HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH SUCH PEOPLE

2 Timothy 3:3-5 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

Review

We are in the last days. God says those days will be hard to bear because of how many people will conduct themselves. We covered part of the list last week; we finish it today.

Characteristics of People in the Last Days

“Unloving.” The King James is more accurate “without natural affection” especially referring to the love “of parents for children and children for parents.” (Vine’s)

“Unforgiving.” The word originally meant someone who refused to observe a truce in a conflict (KJV “trucebreakers”). “Implacable” or “irreconcilable” are other common translations. The word describes someone who is simply unwilling to forgive a past offense no matter how hard the other person tries to make peace.

“Slanderous” is *“diabolos”* which means a slanderer, a false accuser. It is one of the names of Satan, who accuses men before God (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6) and who accuses God to men (2 Corinthians 3:3 with Genesis 3:1-5).

“Without self-control” is literally without (the) strength to control one’s actions.

“Brutal” literally means not tamed, as in an untamed lion or wolf.

“Not lovers of good” is not loving those things (or persons) who are morally good or whose actions are beneficial.

“Treacherous” is literally traitor. Luke 6:16b Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

“Rash” means rash, reckless, headstrong. Acts 19:36 Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and do nothing rash.

“Conceited.” I Timothy 3:6 (An elder) must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil.

“Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” *“philedonos”* rather than *“philotheos”* is a deliberate contrast. To find the balance between being grateful to God who “richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment” I Timothy 6:17) while not having our spiritual life “choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures” so that we “do not mature” (Luke 8:14) can be difficult.

The first and greatest commandment is to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37) When the things that bring us pleasure become more important than God, enjoying them becomes sin.

The Religious Façade

2 Timothy 3:5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

“Having a form of godliness but denying its power” means having an outward appearance of doing the things that please God (or possibly simply being religious) while denying the ability and power of God to do anything meaningful. People will profess to know God and follow outward forms of religion while denying that God has the power to really change anything.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

I Corinthians 6:9b-11 Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our god.

We are to have nothing to do with (avoid, turn away from) such people. 2 Corinthians 6:14&15 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

2 Corinthians 6:16&17 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” Therefore, “Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”

Where Does This Leave Us?

Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

“Harassed” literally means to flay to skin alive. It is usually translated “distressed,” or “troubled” in other translations. “Helpless” literally means thrown down. Jesus also saw people as sheep without a shepherd.

John 10:2-5 “The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.”

Many people then and now have no one they really feel they can trust. The Jews of Jesus’ day certainly could not trust their “shepherds,” their religious and political leaders. Nor could they trust their leaders before the first captivity.

Ezekiel 34:1&2 The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not the shepherds take care of the flock.

Ezekiel 34:3-5 You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals.

In a world like the one described in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, there are many people desperately looking for a shepherd, someone they can trust to take care of them; someone they can safely follow. That is why many followed Jesus, and that is why, at least in part, many flocked to Asbury.

What Did Jesus Say to Do?

Matthew 9:37&38 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

John 4:35 “Don’t you have a saying? ‘It’s still four months until harvest?’ I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”

Things to Remember

We are living in difficult days because many people have rejected God’s ways.

Some who profess to know God will deny God’s power to change sinful behavior and will instead affirm what the Bible condemns.

We should avoid working with them.

The difficult days we live in leave people “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd,” wanting to find a shepherd they can trust and follow.

Therefore, “the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.”

We need to ask God to send more workers into the harvest and to be willing to be the answer to our prayers.