

The Sparrow Hath Found an House (Psalm 84:3)

“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.” (Psalm 84:1-5)

God, through His Word, calls sinners into His Kingdom. This Kingdom is upon this earth, and its inhabitants are joined together by the bond of love which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. We marvel and thank God that He continues to call penitent ones into His Kingdom from various parts of the world. We sometimes ponder how God will reveal His Word to parts of the world where no believers now dwell and no services of God’s children are held, and then we are amazed to see that when God’s time is filled, people in parts of the world where God’s Word was never heard before begin to seek God’s Kingdom and repentances occur. We are thankful and rejoice with the newly converted, “the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young.” (Psalm 84:3)

As we rejoice over how God is increasing His kingdom, we also are sorrowful that some fall away from faith through sin and disobedience. We notice the restlessness of this world and the increase of secularization. These societal trends in our homelands are not without their effects on the inhabitants of God’s Kingdom. Pastors in God’s Kingdom are encouraged to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.” (2 Tim. 4:2) Sin is preached as sin and grace as grace.

We, God’s children, continue to attempt to make known the love of Christ to the world around us. We endeavor to preach God’s Word without respect of persons. We mustn’t “water down” our sermons for the fear of offending unbelieving service guests. We preach of God’s Kingdom, encourage those yet on the outside unto repentance and believing the gospel, and preach the gospel of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name and blood to all hearers. This gospel is comfort and strength unto the believers and encourages those on the outside to repent and believe. Each child of God lives through the gospel and that is why we want to use it freely in our sermons, and also in our discussions with brothers and sisters in faith.

God’s Kingdom is made up of people from different nations. The outward circumstances under which believers live in their homelands may differ much from each other. There are various types of government, cultural differences, language differences, differences in the standard of living. Outwardly, we can be so different from each other, yet we are united; we are one because of the love which unites God’s children together. God’s Kingdom is the place “where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” (Col. 3:11)

As a result of this diversity in God's Kingdom, there may be many views on temporal issues. These varied views can result from the environment we live in, the kind of government we have, our cultural and home experiences, our education, and even the influence of the media in our homelands.

We must remain watchful that these different views on temporal issues and on events which happen in the world do not break the love between believers. We are united by a common faith and a common goal. It is good for us to consider this when we discuss current events and politics with believers from other nations, or even with believers from our own nation or congregation, so that we don't debate these matters in a way that causes offense. Rather we should listen to each other and try to understand each other and perhaps even refrain from such discussions when we know we have very strong differences of opinion about them and they could cause unnecessary controversy. We remember how we are encouraged in Col. 3:14 "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

We feel this love which unites us when we visit with believers in our own congregation and in the area where we live. When we travel to other areas or even other lands, we marvel that we can visit believers who live there and immediately feel the bond of love which unites us. This is a gift that God gives us, and even those outside of God's Kingdom often marvel at this. Paul writes of this incomprehensible love: "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph:3:19) No outward differences can come between this love.

This unity is especially precious in our time as we see how the world continues to rage around us. The Apostle Paul warned Timothy of these times in 2 Tim. 3:1-6. The people of this world are becoming increasingly less concerned about God's teachings — that it is sin which separates man from God. Many faiths in this world no longer teach in a wholesome way concerning sin and its effects, as they are afraid of offending their members who are living in sin and want to continue living in this way. The media in our society portrays this sinful life as normal and acceptable and many people begin to take it for granted without pondering what will happen to them after this life ends. Pornography, common law marriages, use of drugs and many other examples of sinful life are rampant in our time and are becoming more and more acceptable with disastrous consequences.

God's children continue to preach God's Word through the power of the Holy Spirit. Sin is preached as sin and the love of God toward the penitent sinner is revealed. Those who seek peace are reminded how this peace can be found. When sins are preached forgiven by a child of God and they are believed forgiven, an unbeliever is released from a life of sin or self-righteousness into the light of God's Kingdom. In place of sorrow comes joy, hope replaces hopelessness, and the desire comes to live a life that is acceptable to God.

We live in an uncertain world. People fear war, terrorist attacks, diseases and even natural catastrophes. Many people hope for peace and security and despair of ever living in a world where life would truly be safe.

What a gift we own through faith! God has given us His Kingdom where we can live in peace and security in these troubled times. As inhabitants of God's Kingdom we are assured of being

cared for in this life and of receiving eternal life after death. The Psalmist says in Psalms 46:1-5 “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.”

Our comfort comes from God’s grace toward pardoned sinners. God’s word reminds us of this care of the Heavenly Father: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” (Psalm 103:2-5) We are thankful that God’s grace shelters and comforts us and that we have nothing to fear. Jesus has promised to be with us every day of our lives.

God continues to call His chosen ones into his Kingdom from various parts of this world. He also gives many of us many opportunities to gather together around His word and be in the fellowship of believers as we now experience at these services. God encourages us to gather together as the end of time approaches. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (Heb. 10:25). When we gather together at services and visit other children of God, our journey is easier and we can comfort one another with God’s Word as we are encouraged by Scripture to do.

When we consider all that God has given us when we can be His children, we have much reason for joy. We are protected in God’s kingdom from this raging world which surrounds us. May God give us strength to remain as children — free and happy children. One day we, too, will receive the reward of eternal life, as so many have before us.

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