

REJOICING PEOPLE IN A CROOKED GENERATION

Wednesday, April 29th 2020

Philippians 2:14-18

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.”

We're all currently running away from a deadly virus, with almost 1/3rd of world's population under lockdown, hoping the virus won't enter their bodies and homes. All those dreams we had of staying home, spending lots of time with our families and our flat share colleagues, and sleeping for 9 hours a night are all up in ashes, because now we're all eager to enjoy freedom. We have learnt by now to appreciate the rightful balance between quality time indoors and outdoors.

But let me draw your attention to a much deadlier virus that's floating in our air – **Sin**. Christians, who have been redeemed and cleansed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, still live, work, play, and shop in a world full of **sin**. And wouldn't it have been nice for us to impose a lockdown for **sin** too? To stay far away from society and the outside world so we could remain in isolation so that **sin** wouldn't catch hold of us?

Paul writes that we live in a “*warped and crooked generation*”, yet he doesn't ask us to run away and form a “Christians' only” country. Why? Because Christians are called to suffer, and in the midst of suffering to find **joy in our Lord**. Jesus said in John 16:33, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world”. It comes as no surprise that the editors of the NIV bible translation decided to title Isaiah 53 as “The Suffering Servant”, for it foretold the Master whom we now serve.

On April 22nd, two German states decided to set up a hotline for male victims of domestic violence. Meanwhile, reports had already come in of increased calls to the female hotlines across all 16 states. It's natural that in an establishment, such as a family, offices, a Church, etc., there are differences of opinion; this is healthy since it upholds the importance of each participant's input for the well-being of that establishment. But Paul also exhorts us in Christ to not allow such differences lead to unholy murmuring and quarreling, for we serve a Master who taught us, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God”. (Matthew 5:9)

Let these days be a time of reconciliation, mending relationships with some of your old friends or family members with whom you fought and didn't reconcile. As the old saying goes – “It takes two clapping hands to make a noise.” Let's stop murmuring as the world does against our government leaders, and instead kneel and pray for them.

Paul points to the humility and greatness of Christ in the immediately preceding verses and then exhorts us to have the “attitude” of Christ Jesus. Christ didn't murmur when he was born in a manger. He didn't grumble when the soldiers spit on his face. He didn't argue with Pilate when he was being examined. And he still doesn't grumble when we commit those mistakes in our life, **for He still loves us**.

Prayer: *Our Father, I pray that you help me to be more like your Son, my Lord Jesus, in my home and outside in the community. Lord, help me mend the broken relationships I have. Lord, help me to humble myself and not mumble or argue in my daily life. Lord, give me wisdom from above to say the right words at the appropriate time, and fill me with your joy throughout my day. Let this Joy spread through me and out of me to my Church, to many people here in Freiburg and across the world. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.*

-Stanley George-

