

## Unchanging Truths in Times of Change, Part 2

### Selected Scriptures

While the West is weakening through its moral decline, dancing around in rainbow colors, which, by the way, promise God's grace that he will not judge the world with a flood anymore; oh, but he will, 2 Peter 3, judge the world with fire. They're dancing around in the grace of God. They're dancing around in God's colors and weakening. And while that's happening, the East is on the rise. China is on an economic ascendancy. We're seeing a resurgent Russia invading other countries at will, taking what it wants.

I just read an article last night quoting Vladimir Putin, who is condemning the West, get this, for departing from Christianity. China, Russia, the borders of the Middle East, set about a hundred years ago after World War One, arbitrarily by Europeans; the victors always be able to divide things up as they want to. Well those borders are now being redrawn by Isis and other groups in the shape of a Muslim Crescent. Nationally and internationally, regionally and globally, the world

continues to change. The ground is moving beneath our feet. All the old structures, the reliable institutions, the founding documents and principles upon which this great nation was built, everything is being dismantled. Nothing is left untouched, and there's nothing we can do about it.

Listen, can I give you a word of hope? Here it is, Malachi 3:6, "I the Lord do not change." The Lord God looks down from Heaven on all this nonsense going on below him, and you know what he does? He laughs. Psalm 2:4-6, "He who sits in the heavens laughs;" and, "the Lord holds them in derision." And, "then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 'As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.'" Folks, God is not worried. He is not worried. He's comfortable, he is at peace, he is confident, he's even rejoicing right now in the unfolding of his perfect plan, which is unstoppable, to send Christ back to Earth. Folks, this is all part of the plan.

Listen to Isaiah 41:1-4, "Listen to me in silence, O coastlands; let the peoples renew their strength; let them approach," and, "then let them speak; let us draw near for judgement. Who stirred up one from the east whom victory meets at every step? He gives up," the, "nations before him, so that

he tramples kings underfoot; he makes them like dust with his sword, like driven stubble with his bow. He pursues them and passes on safely, by paths his feet have not trod. Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he."

God is executing his plan. Israel had to deal with the same kind of invasions and exile and fear and trembling, and God says, "Who do you think called the conqueror into your land? I did. I did." God helped Israel understand the social unrest that they faced, the conquest of nations mightier than they. And you know what, folks? We can learn from that. We need to learn from that. God is the one who's bringing America down, and he is the one who is raising up the nations of the East. God is the one who is dismantling the power and authority and the strength of the West. God is the one who is strengthening the East. He's raising up these nations for judgement on the world, make no mistake. What America interprets as freedom, reveling in it, is actually the mark of harrowing judgement. It's the judicial wrath of God on a nation that flaunts its sin.

But to his beloved people, God says this, Isaiah 41:8-10, "But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I took from the ends

of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, 'You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off'; fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

You recognize that verse? It, you know it comes frer, from Isaiah 41, and we sing it in that hymn, *How firm a Foundation*. What a great source of confidence there. Such comfort! Such confidence for the people of God. This, written to Israel; but folks, if we belong to Israel, if we are united in Abraham by faith, you know what? God is our God, too. We're grafted in, we're protected in the vine.

Listen, you need to understand the significance of what's going on in the world around you. The world that has been, it will never return. The evangelical influence over the past hundred years in America, however real or perceived that influence was, you know what? Those times are over. That was a historical anomaly, folks. We just got used to it. The cultural acceptance and tolerance of Christianity, that level of influence, that was not normal. We enjoyed that for a time, but now it's back to business as usual for Christians living in a hostile world. Jesus promised us, "If the world hates you, know

that it has hated me before it hated you.” John writes, “Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.” Don’t be surprised by that.

Everything is different here on the ground level, but up in heaven, nothing has changed. Nothing has changed. Everything is moving along exactly according to plan. God is still sovereign. God is still on the throne. God is still bringing everything to his preordained ends. Listen to Isaiah 45:5-7, God says, “I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you don’t know me, I equipped you that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none beside me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness; and I make well-being and create calamity; I am the LORD, who does all these things.”

Listen folks. That’s the God we belong to! We belong to him. We belong to God. Psalm 100, verse 3, “Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” We’re going to have the opportunity, we Christians are going to have the opportunity, unlike any that we’ve had as Christians in this part of the world for the past century or more, to really learn what that means. It’s a joyous privilege that we have to learn what it is

to be God's people, to be under his care, under his protection, even though they're going to hunt us down. I'm excited about that. I know you are, too.

You know what else? We continue to see, in Jesus words, we see them fulfilled. And we see his boast in Matthew 16:18, we see that boast vindicated, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He's just proven that again today, hasn't he? Six people being baptized, twenty-something people coming into membership in this church, more waiting. He continues to build his church! Doesn't matter what's going on in the culture around. He is marching forward, forging ahead. He's doing it right here in our midst. Very exciting times.

The world, the world is tearing itself apart around us. In the midst of all, all of that, Jesus Christ is, indeed, building his church, and that promise in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Doesn't matter how many rainbow flags you have, not prevail against my church. He's basically taunting the enemy. It stands as a taunt to our enemy. Our membership, our involvement in this local church is absolutely vital, and it's more apparently so today than ever before in our lifetime.



Our church stands as a protest to this ungodly world. Our church stands as a lighthouse, shining the truth of God's holy Word to a dark and fallen world. Our church stands as a hospital, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cleanse lepers, and to cast out demons by proclaiming the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. And, you know what else? Our church stands as a training center, equipping the saints for the work of the ministry in this day and age.

As Jesus said, Matthew 5:13, "You are the salt of the world. You are the salt of the earth." By his grace, by God's grace, we're going to make sure you don't lose your savor. Jesus also said in verse 14, Matthew 5:14, "You are the light of the world." And, by his grace, we're going to work hard to keep your light shining as brightly as possible. "We want you to sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts." "We want you to always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for the hope that is in you."

You say, you know what, I don't find too many people coming up to me and asking about the hope that's in me. Oh, they will. Right now, they feel pretty comfortable. They don't feel like they need anything. But beloved, what's going on in the world around us, this doesn't end well for them. It does not end well.

Times like these do not lead to human flourishing and happiness, they lead to suffering and sadness. Times like these bring pain and sorrow. Times like these bring dismay and despair to those who are mangled by sin, whether it's their own sin that they're participating in, or the sin of others that's perpetrated upon them.

I've had the opportunity to counsel a number of people who struggle with homosexuality, and to a person, man and woman, they're destroyed by that sin. It hurts them, folks. It's not loving to celebrate it. It's not loving to tolerate it and to overlook it. It's loving to help them. It's loving to confront it. It's us Christians who have the answers from God to all the questions that are posed by a confused and a perplexed world. We are the ones holding out hope to a dejected, a degraded, and a decimated world. We have the Gospel of God!

Now, what does all that mean for our church practically in the coming years? Means we need to get busy learning, growing, training, preparing. As A.W. Tozer so famously said, "This world is not a playground, it's a battleground." And we are an outpost of the Kingdom of God. We are like a forward operating base of the Kingdom of Heaven. And like Paul, 2 Corinthians 6, "as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great



endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger.”

We commend ourselves not by big buildings, not by numbers, not by money, not by power, not by influence; We commend ourselves, “by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love.” We commend ourselves, “by truthful speech and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as imposters, and yet we’re true; we are unknown, and yet well-known; we are as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing,” and “yet possessing everything.”

Listen, as we train and prepare and conduct our mission to proclaim the truth in this world, we do not fight with the sinners in the world. They are our mission field, and our battle is part of a spiritual warfare. This is 2 Corinthians 10:4 and 5, “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God,” even supreme court justices, “and

bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

So, we’re going to continue to study God’s Word together, and we’re going to create more opportunities for learning the truth of God to get equipped, to get strengthened; we’re going to continue Sunday morning expositions in this pulpit. Reestablishing, setting a foundation, for understanding the person and work of Jesus Christ. I don’t know about you, the so-called Christians that you run into, but they do not know the Gospel, they do not know the story. We’re going to retell it, right from the scripture.

We plan to offer more classes on doctrine, practical theology, because we need to educate ourselves in Christian truth. In fact, you know what we were doing yesterday morning as elders? We were learning. We were conspiring together to teach you about our great God. Listen to the statement we were pondering yesterday, meditating on, wrestling with how to teach.

Here’s the statement, “The Lord, our God, is the one and only living and true God, who’s subsistence is in and of himself, who is infinite in being and perfection, who’s essence cannot be comprehended by any but himself, who is the most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts or passions, who only has

immortality, who dwells in the light which no man can approach, who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, in every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; who works all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will for his glory; who is most loving, gracious, merciful, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin; who is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him, and who, at the same time is most just and terrible in his judgements, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty."

You know why we want to teach you about God? Because that God is our rock and our refuge. That God is our shield and our great reward. Folks, that's why Christ suffered and died for our sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, 1 Peter 3:18, that he might bring us to that God. We want to augur your souls deeply into the bedrock truths about our unchanging God because he is the only anchor who holds fast in a rapidly changing world.

We want to step it up for student ministries to young adults, middle school, high school, because we want them to understand not just what those verses are, but what they mean, how they apply, how they, the implications of those on the

worldview they face every single day in a hostile school environment. Then we want to provide adult teaching as well, so we can equip parents to be parents, to strengthen marriages, to teach principles of apologetics and evangelism, worldview for adults. We want to make sure those who serve are encouraged, we want to make sure they're well fed, make sure they're well equipped to do the work of the ministry.

You know, there's another reason, also, for proliferating teaching opportunities around the campus, we need to raise up godly leaders for the future. If we don't have places for them to learn to teach, then we cannot reproduce ourselves and carry out the mandate that's given in 2 Timothy 2:2. Paul commanded Timothy there, he said, "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."

Apart from parents raising and training their own children in the context of the home, that's the only text of the New Testament that commands Christian education. We've historically relied on Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries to conduct that education for us. But, listen, in this new, anti-Christian climate, which will prohibit and penalize the free

exercise of religion, Christian education is under fire. They're going after it. They already signaled that. Also, the education that's going to happen in the context of the local church, that's where it needs to happen is here. Needs to happen here. Christian education will need to happen in partnership with other local churches that are like-minded. We need to be prepared for this.

Dr. Albert Mohler is the president of Boyce College and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He believes that the Supreme Court's ruling on gay marriage is going to have the most, eh, almost immediate implications on Christian education, particularly in the areas of faculty and staff hiring, student enrollment, married student housing. If a gay couple comes to your campus and says, I want housing, can you let them in if you're a Christian institution? No. But what's going to happen to your funding? What's going to happen to your grant money? What's going to happen to your student loans? What's going to happen to your taxes, your tax status? Are you going to be protected anymore? No, you're not.

In oral arguments before the Supreme Court Donald B. Verrilli, the solicitor general of the United States, member of the Obama Administration, bringing that case to the courts from

the administration, Verrilli signaled the government's intention to do just that, to go after Christian institutions. It's not enough to tolerate gay marriage anymore. They demand that you celebrate it with them. Anything less than unqualified support and celebration will be interpreted as hostility and hatred, and you'll be penalized into compliance.

That's going to apply to all kinds of Christian institutions and parachurch organizations and will likely encroach into local churches as well. If a Christian organization, a college, seminary, church, parachurch, if a Christian organization has the courage to stand firm on biblical conviction regarding issues of marriage and sexuality, you know what? It needs to be prepared to forfeit its tax-exempt status, to forfeit federal grants, to forfeit student loans, and perhaps face penalties for engaging in hate speech.

For us, it doesn't matter if the government penalizes me for attending church, imprisons me for preaching the Gospel. I'm preaching! So glad to hear you clap, because I was about to say I'm gathering with all of you. So, we'll go to jail together. But, together, by the grace of God, and with the enablement of his Holy Spirit, we're going to obey his Word. That's what we're going to do here. We're going to follow Paul's directive to



entrust the Gospel ministry to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. And if they double my taxes for coming to church, I'm going to come to church poor, yet rich.

To that end, we also want to strengthen our association and our partnership with like-minded churches. We need friends in the region; we need partners to cooperate with us in reaching northern Colorado with the Gospel of Christ. We're going to minister to men, we're going to strengthen them for the unique role that God has given them in leading their homes, in taking initiative as strong men, courageous men in the workplace and society, as husbands, as fathers, we're going to strengthen their hand. We're going to tell them and remind them of what God created them to do. It's not to sit around and be the butt of every joke on a sitcom. Men are to be men as God designed them.

I've gone a little bit longer than I probably should have, but you know that about me by now. But I just wanted you to have a little perspective about what we're doing and then why, wha-, what we're doing here is so vitally important. You need to understand, this is the place to be. This is the place to be, because your leadership, coming before you today, has every conviction that I've laid out here. These are their convictions. These are your convictions. We stand together.

I just wanted to give you also a little preview of what's coming is definitely worth praying fervently about, supporting faithfully, serving diligently. And just understand, God has raised us up for such a time as this. That's why we're here. And we have his backing. When we stand and we face the enemy, not the world, understand, they're our mission field, when we stand and face the enemy, who is Satan and all his hoard, the spirit of the age that's coursing through the minds of all these people, we stand and face that, you know what? Behind us is our great God, and our Savior, Jesus Christ, and he's the one who will go before us. Amen?