

Greg Laurie: God Is Giving America a Chance to Repent Right Now

Generation Z, born from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, now make up 25% of our population.

This is a generation that is dealing with severe depression. They're immersed in media. They have a very high incidence of mental health issues. And they've actually been described as the loneliest generation.

We've never been more connected but disconnected at the same time. It isn't a coincidence that the suicide rate among this generation has risen dramatically.

They've been raised with moral relativism. Thus, they're nihilistic. They don't think there's a God or meaning in life.

When asked in a survey whether they thought lying was wrong, only 33% could agree that it was.

Many of us would say this is horrible. And in a way, yes it is. But in another way, it's like a blank canvas. We need to come with the message of the gospel and engage these young people. We need to tell them there is a God. And there's a book, the Bible, that has the answers they're looking for. It's all found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

At the same time, we don't like the word *preaching*. It's a negative word in general, yet the Bible tells us to go into all the world and preach the gospel (see Mark 16:15). It doesn't say go into all the world and be a good example.

Of course, I'm not suggesting that we go into all the world and be bad examples because our preaching would be very ineffective if we were bad examples. There are some people, in

fact, who I wish would just not talk about Jesus.

I appreciate their desire to express their faith, but could they please be a good example first? We want to start there. It earns us the right to verbalize the gospel.

But being a good example isn't enough, because the primary way that God wants to reach a lost world is through the verbal articulation of the gospel.

God could have come to us in many ways. God could have sent an iPhone to planet Earth 2,000 years ago. He could have descended in a ray of light or sent a beautiful painting in the sky to tell us the gospel story.

He could have reached us in a lot of ways. But the primary way by which God continues to reach us is through someone sharing this message.

As Romans says, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14).

One reason revival came through Jonah when he preached to Israel's enemies, the Ninevites, was because he experienced personal revival himself. And he experienced it in the belly of a sea creature.

God gave the Ninevites 40 days to repent. And if they didn't, he would destroy Nineveh. They had 40 days to think about it, 40 days to consider their lifestyles, 40 days to get right with God. When God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, on the other hand, there was no 40-day warning. But God gave this particular city an opportunity to repent.

I wonder if God is giving the United States of America an opportunity to repent right now. I think He is. But it seems as though in our nation, we're lurching to the left. We're

going the wrong direction. We have elected officials who are literally advocating infanticide.

What kind of world are we living in where someone could take the life of a little baby who has just been born? That's the world we're living in today.

And then there's the opioid epidemic, which just gets worse and worse. Marijuana use is up dramatically as states legalize it. Yet the marijuana that people are smoking today is far more potent than it was back in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The element of marijuana that influences people, THC, is 20 to 30 times more powerful than it was back then. And now recent studies, most notably by the British Medical Journal, have found that people who use marijuana daily are substantially increasing their likelihood of having psychotic episodes and developing schizophrenia. Yet we're seeing it pushed in so many places.

I think only a spiritual awakening can turn this nation around. We need to pray for that. God can do it. He did it before, and He can do it again. But to reach our generation, we need to preach the gospel.

We need to go into all the world and share the gospel. We need to go into all the world and start conversations about the gospel and tweet the gospel and find ways to communicate the gospel.

When I was a kid, I had a paper route. I delivered the *Daily Pilot* on my Schwinn Stingray bicycle. I became pretty adept at throwing those papers. I learned how to toss them so they would clear the hedges and land on porches. My job was not to write the news or make the news; my job was to deliver the news. I was just a delivery boy.

In the same way, that's really what we are. We're delivery

people; we're delivering the message of the gospel. We don't have to apologize for it. We don't need to edit it. And we don't need to add to it or take away from it. We just need to deliver it in its raw, explosive power.

The apostle Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile" (Rom. 1:16, NLT). In the original language, the term for power speaks of explosive power.

There's explosive power in the story of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I've seen it time and time again. The story connects with people. It's God's story, and it's a story we need to communicate. We just need to deliver the message and let God do what He wants to do. {eoa}

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