Working out Our Salvation in a Perverse Nation

Phil. 2:12-16

Introduction:

A. It is easy to excuse and/or blame our shortcomings on our surroundings.
   1. How can Christians be expected to live faithful and godly lives in this city, state or nation?
   2. How can Christian parents be expected to raise faithful children in this nation?
   3. How else can it be done? There is nowhere else to do it!
B. Philippians (and others) had to work out their salvation in “midst of a crooked and perverse nation.”
   1. Were their surroundings more or less conducive than ours?
   2. Let us look at the conditions then and now along with the solution then and now.

Discussion:

I. Their “Perverse Nation.”
   A. The religious surroundings in a typical Mediterranean city.
      1. Jewish synagogue or other place of prayer.
         a. Long rich and prestigious tradition.
         b. Strong central government in Jerusalem.
         c. Exciting program of persecution – violence in name of religion.
      2. Pagan temples and shrines.
         a. Could worship the “god of your choice” (Athens, Acts 17).
         b. People could satisfy every lust of the flesh in the name of religion.
   B. The moral surroundings of a typical Mediterranean city (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11).
   C. The immorality in political leadership.
      1. The Caesars.
      2. The Herods.

II. Our “Perverse Nation.”
   A. The religious surroundings of a typical American city.
      1. A church or synagogue to suit every fancy.
         a. With a doctrine that takes the effort out of religion.
         b. With a program that “meets the needs” of the fleshly side of man.
         c. With activities that make church fun!
      2. A variety of “exciting” churches.
         a. Charismatic.
         b. Fastest growing – doing whatever it takes.
         c. Come as you are, do as you please churches.
   B. The moral surroundings of a typical American town.
   C. The immorality in political leadership.

III. Working out Our Salvation
   A. By being consistent and persistent in obedience (v. 12).
      1. Includes our worship and service to God.
      2. Includes properly training children (Eph. 6:4; cf. 2 Tim. 3:15)
   B. By being serious about religion (“fear and trembling”).
   C. By letting God work in us to do His pleasure (v. 13).
   D. By acceptance rather than “murmurings and questionings” (v. 14 ASV).
      1. Whatever the duty.
      2. Whatever the circumstances.

Conclusion:

A. It could be done then and it can be done now – but it took effort (work) and so it is now.
B. We cannot let “perverse nation” be our scape goat.