

# THOUGHTS

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SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

## STILL HAVE THE JOY OF THE LORD?

The world seems to be falling apart both socially and physically, but that is nothing new. Occasionally a string of cultural and environmental calamities arrives, and it can throw us off, turning us angry or anxious.

Remember that we are not to derive our joy or comfort from this world! We should expect trials, hardships, and difficulties. God uses such things to refine our faith (see James 1:2-8). Happiness is dependent upon the circumstances, and it can evaporate quickly! The joy of Christ is fixed, not a mood but a moral compass always pointing toward Christ. Our future is secure in Him. Therefore, our default mindset is to be joyful! When your mind is burdened or in distress, turn to prayer to find God's peace, allowing Him to guard your spirit (see Philippians 4:4-9).

## TOO LATE

Hurricane Ian steadily approached Florida and hit on September 28, 2022. Warnings were issued and there was time to leave. Finally, the time for leaving was over; the storm was upon them. Some left and some didn't.

Humans are to leave the world of sin, the Humanistic, atheistic culture that denies God, and are to turn to Him. The phrase "in the world, but not of the world" is used to indicate the intentional separation made between the world's values and our values as Christians. We are to be radically different from the average citizen to the degree that we are seen as aliens, strangers (see I Peter 1:1-2; 2:11-12). Another planet in our solar system would be hostile and we would not feel comfortable there. Likewise, the atmosphere of ungodliness and wickedness is uncomfortable to the Christian. If you don't feel out of place, at odds with much of what the culture does, then you may not be much of a Christian. James the Apostle said that anyone who chooses to become a friend to the world becomes an enemy of God (James 4:4b). Fellow Apostle, John, wrote, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him (I John 2:15)." Do you get the sense that we are to be oriented in opposition to the sinful culture that leads to death?

We are to flee materialistic, greedy desires and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness (see I Timothy 6:6-16). Paul warned Timothy, "Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Timothy 2:22)." The world presents a storm of temptations and difficulties. We are to flee evil and pursue good. What does that say about all the lazy Christians who are essentially doing nothing? They don't worship, study the Scriptures, witness, give offerings to do the work of the Great Commission, pray consistently, visit the sick, or volunteer to serve in a capacity that will show love to others and build them up.

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*The Bible is God's Word...Jesus is God's "Word" made flesh...  
His death and resurrection, the message needed Today.*

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They are dead in the water, drowning in worldliness, making them ineffectual and more of a problem for the Kingdom of Christ than a solution! If that description pertains to you, then it's time to repent! God is not saying, "Get away from me," but "Come to me!" Stop pretending and start producing! Escape the flood of dissipation that is engulfing the world! You know how to get out of harm's way when it comes to a flood. Get out of harm's way in the flood of wickedness engulfing the world!

Jesus' parable of the houses built on rock or sand comes to pass in our lives. The cultural storm hits and sweeps a lot of people away. How many lives will be lost – I'm speaking of eternal consequences – in the humanistic hurricane? This generation had time and the warnings have been given consistently by the conservative preachers and church members. Most didn't evacuate. Many will perish. Your last chance is to close at hand.

#### **NOT REMOTELY HEALING**

God does not typically heal people magically from a distance. I only recall one or two times that Jesus opted to conduct a distance healing. In those instances, His power was displayed in that He did not have to be in the presence of the one being healed. Most of the time, however, people brought the sick and troubled to Christ or He went to them. A woman sat in my office with tears running down her face. She was a faithful believer but decided to cohabit, and so she diminished her commitment to Christ to dull the guilt that was plaguing her. Not a good idea. Usually, our guilt is for a good reason, and it's not in our best long-term interest to resist repentance.

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Now, she wanted to have me pray with her. We prayed and I told her that she needed to get back into gear and resume discipling. She said it was "complex" and had a "fear" of doing so. Satan loves to make it seem like we just can't break through the problems and come back to Christ. I told her I was having none of it. She needed to return to church and get back into the body of Christ.

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She literally wanted to run away, to leave the state and start over again. That's often a losing proposition for a new start. It's desperation. The answer lies in resuming one's walk with the Lord, not relocating. As she left, she said I had given her much to think about. I said I expected her to get back to church. If she expects her life to change for the better, she will.

**I NEED A WALKING PARTNER. WILL YOU WALK WITH ME? ~ Jesus**

Blessings,  
Douglas W. Schroeder