

God-Given Grace to Stand



Gary Wilkerson March 16, 2020

For the first time in history, less than 50 percent of Americans identify themselves as believers of any kind. That figure is even lower — 30 percent — for those under thirty. Many of these check “NONE” as their religious affiliation. It is estimated that within a decade this generation will be lost completely to secularism and godlessness. And tolerance for Christians will only decrease.

What are we to do with this information? The writer of Hebrews answers, “Recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings” (Hebrews 10:32).

God turned the suffering of those early Christians into tools for gospel power: “Sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction ... you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, ‘Yet a little while, and the coming one will come ... but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.’ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls” (10:33-39).

Although this seems to be a hard passage, there is good news embedded here. It speaks of a time when things get so bad that believers are tempted to shrink back from their message. Yet “we are not of those who shrink back ... but of those who ... preserve their souls” (10:39).

We may never face the same trials that New Testament believers did, but God still gives us New Testament power. Surely we will face trials of our own because we’re not immune to what is coming in the world. But those hardships will produce in us a power we’ve never seen.

The nonbelievers referenced above represent a soul headed to hell, someone for whom Jesus died. Those numbers alone call us to rise above mediocre Christianity to proclaim the gospel without fear or hindrance.

Christ’s great power is endued by grace alone and it is free to all who believe. May you be a testimony of his grace and power to all those in your sphere of influence today.

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