

# Our Time is Now

Sermon Notes By Warren Zehrung 2/20/2016

A few weeks ago in one of our inter-active discussions one of the brethren asked the question, "How do we stay on track?" At the same time I received the question, "How can we **spiritually** measure how we are doing – what are the indicators?" That is what we will be speaking on in today's sermon.

In a Christian living, and a pre-Passover sermon, we would all like to have a long check-off list like this:

Believe the Bible.

Believe Christ.

Pray, fast, study.

Put God first.

Check my attitude.

Am I angry?

Do I stay away from places and people of temptation?

What kind of Christian example do I portray at work?

How do I put God first?

Am I always a light to the world?

Am I always a light to my family and loved ones?

Do I choose my friends carefully?

Am I jealous of what others have?

Brethren, do we live our Christianity – even when no one around us is doing so? Do we believe the truth – even when no one around us does? Am I jealous for the attention others receive?

Let's realize that God gets the credit - always.

Luke 11:33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

I want to share a story with you – it happened to me this week – and it made an impression on me. Sharon and I were at Walmart shopping for groceries. It was crowded – you could just barely get down the aisles.

Sharon was across the aisle from me picking some veggies – and I was parked next to the potatoes and onions, when all of a sudden there was a traffic jam of shopping carts – and I was caught right in the middle.

Then this young black woman backed right into me – never saw me at all. I say, "She was young," like our kids not much over 50! Well, she backed into my cart, and in an instant she said, "Excuse me, **dear**." She hardly glanced at me – and she was off – headed over into the frozen pizza section.

"Excuse me, **dear**." She was so kind and **gentle**! It happened in an instant – she didn't have time to think – that is **who** she was.

Luke 6:45 A good person out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is **good**; ... for of the abundance of the heart [her] mouth speaks.

Those are red letters in my Bible - that means that these are the words of Jesus Christ.

And, so as she rounded the corner – I judged her – I discerned her attitude – and I said to myself, “I like that... And I have to strive to be **like that**.”

I’m not allowed to have a bad attitude and say to myself, “I’m not like that.” “That does not come **naturally** for me.” “Oh, that’s **her** gift – I’m different.”

You see, her candle was burning brightly – and her heart reflected that light – the kind of person she really was.

God tells us to “Prove All Things.”

It is a wrong premise to think – “I’m good” – “I’m on the right track” – “I just have to make sure I stay there.” Right premise is – I’m a sinner – and I cannot even trust myself. Thinking that we are good and right is a **huge** problem in God’s Church. A wrong Premise means – starting with an incorrect supposition.

1Thesalonians 5:21 **Prove all things**; hold fast that which is good.

Sure, there are the concepts that we must follow: We must - Prevail, Persevere, Overcome, etc...

But to say, “I will **stay** the course,” (That misses the mark) because it **assumes** first – that I am **on** course – and, therefore, I do not need to strenuously examine my motivations, intents of my heart. We **do** need to examine ourselves.

1Corinthians 11:28 But let a man **examine** himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

A distinct difference exists between those who live according to God's instructions and those who do not, and the difference cannot be hidden.

2Corinthians 13:5 **Examine** yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

The Bible says we love our own flesh. It is “natural” to do what seems best for ourselves. The problem with that statement is that “natural” is the opposite of Godliness.

We are to flee the natural lulls of the flesh:

1Corinthians 6:18 Flee fornication.

Flee Gambling,

Flee Hatred,

Flee Drinking,

Flee even certain People who are not good for you...

But when we consider the rapidly declining shape that the world, our nation, and the overall Church of God is in, we need to examine the **premise** of “staying on track” as opposed to getting on track. It has been drilled into us for so long, “We are so good and so right – and the world is so wrong.” Could it be that we are a lot closer to the world than we are to Jesus Christ?

We are living in very dangerous times. So much of what is sacred, honorable, respectful, moral and foundational is under attack. Our core principles, our most basic values are being systematically discarded. We have arrived at our last cross-roads. In my estimation we have already passed the point of no return.

The elections today (2/20/2016) may only determine if we have a little while longer, or if we are going over the proverbial precipice – the cliff of no return.

When I hear the leading presidential contender say, "What's with this seventh-day stuff?" He says things like that because he is holding Sabbath keepers in derision because we are not main-stream religion – Sunday observance.

It makes me shudder to think that the First Amendment of the United States Constitution protecting the right to **freedom of religion** and freedom of **expression** – from government interference – is no longer sacred in the minds of the great majority of leaders.

Now, people of our nation want **anybody** who will promise to "clean house" and "throw the bums out."

In the 1930's we had a leader like that, **Huey Long**, on his way to national prominence – no one could stand up to his underhanded politics. He was assassinated in 1935 – it wasn't in God's timing yet.

But at about the same time in Europe – something very similar was ascending.

Thomas Sowell observed:

"Too many nations, in desperate times, especially after the authorities have **discredited** themselves and forfeited the trust of the people, have turned to some new and charismatic leader, who ended up turning a dire situation into an utter catastrophe." --Thomas Sowell

Brethren, take notice of how our world of 2016 is eerily beginning to resemble the powder keg of 1939 Europe. Hitler articulated the grievances of the masses.

Our faith, for those of us in God's Church, is that God sets up the rulers He wants a nation to have. I believe He gives us the leaders we deserve as well.

Will we have a **Fascist** for our next President? That is a very strong and offensive word. But look how far we've come. And how fast! We already see an attitude that the President can do whatever he wants to do. He does not let **rules or law** get in his way.

With a Fascist, you are the enemy if you do not conform to the strong man. Any type of questioning the man is not to be tolerated. If you do **not** see things his way, you are **wrong**. If you do not agree with him, you cannot be allowed to live and taint the minds of the rest of the "good" citizens.

Will we have a **Socialist** for our next President? A Socialist is generous until he runs out of other people's money and chokes the economy to death – it has happened that way every time it has been tried – because it violates God's Commandment – Thou shalt not appropriate from others what you did not earn for yourself – it is stealing – and it fails every time it's been tried.

When I came into God's Church I was surprised to find out how bad the old kings of Israel were. Most of the kings of Judah were **not** good kings.

All the kings of Israel – some 20 in all – every one of them were bad kings – evil kings.

I thought to myself, "Certainly, One of the kings would have wanted to be a good King.

2Chronicles 33:2 But did that which was **evil** in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

God gave us these words as a **warning** to us.

They came to the point where God could not do anything with Israel – just like USA – because of their stiff-necked rejection of Him. That's Idolatry.

It is not wrong to be angry and disappointed when our leaders do not follow God's way. Jesus Himself, was filled with **righteous indignation** when He saw the money changers in the Temple.

Obedience to God's words becomes a sign to us because it is a testimony that there is a God who wants us to learn to live as He does.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. [Keep His Commandments – do His will – that is good works.] Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and **purify your hearts**, ye *double minded*. [Repent and turn to God.]

Double minded – We say to ourselves, “I’m on track,” but God is saying, “**Get on track**, and **purify your hearts**.”

James 4:9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: [We sigh, cry, mourn, weep for those who are burdened] let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

Today’s election will probably determine the direction of our demise and ruin. All the pollsters are predicting that the America we once loved and cherished is **over with**. The blessings God poured out on this land as a result of His Covenant Promise to our father, Abraham, are **ceasing**.

1Timothy 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

I remember reading these verses when it was becoming clear that the Tkaches were destroying the Worldwide Church of God.

1Timothy 2:2 For kings, and for all that **are in authority**; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

We prayed – and yet it got worse and worse – until it fell apart. That was because God was sorting people out.

1Timothy 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior;

1Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

We took a stand by speaking the Truth – because we were not ashamed of the Gospel. That’s because when you don’t stand for **something** – you stand for **nothing**.

The question remains – what kind of a people must we be in the face of this national reality?

**The time is now** to be sure that we are on track, if we are to continue.

Think back to the pomp and splendor of a funeral procession for a President of the United States modeled after the ceremony of a royal funeral with its caisson carrying the flag draped coffin accompanied mourners and by the United States Marine Band played funeral dirges.

It is a proper and somber tradition that dates way back. What would the populace of our country think if Congress neglected to pay their proper homage by not attending the funeral of a President? It would be inexcusable.

We have **three** separate highly esteemed branches of government in our country which share a mutual respect, deference and regard for each other. They stand or fall together – like a three legged milk stool.

They are the executive, the legislative and the judicial branches. This is our God given heritage – it should be protected and preserved.

The Supreme Court is the head of the judicial branch which rules on the meaning of the Constitution and laws passed by Congress, and signed officially into law by the President.

All three branches of government take on their respective share of the balance of powers.

This system was designed by our founders – brilliant men – I believe directed by the **hand of God** – to preserve our republic.

Today proper protocol and etiquette is being breached by our President who does not love this nation as founded, nor does he understand the importance of maintaining the dignity of our hallowed institutions of government.

Antonin Gregory Scalia (March 11, 1936 – February 13, 2016) was an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1986 until his death in 2016.

He was appointed to the Supreme Court by President Ronald Reagan in 1986, Antonin Scalia was described as the intellectual anchor for the originalist and textualist interpretation of the U.S. Constitution.

That means that with all his might Antonin Scalia diligently sought to preserve the **original** intent of what the founding fathers wrote as America was being set on its course as the greatest nation to ever exist.

It is not fit that a Supreme Court justice be snubbed as he is being laid to rest after a distinguished career of 30 years on the bench, having dedicated his life's service to this country. It suggests obvious partisan disrespect and displays deliberate contempt for all the world to see. At the very time that this nation should come together in unity, we are being split by a divisive behavior.

Antonin Scalia is a dying breed that reflects American exceptionalism as God intended it.

The childish attitude of President Barack Obama, in publically displaying his disdain for those who wish to preserve the American dream, is **not** what God intended for ancient Israel or for our nation today.

The world rubs off on the Church brethren – sometimes more than we know.

God gave us His Ten Commandments, His statutes and judgments for an orderly and prosperous nation – not to become a third-world country.

Moses writes that the commandments, statutes, and judgments would make the nations around Israel stand in awe when they saw the Israelites' manner of life and what it produced.

Deuteronomy 4:6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this **great nation** is a wise and understanding people.

Matthew 19:16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, **Good** Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

He was saying, give me a check list – I'll do each one – and I'll get eternal life. Notice that Jesus does not respond to His request but zeroes in on his wrong premise.

Matthew 19:17 And he said unto him, Why do you call me **good**? there is none good but one, that is, God: [The Father]

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, **no, not one**:

Romans 3:11 There is none that understands, there is **none** that seeks after God.

Romans 3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is **none** that doeth good, no, not one.

Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: **but I am carnal, sold under sin**.

To think that anyone in the flesh is good is starting at the wrong place – it is the wrong premise.

When **we** – those of us who have been in God's Church for decades and decades – think of ourselves as being **right** – being **good** – we are making a big mistake.

Romans 8:7 Because the **carnal mind** is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

But that is who we are much of the time – because it takes God's Spirit to override the carnal thoughts.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own **Son in the likeness of sinful flesh**, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Matthew 19:17 And [Jesus] said unto him, Why do you call me **good**? There is none good but one, that is, God: [The Father]

Brethren, we don't go around in the flesh thinking we have it all together – and that all of our motivations and intents are as pure as the driven snow.

Even ministers have to judge their motives. Do they try to get people for the numbers? Do they try to get people because they enjoy the social status? Is that why we go to church services – to get the recognition? Do they try to get people so that they will look good to Head Quarters? Do they try to get people for the money? Do they try to get people because they like the power and control? Those are all wrong motivations. That is a wrong agenda. That is political gain.

Paul judged himself harshly:

Acts 20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am **pure from the blood** of all men.

He did not hurt, harm, take advantage, misuse, be unfair... In sincerity, Paul taught "Christianity," to those who would hear.

Acts 20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Matthew 19:17 ...but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

Matthew 19:20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

Matthew 19:21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

Matthew 19:25 When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, **Who then can be saved?**

Proverbs 29:2. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: But when the wicked bear rule the people mourn.

It is best to assume that we're not doing as well as our carnal minds tell us, and act appropriately.

End: Our Time is Now