

FAITHFULNESS IN HARD PLACES

INTRODUCTION:

- A. We are living in perilous times 2Tim 3:1-7
- B. Men have lived in perilous times before now and have remained faithful – as noted last week:
 - 1. We face many disturbing things in life: many common in every age: Sickness; Death; Natural disasters Job 14:1
 - 2. Such things effect us in different ways: some, anxiety and fear; others with depression (our age has been called the "age of anxiety" and "age of the neurosis") Christians can be affected: may murmur or complain or simply exist in a state of "joylessness"
- C. Today let's look at some examples which may be able to help us to remain faithful

DISCUSSION:

I. NOAH - FAITHFUL IN A GODLESS WORLD 2Pet 2:5

- A. Notice the kind of civilization in the ancient world Gen 6: 5
 - 1. Wickedness was great
 - 2. Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually
- B. Noah preached righteousness for 120 yrs,
 - 1. Didn't become discouraged and quit
 - 2. Did the things required by God
- C. Can you imagine the ridicule Noah must have endured

II. JOSEPH - FAITHFUL IN OFFICER'S HOUSE Gen 39:2-10

- A. Joseph was a slave yet promoted to a position of great importance
 - 1. Was faithful to the trust placed in him
 - 2. Was instrumental in making his master great
- B. Master's wife was attracted to Joseph
 - 1. He resisted her advances
 - 2. As a result he was slandered and imprisoned
- C. Even in prison he was faithful to God
 - 1. People were aware of his faithfulness
 - 2. He was finally made ruler over Egypt

III. DANIEL FAITHFUL IN HEATHEN COURT Dan 1:8; 6:4-10

- A. As young man was given the test of moral conviction
 - 1. He had to decide whether or not he would defile himself with the king's rich foods
 - 2. He chose to eat Pulse (seeds) and water rather than defile himself
 - 3. God then blessed him because of his choice
- B. As an old man he received the test of Worship

- 1. Only thing he could be accused of was that he worshipped God Dan 6:5
- 2. A decree was passed that no one could worship anyone but the King Dan 6:7-9
- 3. Daniel continued to worship as he always had Dan 6:10
- 4. Even though he was faced with a den of lions
- C. Daniel passed both tests, but what about us today
 - 1. When our moral convictions are tested
 - 2. Or when we are tempted not to worship God

IV. MANY EARLY CHRISTIANS FAITHFUL THROUGHOUT PERSECUTIONS

- A. Paul 2Cor 11:23-29
- B. Stephen Acts 7:51-59
- C. Peter and John Acts 4:17-20; 5:40-42

V. STABILITY PROVIDED BY THE LORD (noted last week)

- A. Wisdom, knowledge, and salvation provides the stability needed to remain faithful! Isa 33:5,6
 - 1. Wisdom and knowledge provides stability to face life,
 - 2. Salvation provides stability to face death.
- B. The key to this stability is "the fear of the Lord"
- C. Those who lack stability in troubled times do so because they lack the wisdom, knowledge, and salvation of the Lord. They lack these things because they do not have the fear of the Lord!

CONCLUSION:

- A. The crying need of the Church today:
 - 1. Christian Men and women with convictions who have the courage of their convictions Matt 10:22
 - 2. Consecrated, dedicated men and women who will be faithful even in trying circumstances 1Cor 15:58
 - 3. Examples looked at demonstrate a "fear of the Lord"
- B. Be thou faithful unto death Rev 2:10