

Something to Pray About

March 2012 – Cindy Sears

And he said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." --Mark 9:1 KJV

The Kingdom Is Here--Now

Someday, we who have accepted Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as Lord and Savior, will be snatched up into heaven to be with Jesus. But now, we live in the "Last Days." And although, we are called to live in expectation of Christ's Second Coming, we are not called to sit and wait with folded hands.

Read the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-11. These blessings are not for Christians already in heaven; neither are they simply a rule book to follow, so that one can be assured of going to heaven. (By grace you are saved...not of works...Ephesians 2:8,9) On the cross, Jesus said, "It is finished." Jesus has already won the victory over sin and death. He now rules. And what is truly amazing is He wants us—expects us—to be His body here on earth—NOW. Paul's illustration of the church as the body of Christ is not just a word picture. "It expresses Paul's conviction that *this is the way in which Jesus now exercises his rule in the world—through the church, which is his Body.*" (Simply Jesus by N. T. Wright, pp. 217-218)

"The Beatitudes are the agenda for Kingdom people." (ibid) These verses tell us how Jesus wants to rule this world through his people. We are to be the salt (Matt. 5:13) and the light (vs. 14-15) of the world here and now. God's people do not come in with tanks and guns and harsh words; we operate according to God's style—meekness, kindness, and a powerful self-giving love. That's how the first Christians turned the world upside down. That's the way we, even today, are called to do the same. We are not called to just be nice, good, spiritual people, living in our own little sphere of Christianity. We are called to work in the world and for the kingdom of God here on earth. So, our worship of the Lord involves more than reading the Bible, and attending church services. Our whole being ought to be about worship of the Lord. We declare that Jesus is Lord—**and no one else is.**

"Worshiping the God we see in Jesus orients our whole being, our imagination, our will, our hopes, and our fears away from the world where Mars, Mammon, and Aphrodite (violence, money, and sex) make absolute demands and punish anyone who resists. It orients us instead to a world in which love is stronger than death, the poor are promised the kingdom, and chastity (whether married or single) reflects the holiness and faithfulness of God himself." (Wright, p. 217)

Therefore, as Christians, we are to challenge the "norm" wherever we are, whatever we are doing. In all things, we should reflect the love of Christ and God's agenda. Our "good works" are not just keeping a set of commandments or rules. By our "good works," we are to change the world. (See Ephesians 2:10)

The United States and Europe and Great Britain are in such a sorry state today, because many Christians have not been "living out" the kingdom of God. Until "His people who are called by His Name" live out their belief in ALL aspects of their lives, the world will continue to sink further and further into sin and degradation. "Jesus rules the world through those who launch new initiatives that radically challenge the accepted ways of doing things: jubilee projects to remit ridiculous and unpayable debt, housing

trusts that provide accommodation for low income families or homeless people; local and sustainable agricultural projects that care for creation instead of destroying it in the hope of quick profit, and so on.” (Wright, p. 219)

The church is called to speak out against all sin, all evil, and all injustice. But, we do not only point out these things, we work to overcome them—in and through government, and in and through the work we do in our local churches and communities, and in our jobs. The government is mainly there to “keep the order.” Government cannot save or help everyone. But “there are millions of things that the church should be getting into that the rulers of the world either don’t bother about or don’t have the resources to support.” (ibid, p. 230)

Remember what Christ said, “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” (John 14:12, NIV)

We have done “greater things than these.” Why look for miracles that occur by the “laying on of hands” or “speaking in tongues” spontaneously? Look at what we have done using our Christian desire to help people and to learn how God’s physical world works, and because we wanted to spread the gospel message around the world. Medical science and procedures have saved untold lives and healed millions; we can fly (in planes), we can move quickly from place to place (cars, trains, ships), we can communicate with people around the world (phones, internet, Bibles translated into thousands of languages), we have visited the moon and sent probes deep into outer space; and the most equitable and prosperous nation in the world was built upon a foundation of Christian principles.

This is not our permanent home (yet), but it is where Christ is working through us to establish God’s kingdom. This is our training ground to be co-rulers with the Lord in the coming millennial kingdom. So why aren’t we the leaders of industry—all of them, from manufacturing and farming to entertainment and communication to scientific research and medical science? Our Christian influence should be felt in all aspects of life on this earth. We truly do need to be *courageous* about our faith. The Kingdom is NOW.