

Words of Truth

Good News Is Refreshing

By: Brian A. Yeager

As it has been in times past, today we hear bad news from many different sources (Jeremiah 20:10). Added to the bad news, we hear evil and false reports as God's people have always had to endure (Numbers 13:21-33 and II Corinthians 6:8). Because of false witnesses (Psalms 35:11, Proverbs 12:17, and Mark 14:56-57), it is hard to know what news we should ignore and that which we should believe. Thus, we often find ourselves searching out all things we hear to verify facts so that we can discard the false information we hear (Proverbs 14:15 and I Thessalonians 5:21). That makes the "news" more work than information at times.

With all of the bad news and false reports it becomes easy to get discouraged. Here locally, you cannot watch the news on television without hearing about murders in Juarez and violence in our city as well. It is not fun to hear about beheadings and threats on the lives of our neighbors. Even with the news that comes from brethren around the world, there is often more negative than we hear than positive. It is not new that evil abounds (I John 5:19), but that does not make hearing about evil less discouraging.

As I am writing this article it is Monday, February 21, 2011. In my office I have my television tuned to the local news channel. Right now they are discussing a shooting at the El Paso airport. They reported that 50 people were murdered in Juarez over the weekend. There was a fatal accident on I-10 yesterday. They are discussing a new video game that glorifies the drug cartels in Juarez. There is a manhunt for someone who is wanted on drug charges. There is a report that Texas is poised to pass a bill allowing students to carry concealed handguns on campuses so that students can protect themselves against rising violence on college campuses. Now they are discussing the seven public places that have the most germs. Finally, the only "good news" I have heard was just reported. They said that the temperatures should be in the sixties and seventies for the next seven days. This is why I rarely watch the local news. There is not much good being reported on in our city. If you turn on the national news channels, it even gets worse. Thus, we won't go there.

As far as our brethren are concerned, their news is often like the news on television. There is often doom and gloom type of things reported. Locally, we struggle with news in the congregation here about physical ailments our brethren are facing. It is not fun to see the faithful suffer in this life (Romans 12:15 and I Corinthians 12:26-27). Worldwide, we hear more about congregations decreasing in numbers rather than souls being added to the body (cf. Acts 6:7). We often hear about divisions and false doctrines that are spreading amongst churches of Christ today. We hear of preachers compromising. We hear of new sects that have formed. Recently, we heard about the apostate church in Alamogordo, NM falling even further from the truth by rejecting the necessity of water baptism (cf. Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:12-13, Acts 8:35-39, Acts 19:1-7, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:3-6, Galatians 3:26-29, Colossians 2:12, and I Peter 3:20-21).

With so much bad news being spread it is so much more necessary that we share the true, good news. I love to report about good things going on in congregations I am closely working with or associated with. It is great to hear about the church in Butler, PA standing strong in a time where they could be discouraged for being few. They know that being few is not a sign of weakness, for few disciples is exactly what God has said we shall find (Matthew 7:13-14 and I Peter 3:20-21). It is encouraging to hear about the good work in Louisville, KY where the Terry family is striving to stand for the truth (Ephesians 6:14). Each time I talk to Mike they are learning more and more. It is good to hear of the good news out of Overland Park, KS where the congregation continues to grow spiritually. When we are able to look at how weak that congregation was in the beginning, it encouraging to see how Scott has used the powerful word of God (Hebrews 4:12) to build those folks up aright (Acts 20:32 and Colossians 2:7). They've come a long way from some of the brethren there needing page numbers to find books of the Bible to now being capable of deeper Bible discussions. They are moving away from being babes to spiritually mature Christians (cf. Hebrews 5:12-14). The brethren in Midland are working in an area that is quickly growing more and more morally bankrupt. Like the church in Pergamos, they are dwelling in an area full of the influence of evil (Revelation 2:11-13). Like here in El Paso, they see many buildings that have a sign saying "church of Christ", but there are really false brethren in those buildings (Galatians 2:4). Instead of being discouraged and giving up, we can be encouraged to know they are pressing on.

More than just these brief details, I often share the good reports I hear from these and others throughout the world. Why? We need to hear good news when it is available. Such is proven throughout the word of God. Let's see what the Scriptures say about the worth of hearing good news.

The Value Of Good News

"The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat... As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country... We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints... Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord... For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (Proverbs 15:30, Proverbs 25:25, Colossians 1:3-4, I Thessalonians 3:1-8, and III John 3-4).

Conclusion

In difficult times it is easy to forget the good news because the bad news is often so much worse. Let's not forget to listen for the good news. Thinking on good reports that we hear can encourage us. We need to talk about the Demetrius's of our day (III John 12). Along with the word of God, when we have good news, let's share it so that we may refresh one another.