

The Demonic Lie That's Rewritten the History of the World

There is a lie so demonically destructive that it has literally rewritten the history of the world, and yet this lie is so entrenched in Christian thinking that it's rarely questioned. In fact, most believers have heard the lie so many times that they actually assume it's a verse in the Bible. It kind of reminds me of one of my mother's famous sayings, "God helps those who help themselves." She repeated it so often that I was shocked when I started following Jesus, read the entire Bible and couldn't find that verse anywhere. In fact, I found the Bible to be quite the opposite of my mother's mistaken understanding. I discovered that God helps those who can't help themselves, won't help themselves and who don't know how to help themselves.

Unconscious Falsities and the Big Lie

Yet the lie I am referring to is not like my mother's innocuous quote mistaken for a Bible verse. No! This lie actually undermines the destiny of nations, decommissions the weapons of our warfare and derails the Great Commission. One of the simplest ways to get people to believe anything, (be it true or false), is to repeat it often. No one in modern history has ever done this better than Adolf Hitler. Hitler knew if he confidently repeated his propaganda long enough, the masses would evidently assume it to be true. So persuasive was his lying ideology that he literally convinced an entire nation to genocide their Jewish friends and neighbors for the common good. Six million Jews were murdered at the hands of a compulsive liar! This should serve to remind us of the power of repetition and the utter depth of deception.

OK Kris, no more suspense, what's the lie? One of the most destructive lies of all times is that, "In the last days the church will get brighter and brighter while the world gets darker and darker!" Jesus clearly stated the status of light when He proclaimed, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a basket, but on a candlestick. And it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).

Turn on the Lights, Church!

The apostle Paul did speak of a dark time in the last days. Most of us have read his commentary as a description of only the world. Read it for yourself: "Know this: In the last days perilous times will come. Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, slanderers, unrestrained, fierce, despisers of those who are good, traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying its power. Turn away from such people" (2 Tim. 3:1-5). Did you notice that the list includes "Having a form of godliness, but denying its power"? That line certainly doesn't sound like a description of the world; this sounds like a powerless, harmless, fruitless church. In other words, the light went out in the church, and that's the reason the world got dark. Dark times were perpetuated by the "Last one out, turn out the lights," mentality.

Yet I propose to you that our kingdom motto should be, "The first one in, turn on the lights!" In fact, that actually is what Isaiah prophesied 500 years before Christ. He proclaimed, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For the darkness shall cover the earth

and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord shall rise upon

you, and His glory shall be seen upon you. The nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising" (Isa. 60:1-3).

Did you catch that the backdrop of our ascension was deep darkness? Yet the connotation is that it was the dissension of the people of God that was responsible for the deep darkness in the first place. I really like the way Jesus put it. Speaking of our body, He explained, "If the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matt. 6:23b).

It's like the old rock song, "The Night the Lights went out in Georgia." If the Church of Jesus Christ is the light of the world, then what happens to the world when believers turn off the lights and pull down the shades? Can anyone say "ugly"? It is therefore encumbered upon us as the people of God, to not curse the darkness, but instead stand boldly in the midst of the thick gloom and shine.

What Does Light Look Like?

As Heidi Baker famously put it, "Love looks like something!" I agree. But if love looks like something, then so does light. In fact, Jesus said that the eminence of His light flowing through us is "good works." The point is that good works illuminate the nature of a great God. It is one thing to do something extraordinary, but the most profound impact on society might actually be doing ordinary works in extraordinary ways.

The famous story of the Queen of Sheba coming to Israel to experience Solomon's wisdom is a case in point. The Bible says, "When the queen of Sheba observed Solomon's wisdom and the house he had built and the meat of his table and the sitting of his servants and the attendance of his ministers and their clothing and his cupbearers and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the Lord, it took her breath away" (1 Kings 10:4-5).

She went on to describe Solomon as much wiser than she ever imagined. But Solomon's spiritual wisdom was demonstrated through really practical things; I mean how do you set a table in a way that people say, "I see the wisdom of God all over that girl!" I am not sure. Or how do you dress your waiters in a way that people are stunned by the brilliance of God? I really don't know, but there is something amazing about heavenly wisdom that has an earthly manifestation that meets the felt need of people.

Could it be that these are the kind of "good works" that are lighting up the darkness, illumining cities and shifting atmospheres? Might it be that meeting the simple, felt needs of our cities in extraordinary ways is actually what drags communities out of the cesspool of despair into the wellspring of hope?

The Truth About Light

If we are going to be a force of hope in our communities, we must ditch the passivity that is present in the philosophy of so many Christians. I am often taken aback by the way believers describe Jesus; they make Him sound like a Buddhist monk instead of a radical world-changer. Passivity has never worked for me. It's not that I like to fight; I really don't, but I hate feeling powerless, helpless or feeble. The challenge for me is that believers today often embrace passivity as peace and never really move the world into a better place. The peace of God does surpass all understanding, but it is also the main attribute of the Prince who crushes Satan under His feet. Therefore, peace isn't the absence of conflict but the presence of well-being, the sense of security and the awareness of a hopeful future in the backdrop of whatever may come our way.

People speak of darkness as if it is the most dominant force in the world; as if darkness is forcing light out of the world. But nothing could be further from the truth. It's light

that is stalking the darkness! The goodness of God is overwhelming evil; truth is overcoming lies, and it is the power of the Spirit that is displacing the powers of darkness. But the power of our message is not in our words but in our works. Ours is a living message preached through practical solutions to difficult situations, not that we talk about, have a vision for, or that we strategize over. These things are necessary; but we must actually do them.

Ditching Passivity

The road to hell is paved with good intentions. I can tell you that I have had it with people who want to analyze situations until they are paralyzed with fear. They are often afraid of what people are going to think, what may happen if it doesn't work or how is it going to affect their reputation. Honestly, I couldn't give a rip! No matter what you do, some people will hate you. We need to get over our obsession with pleasing people. Furthermore, a hundred percent of what you don't try to fix will fail, so at least make an effort, for goodness' sake. And finally, remember most heroes were celebrated after they died, so you will probably have a great reputation after you are dead. Come to think of it, that's what funerals are for; they always say nice things about dead people at funerals (even scoundrels), so you are bound to end well.

Another challenge is that Christians are notorious for arguing over their end-time theology while the world burns down around them. If you have an eschatology that doesn't inspire hope in your city, scrap it and find another one. Jesus is the hope of the nations, and any worldview that doesn't breathe hope is rooted in a lie. Ultimately, we need our cities to prosper in felt ways through good works that shine the light of hope to a desperate world.

Let me close with the 10 practical signs of a noble city again:

1. The city is safe; there is a sense of well-being. The citizens of a noble city are not worried about their children being harmed or their property being vandalized. When someone does commit a crime, they are swiftly brought to justice.

2. The city is prospering; businesses are thriving, the economy is growing and there are plenty of good-paying jobs for everyone who wants to work. Unemployment is low, and there is enough tax revenue to pay for all the necessary city services.

3. The educational institutions are excellent. They are doing an exceptional job at training and equipping students in both life skills and occupational instruction to prepare them for a fantastic future.

4. There is a positive spiritual climate in the community, led by many healthy churches that invite people into a relationship with God Himself.

5. The morale of the city is great. Most people have a positive outlook on life, and the overall atmosphere of the city is hopeful and healthy.

6. The medical community is well equipped and staffed to help bring physical wholeness to people.

7. There is healthy recreation and entertainment in the city that stimulates a wholesome community of enjoyment and fun.

8. The local government is honest, wise, forward-thinking and noble. Leaders have fresh ideas and innovative solutions to the challenges that face the community.

9. The poor and homeless are well taken care of by all the citizens of a noble city. The responsibility for the broken is carried by a prosperous community and is not left up to a few organizations to navigate.

10. The city has a noble identity and a deep sense of purpose

infused into the DNA of its constituents. This creates a foundation for a great sense of public pride as well as private responsibility in its people.

These are some of the signs of a city under the influence of the kingdom that are perpetuated by the “good works” of people who love God. This is what a lighted city looks like; a city on a hill that attracts the attention of the nations of the world. It’s time to arise and shine!

So today I want to propose the question to you—what can *you* do to let your light shine brighter than it is right now? I’d love to hear testimonies and your thoughts in the comments! {eoa}

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