

Title: How to Think and Act in Evil Days

Passage: 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Introduction

- The challenge of today's culture and world is very real

2 Timothy 3:1-7 (Godlessness in the Last Days)

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power...For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

- includes those who are "religious" on the surface (but not in the heart)

Question: How are we to act in present context of evil days?

Context of passage:

- Paul wrote more to the Corinth than any other church.
- Corinth = much immorality was present in that culture
- In chapter 16, exhortation to the people of God

Passage: 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 (NASB)

Be on the alert. Stand firm in the faith. Be men of courage. Be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.

EXPOSITION

Preliminary Observations

Commands

- Not optional

Present imperative

- these are to be a way of life

Plural

- not in singular
- Implies to be heard and applied in context of community of faith and in relationship with one another.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

I. Calling - Be On The Alert

- military term = “wake up” / “watch”
- Often used with regards to Jesus’ return (second coming)

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

1 John 2:15-18

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. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

- be alert against the world, the flesh, and the devil

Ephesians 6:12

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- we are in battle - both visible and invisible forces

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

What are our weapons in battle?

- Word of God
- Prayer - interceding on behalf of church and our nation

Ephesians 6:17b-18

and take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

James 5:16 (prayer)

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

pray without ceasing,

II. Conviction - Stand Firm In The Faith

Jude 1:3

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

Romans 8:36-39

As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Temptations

- Wrong beliefs/doctrine, then lead to
- Wrong behavior

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

III. Courage - Be Men of Courage

- Meaning = keep on being men of courage / act like men / man up
- God's man is a man of conviction to live out regardless of the cost
- Conviction without courage will ultimately lead to cowardliness
- Both publicly and in private

Joshua 1:9

Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

IV. Character - Be Strong

- inner person of what will be required - strength of character
- strength to endure through trial will come through Christ.

2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- our part? Submit to God

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

2 Timothy 2:1

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus,

2 Chronicles 16:9a

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.

1 John 5:18

We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

V. Compassion - Let All That You Do Be Done In Love

- How? Through love and prayer

Matthew 5:44-45a

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

1 Corinthians 13:1

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

See Jesus' example

- God loves His enemies through common grace

Romans 5:8

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Matthew 9:36-37

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;

- God loves His enemies through warning them.

1 John 3:18

Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

- God loves His enemies through offering the Gospel of Jesus

Romans 10:13-15

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

Hebrews 13:20-21

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.