

Cherished-Chosen-Challenged – December 5, 2010

Are We Having Fun Yet?

The LORD tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Upon the wicked He will rain coals; Fire and brimstone and a burning wind *shall be* the portion of their cup. For the LORD *is* righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright. Psalm 11:5-7

Preparation for the celebration of Christmas is for many a time of great stress. Instead of having fun it's like being thrown into a pressure cooker. The season can bring out the best in people...good will, happy dispositions, charity and the like. The stress of the season also brings out the worst. The news this past week was full of reports of violent behavior from some who were disappointed in their shopping experiences on "Black Friday". Screaming and hollering, pushing and shoving, intolerant and rude attitudes and irritation with others, cursing and swearing, even reports of fist fights amongst people in an effort to obtain that last "hot" item which they just can't live without. Can't you just hear the conversations in line at the checkout? "Are we having fun yet?"

Stress and stressful situations are part of this sinful world. Imagine your bride to be was pregnant and about to deliver her first child. You had been summoned by the government to report to the city of your family's origin and to be counted and taxed. The travel under such circumstances was exceedingly difficult. The city was crowded for everyone else was under the same order. People were no doubt testy, tired, and hungry. Good manners and kindness under such conditions would be difficult to express. It gets worse...there was no place to stay...the inn was full. Such a situation could bring out the best in people who faced the same challenge. It could have evoked compassion from some for the pitiful situation of this young couple. But knowing human nature it certainly also could bring out the worst. Welcome, dear friend, to Jospeh's world! Add to that the pressure of the Child to be raised in your home being the Son of

God...Who could blame Joseph if he were tempted to query that first Christmas: "Are we having fun yet?"

Like Joseph, as the righteous people of God we can expect our faith to be tested. Each stress is an opportunity for us to lean upon the ever present God, especially when we lack understanding. His promise is that He is always with us. We dare not protest that the wicked always triumph and the righteous are beat down into the dust for the day of reckoning is coming when the wicked shall reap what they have sown. No...instead let us be the ones that in the midst of great trial find comfort in the mercy of God and depend on Him to work His will in our lives to His great glory and our great blessing.

As we go about our preparations for Christmas, let us meditate on the account of our salvation. In the manger we see God meet head on all the burdens of our sinful flesh and taking them upon Himself grants the ultimate victory over sin and death and blesses us with eternal life. Through God's grace, such meditation will lead us to repentance and true joy that no matter the stress and difficulty...no matter the pressure or our situation...since Christ our Savior is born it shall truly be a Merry Christmas!

- Remember: The true joy of Christmas is Christ. Why not share that joy with others?

How blessed we are to be the people of God. He has chosen us to be in this place. He has prepared us for this time. He has equipped us for service to Him. **Don't wait for someone else to do it. If you wait on someone else to do it...it will never get done!** God bless you in the growth of your faith and in service to Him and His people, for your labor in the Lord is never in vain.

Pastor Jacobs

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