *to chase after, to follow after, to seek after, press toward*
- Live in such a way that God is ON YOUR SIDE! Don’t live so that He is against you!
- Live in harmony: Lit = “be likeminded” Think alike so that you can get along...be in harmony
- Be sympathetic: Lit = “have compassion for” Understand the challenges of being black...or wearing blue
- Be compassionate: Lit = “Love others as brothers” tenderhearted (love covers a multitude of sins)
- Be humble: Lit = “Friendly and courteous!”
- Don’t repay evil Lit = “no payback!” stated intent for the Dallas shootings (repay perceived evil..true or not!)

Peter says...listen...there is a way of living life that can truly make a positive difference...and you have to aim at that!

WHY?

Peter tells us, listen...WE ALL WANT THE SAME THING!

We want to love live...and see good days!

OUR GOAL is the same...but our WORLD is fighting us every step of the way!

2. FORGET YOUR FEAR AND LIVE IN FAITH!

When we see and hear about all of these things around us taking place, many times our FIRST reaction is FEAR

We are afraid that it is going to touch or someone we love

We are afraid that it is going to not only continue...but in fact get worse

We are afraid that what we have seen is just the beginning of more horrific things to come

Fear becomes an ever present companion with us, and we begin to look for a way to withdraw, to hide, to protect

BUT

Peter tell us that those of us who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are to have a very different kind of reaction!

Our reaction is not to be FEAR...but rather we are to respond in FAITH!!!!

Vs 13-14

- Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? The implied answer is that doing so will help you protect self
- But even if you DO suffer for doing good. If it does come your way then you are blessed...like Jesus
- Do not Fear what they (world and culture around you) Fear. You know the one that conquers every fear!

To fully understand and appreciate this, you have to know where this statement comes from...Quote from Book of Isaiah!
Isaiah 8:13 is the quote, and it makes sense when you understand the history of that day

“Do not fear what they fear...do not dread it!”

Isaiah was speaking to a country much like ours!

- *Trouble within*
Is 1:2-20
~People hearts have wandered from following God, pursuing their own ways
~Those who were leaders were pursuing their own good, not the good of the nation
~Many of those who called themselves priests and men of God were charlatans and thieves
~Had an empty, meaningless form of worship...but it didn't come from the heart
Isaiah 1:20 tells us what the nation was like...pretty much like ours!
- *Trouble without*
Is 7:1-6
Surrounded by enemies from other countries that wanted to destroy them!
~Isaiah 7:6 gives us insight Let us invade Judah; tear it apart and divide it!
~Sounds like those who wish to destroy our way of life in America doesn't it!
- *But, Isaiah Says:*
In a country much like ours...troubles within and without...God speaks...and listen to what he says!
Isaiah 7:7-14
~God has a plan of salvation...and it is His son...*Immanuel*...God with us!
~Don't despair!
- *So Peter, when he is speaking to Christians in a very similar situation quotes Isaiah! Says same thing...NO FEAR!!!*
~Surrounded by enemies (Rome and Nero persecuting them)
~Running for their lives,
~A culture and a community that doesn't understand you...
He tells them...and he tells us... *“Don't fear what they fear”* Have faith...God will answer...God will provide!
The world around you may be terrified...but because you know Jesus then you have a foundation on which to stand!
Refuse to give into the fear, Refuse to despair, Refuse to give in or give up! You know the end of the story!

SO WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN FEAR COMES?

3. KEEP YOUR EYES ON JESUS, WALK WITH HIM! Vs 15

There are three very specific things that will help you stay focused and stand in faith when the world goes crazy around you

- *In Your Heart:* Look IN to where the Spirit dwells instead of OUT to where the trials are! NOT OUT!
If you look Out...You will be afraid...you will be terrified...you will be discouraged
Bible is very clear. When you came to him, His Spirit dwells in YOU
All of the power and presence of God is with you, regardless of where you go, what happens
Greatest, most often repeated promise in the Bible: *“I am with You!”*
- *Set Apart:* Recognize the difference Jesus makes!
Set apart: Lit = *to set a building apart...to realize it is different...other than normal*
Used to describe a building that is set aside for Worship
Or instruments set apart for use in the temple
Jesus used this word, when He taught us to pray
“Our father who art in heaven...hallowed be your name: Sanctified, Holy, Different!
Set apart Jesus as the source of strength in your life
Set yourself apart to be used by him!
- *Christ as Lord:* Jesus is the Messiah...Promised deliverer of Israel...He is the LORD! Promise Fulfilled
He is the One...the only One, who can deliver us through this struggle
He is the one who hold the hearts of the King in his hands
He is the one who can turn them in the direction He desires
He is the one that can bring us through...regardless of what is going on around us.
When Peter quoted that passage, He was saying, Look...Jesus is the Messiah..
He is the HOPE of Israel...and He is the hope of the early church...He is OUR Hope today!

Illus: Here is what Peter is saying: Keep your focus on Jesus and you can walk through anything

Mt 14:22-34 Pg 692

When Peter was focused on Jesus...He was fine

When Peter took his eyes OFF of Jesus, he gave way to fear....and he began to sink

THAT is what it means to set apart Jesus as Lord in your heart!

CONCL

- Want a Good life? We all do
- Forget your fear...It seems terrifying until you remember...God is in charge!
- Set Him apart...in your heart...Keep him there, treasure him, Remember...He is Lord

GET THAT PIECE RIGHT>>>>EVERYTHING ELSE WILL BEGIN TO FALL INTO PLACE