

1/19/57 2:04/60
N.W. Bailey
P.M.

Scripture Lesson:-

Text:- Psalm 44: 23-26. "Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? Arise, cast us not off forever. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and oppression: Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake."

That is the cry and prayer that that goes up from millions of hearts the world round. There is so much misery and suffering and sorrow in the world. Two world wars in one generation have left the world a wreck with vast destruction of property and with millions of fresh graves.

I.

Now we are in another world war in which Korea is being bombed to pieces and thousands of our boys being killed and wounded and captured and thousands of our Korean Christians uprooted, their churches destroyed, their homes destroyed and their families killed or scattered. Our political leaders tell us we are drifting toward a third world war which may burst upon us at any time. Millions of people all over the world are asking with deep anxiety, "Why does not God do something? Why does he sit idly by and let his human family of two and one half billion soul drift toward the precipice of destruction? Is God indifferent to what goes on down here? Is he helpless in the face of the world situation? Does not God care what happens to us down here on this little planet as it rolls through space to its destiny or doom?

Japan ravaged China; Italy seized helpless Ethiopia; Russia raped Finland; Germany violated world peace and plunged the world into a second world war and God does nothing.

Is God so busy running his universe that he does not have time for our little world?

If God is omnipotent and all powerful why doesn't he stop ruthless Stalin and Mao who seem to delight in cruelty, tyranny, death and destruction?

Are the Deists right when they declare that God is altogether indifferent to the woes of humanity, that he made the world, wound it up and left it to run itself?

Thomas Carlyle, the old Scotch philosopher, in a flare of anger and complaint against God cried out with deep feeling, "God does nothing". A well known writer once said, "A silent Heaven is the greatest mystery of our existence". Poor old Job in a desolate hour when it seemed that God had forsaken him cried out, "O that I knew where I could find him that I might come to his place. I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." Job wanted to have it out with God face to face. Many folks feel that way.

Well, we shall take a straight look at these complaints against God.

II.

Our world is in a dreadful mess. That no one can deny. But whose mess is it? Is it God's mess or man's mess? To ask that question is to answer it.

Did God send World War I or world war II or this Korean war or the Cold War or any other war? The answer is "No". He did not. You know and I know and we all know that these wars and all wars are man-made, caused by man's selfishness, man's greed, man's lust for power, and man's hatred and man's ignoring God. St. James in his epistle gave answer to that question long ago, when he said, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not of your own lusts? I believe that James' answer is still valid.

Let us not make the foolish mistake of blaming God for making wars. If men and nations had followed the teachings of the Bible there would never have been a war and there would never be a war in the future. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself". If men and nations would obey that divine injunction, would there, could there ever be another war. I am sure not.

The Bible is filled with exhortations to love and goodwill and neighborliness and brotherhood which if men and nations would follow, wars would cease, and men would beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and nation would not lift up sword against nation, neither could they learn war any more.

No. God has not forgotten us neither has he forsaken us. We have forgotten him and forsaken him and his word and his will, that is why we are in this horrible mess. If God did not care for us would he have sent his own son to suffer and die upon a cross that we might be saved?

Then why doesn't God intervene and straighten out this world mess? God made the world didn't he? It is his world. It is his family, isn't it? Yes. Then why does he not look after these two and a half billion souls in his big family and give them a chance to live in peace?

III.

To answer that question we must keep in mind at least two significant facts.

FIRST, - God made us to glorify him, and we have not done it. We have glorified ourselves, our own smartness and our own achievements. We Americans have boasted about our phenomenal achievements in science and production. Groups of people have come from other countries only to stand in awe and wonder at our long mass production lines turning out worlds of manufactured goods for our people, giving us the highest standard of living in the world.

IN THE SECOND PLACE, we must face the fact that God made man free - free to choose, free to choose the good or the evil and all too often we have chosen the evil. But remember when we choose the evil, ~~we choose~~ the consequences of evil too. One thing God won't do; he will not violate our sovereignty, our free moral agency, our freedom of choice. God will not force us to do his will. He can't, since he has made us with full moral power to choose the good or the evil. That limits him. God has limited himself.

There is another fact that we must stress. God must work through human beings, and human wills, and by human cooperation. As far as I know that is the only way he does his work or can work. Strip God of his workers and you terminate his work in the world. That is proved by the fact that whole tribes and nations are still in the darkness of heathenism and paganism, never having heard of a Savior, because God had no one one to send to tell them of the good news.

God needs us. He needs me. He needs you. We are ~~xx~~ necessary to him and his work, as the branches are to the vine. He cannot carry on his work in the world without us. We are workers together with God." If we don't work, God can't. If the world is not running right, it is not God's fault, but ours. If the government is corrupt and cursed with graft and political corruption, don't blame, blame ourselves. How can he expect to have good governments when only about one half of the people bother to vote in municipal and state or national elections.

Who knows but that in these dark days for humanity around the world, God has some great movements ~~xx~~ afoot which will advance the interests and well being of his creatures more than in any similar period in the history of the world? Let us hope, and let us pray to that end.