



bits from bob....

God is God, God is good (Psalm 100) August 2020

Are you ready to evaluate 2020? Seven months down, five to go. I recently saw a post asking others to rate 2020 – from one to five stars! Seems that many have already decided that 2020 deserves only one star – the worst rating possible, one of the worst ever!

I remember the well-known beginning quote from Charles Dickens: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”

Especially for those who claim to be Christ-followers, you who are ready to decide the final outcomes of the present experience, may I call attention to Joseph? May I remind you of Job? Countless other Old Testament faith witnesses. Have you considered Jesus himself? Power and goodness through suffering and defeat. Have you carefully thought about the biblical principles of crucifixion and resurrection? Dying to self in order to live for Christ?

Matthew 5 and Luke 6 are still true: Blessed! The things that matter in life are intact, even in the midst of sadness, separation, and difficulties.

I think about my own experience in 1993-1994—slightly less than twelve months. I finished my coursework for my doctoral studies. I worked diligently on my project-thesis, turned it in, and passed my oral examination. **My mother and stepdad died in a tragic auto accident.** Eye surgery gave me a new view of life—without glasses, something I had not known since the third grade. I graduated with my D.Min. on the same day our eldest son graduated from OU with a degree in meteorology.

Psalm 100. God is God, God is good. Do not say the second without saying the first. We are tempted to begin with results rather than beginning with God. Begin with God. Try to see the world through God’s eyes. I learned from my mother’s death one lesson that has been of supreme importance for me – you have to decide in advance whether Psalm 100 is true. After the tragedy, it is too late to decide whether God is dependable.

May I talk to you about 2020? May I talk to you about happiness? Listen carefully – you will be about as happy as you make up your mind to me! God’s goodness, a good year or a bad year, happiness and contentment – these are not found in the circumstances of life. These are internal!

When I read my Bible and read about God’s work in the most amazingly difficult circumstances, I want to say to those who are quick to judge 2020 – how dare you!

Here’s what I know so far: 2020 has been unusual, difficult, challenging. Dickens is right again. I also know that some amazing and marvelous things have occurred to advance the kingdom of Jesus in 2020. I see the makings of a great year of God’s work among and through his humble servants. I see greater receptivity, I see Christians turning outward rather than inward, I see new Christians sharing their faith as never before, I see national churches across Latin America accepting responsibility for their own development and growth.

In fact, 2020 has the makings of being a great year – in the midst of difficulties. “Blessed are....” The question is not whether God is at work – the question is whether we will see God.

If we are firmly established in the first truth -- “God is God,” there will never be doubt that God is good. If we decide that God is good and that the times are good based on experiences, we will ever be in doubt about whether God is really God.

Let’s get it right – the right order. God is God, God is good!