

Pastor Brian's
Midweek Message
April 20,2022

"TROUBLED TIMES"

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

You don't have to look far before you see or hear troubling news. There's a war raging in Ukraine. Did you know that there are also that there are three other wars right now? These are civil wars in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Yemen. Here at home...North America...we are experiencing a period of inflation that hasn't been seen in 50 years. On top of that there's a pandemic that is still out there, and a huge increase in violent crime is plaguing our cities. It's also oozing out into less populated areas. Drug and alcohol addiction is on the increase resulting deaths from overdose and suicide. The God given pattern of family is under attack. Illegal and undocumented immigrants are pouring into the country by the 1000s every day. The list seems to go on and on. Then there's the trouble that we seem to invent for ourselves, either by foolish and reckless behavior or in worry and anxiety about things that we cannot control and will almost certainly never happen. Yes, these are troubled times. We often long to go back to the "Good Old Days".

But really now, were those days really that good? Let's look back to our childhood, at least for most of us. What about the 1950s. We started off with the Korean War (I guess I should say conflict as the nation never did declare war on North Korea). That was linked to the "Red Menace" ...the rise and spread of communism in eastern Europe after World War II, and the expansion of Chinese communism in the Far East. All of this was compounded by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Also in the early 1950s, there was period of runaway inflation that led to a recession. Does any of this sound familiar? It was in the 50s that racial inequity and injustice began to come to the forefront. The fight against racism and segregation entered the mainstream of life. Were these really the Good Old Days? Doesn't seem like it to me. We just seem to have a bit of a memory lapse as we look back. And besides, being a lot younger we had other things on our minds. If you were born after the 50s just do a Google search of the problems in the decade of your childhood and you'll find similar results.

What I'm getting at here is that this life is full of problems/trouble, all the time, no matter what period that you look at. Those issues are unique and different according to the era, but they are still the source of a great deal of suffering, fear, anxiety, and worry. That's because this world has been full of sin and sinners for 1000s and 1000s of years. Sin is the source of all suffering. Sin is the source of all trouble. And we, people, are the source of all sin. The passage that I have listed at the top comes from the teaching of Jesus at the Passover meal on the evening before His crucifixion and death. He's preparing His disciples for what is to come, and for the mission that lay ahead of them after He has returned to His Father in heaven. At the end of the entire lesson Jesus reiterates His main message, that there will always be trouble ahead for His people and on account of him. But Jesus also gives us the assurance and comfort that this trouble will not be able to destroy us, no matter how bad it seems too be. He guarantees us that trouble will come, but also in that He has overcome all the trouble of the world. I mentioned above that all trouble and suffering is the result of sin, so as Jesus overcomes all sin with his sacrificial death on the cross and glorious resurrection, He has also overcome the trouble that it causes.

This is the message of Easter, especially His message on that first Easter evening. Jesus appears to His disciples in the locked room in Jerusalem. His very first words are ones of encouragement, "Peace be with you." Through Christ's completed work He has made peace for us with God the Father, and because He has destroyed the power of sin, death, and hell we can live our lives of faith in peace, knowing that our eternal destiny is secure. Jesus has given us His Word so we can have peace. It might be good for us to dwell in it!