



What do you see as the root cause of all the problems in our country / world?

ISIS had beheaded U.S. journalist James Foley, rioters and looters were being bussed into Ferguson, MO, Israel and Hamas were fighting battles, the Ebola virus was causing great worldwide anxiety, Russia was becoming a problem again in Europe, kids were streaming over our Mexican border, states continue to legalize gay marriage and criminalize those whose beliefs prevent them from supporting it. In other words, things seem to be "falling apart at the seams." The question was a natural one - and a good one. Problems demand solutions. And solutions must treat root causes, not just symptoms.

I pondered the question for awhile and decided that both the cause of the problem and the solution can be found in the Bible - hopefully that comes as no surprise !

The book of Judges ends with this sentence:

Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

That sentence pretty much sums up the book of Judges. It could accurately be said that things were "falling apart at the seams" for God's people at that time too. The root cause of their problems was they had quit listening to God and had discarded His laws as the standard by which they tried to live. They replaced that perfect standard with 'whatever was right in their own eyes.' In other words, they pretty much did whatever they felt like doing. And to say that wasn't working would be an understatement.

A few weeks ago I mentioned in a sermon something I have found to be one of the most basic principles of life:

Do what God tells you... good stuff will happen.

Don't do what God tells you... bad stuff will happen.

It really is 'as simple as that.'

It may be fairly easy to agree with that principle. But our problem isn't disagreeing with that principle. Our problem is this: We do what we feel like doing - what's right in our own eyes - and then convince ourselves that's what God would want us to do, when in fact it probably isn't.

But it's easier to point fingers at all the "Godless" people "out there" than to take stock of our own lives. But the book of Judges doesn't end with the sentence, "And all the Godless people did whatever was right in their own eyes." It was God's people who were not ordering their lives by the standard He'd set out for them. So the solution can't start with attempting to change the mindset of "all those heathens" out there. It begins with the people who claim to be following God.

God himself gives us that solution in 2 Chronicles 7:14,

"If MY people who are called by My name will humble THEMSELVES and pray and seek My face, and turn from THEIR wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

God's solution begins with us. And His solution is simple... but it's not easy. It requires the hard work of finding out what God's ways are, and then making a conscious effort to seek God's own power on a daily

basis to follow those ways instead of doing "whatever feels right." The solution is not easy. But it is worth it. Start by praying what King David did in Psalm 139 & Psalm 51 "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Instead of coming apart at the seams, God will help you keep it all together

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net