

2 Peter 3:1-4
Hope in the Fight

Wholesome Thinking!



It is as if there is a poison in the air these days. The masking that everyone has had to do in this past year of the COVID, is like symbolism for a radical societal sickness/decline. A large percentage of people in our society have developed a particular way of thinking, a malevolent, even malicious way of looking at all people that don't accept certain set of ideals and values. *When I was in high school, and the radical hippie movement was just beginning to run its course, the big word was "love"! Everyone was encouraged to love and accept everyone and everything – well, everything radical, and anti-establishment! It was where this "anything goes" attitude today originated and that has been the movement's lasting impact upon society – it's true legacy! The "love" ideal was the main theme of rock and roll artists throughout the second half of the 60s and first half of the early 70s. It seeming drove the movement. It was a mixture of tolerance of radicalism, and of tolerance for any kind of sex outside of marriage. The invention of "The Pill" or easy birth control, made what was then referred to as "the sexual revolution" possible! The Beatle's anthem, "**All You Need Is Love**" encapsulated the movement's ideal or theme.



Ironically, this is also the era when a seething hatred for "**the man**" began. "**The man**" was a term used for people in power, people with money, or people endowed with authority who were working for "the system" – for government and big industry. Even the soldiers that courageously fought in the Viet Nam war were held in contempt because they were working for "the man". Money was supposedly unimportant, although all the rock and roll singers that drove the movement and were its voice, were rolling in multi- cash – multi-millions of it! They lived like spoiled kings and queens while trumpeting the values of the simple life – and of love! I mean, they **were** "the man" and lived like "the man", but were always singing against "the man"! I mean, the times were filled with the ironies of a huge and obvious disconnects between the messengers and their message. And all of this was apparently lost on the hordes of young people that incorporated this message into their hearts and lives! Of course, that generation, the baby boomers, went on to become the most materialistic, prosperous, money oriented generation that the world has ever known! But even at the beginning, the hypocrisy was thick enough that you could cut it with a knife! The many protest marches against the Viet Nam war during this hippie era were expletive laced, rock and brick throwing, hate-filled events. It is when young people started using the name "pigs" for the police! Most people had to fear walking past a group of long-haired hippies because they were generally known to be confrontative and mean – disrespectful and challenging to all people outside of their little group. In a group, they were often bullies! So people learned to walk a wide berth around them.

50 years later, we now have a similar societal phenomenon going on, except it is a little more honest. It is not about love any more. It is about hate – ironically, by means of virtue and righteousness. This is a much harsher message, very strident, incredibly judgmental - anger and shame based - driven by the social media and the mainstream media! It isn't a “sexy” message so it is not included in the lyrics of songs - although between songs it is preached to youthful audiences during every concert. The artists seem to be in lock-step with each other on these matters. They are still giving an anti-money message even as they rake in millions. They are still for the acceptance of every radical minority cause in society. They stereotype, label, discredit, and shame all who might differ with their approach to life! And the

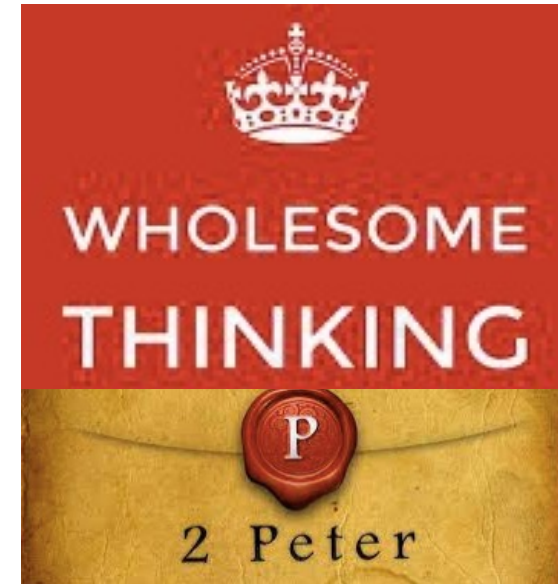


ANGER/OUTRAGE! The VITRIOL! The CONDEMNATION! THE HATRED! A full 20-25 percent of the population are *possessed* by this mindset! They are VERY vocal and in-your-face confrontational to all that are not as “righteous” and “woke” as they are. It is hard to imagine what the appeal is about this dark and miserable mindset, but so many have been taken by it, and another 20-30 percent of the population play around the edges of it by giving it some kind of credibility – which lends it even more power in society.

Then, on the other side of the social/ philosophical spectrum you have conservative traditionalists, who are hating back at their social enemies with a vengeance! They brandish their firearms, continue waving their black American flags with the blue line, and their faded and tattered Trump flags! And they go on You Tube to find conservative news stories, blogs, and every conspiracy theorist that is out there – and there are a lot of them! They post and re-post these on Face Book, Twitter, and other social media sites! They are the backlash against group-think, against a biased media, but they have all the emotional symptoms of their social counterparts – **outrage, hatred, contempt, malice!**

My question to us this morning is – I wonder how Jesus would handle this? If He had been here during these trying times? Where on the emotional spectrum should we be? How He would handle it is how He would want His followers to handle it! Am I right?!

The apostle Peter is trying to build a case for a Christian mindset! He tells us that there *is* one - and refers to it as “**wholesome thinking**”! Peter is saying that it matters what we think and how we think. He begins by telling us that in both of his letters, he is “**reminding**” Christians that we are to possess a Christian mindset – a certain perspective and a certain attitude that honors Christ and that is in cooperation with the work of the Holy Spirit in us! The apostles seem to be forever **reminding** Christians of these things in their letters. Why did the apostles feel they had to do that? Well, because they were wise enough to have determined that on this broken earth, everything and everyone is on a natural downward trend! In the state of fallenness, everything just naturally deteriorates – even our minds and attitudes; actually, *especially* our minds – unless we are consciously/purposefully moving forward with the Holy Spirit! If we let this world pull us down into its messy mix of chaotic philosophies and attitudes, or even in an overblown emotional reaction to it, our mind will naturally drift down into the abyss of selfishness, of aimlessness and lethargy, of anger and frustration, of doubt and fear and faithlessness, and the like! But if we let the Spirit of God have control of our lives, our mind will continue to function in a state of peace and even joy - **despite** the turmoil going on around us! Our attitude will remain steady as an attitude of love toward all others – despite the fact that so many view us as the enemy now, and vice versa! But always clucking our disgust at other people’s statements and viewpoints and the lies they subscribe to, and their bad behavior **gets us nowhere but down**, and then **more down**! Peter is reminding us that this is not of God but only of the old self, and that we need to turn that around so that we are of God and NOT of self!



[Philippians 4:4-9] “Whatever is true,.. noble,.. right,.. pure,.. lovely”

[Col 3:12-17] “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,.. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”

[James 3:9-12] “Out of the same mouth comes praise and cursing...”

This does not mean that we cannot acknowledge reality or ever say a critical word. The apostles,.. in fact - Jesus Himself - was willing to acknowledge the bad behavior and the poor thinking of others. Think of the things Peter has said against the false teachers! Pretty salty stuff! So acknowledging reality is not the problem! We are to simply assess and acknowledge the truth about these things, to judge correctly, but to not get mired down in a dark pattern of grousing and lamenting and decrying! We, of all people, have to call a spade a spade, or we cannot be people who base our lives upon reality. Jesus does not intend for us to see everything and everyone through rose-colored glasses - to ignore and gloss over the problems, sins, flaws, difficulties of people and the trends of culture! To **not** judge at all would be a great flaw in a Christian. But to judge too much and too often is also a great flaw in the Christian! “*We have bigger fish to fry*” as they say – our minds must flow in a different direction! We have a task within the purposes of God to win the world to Himself one person at a time. The hardest part of the task is being motivated. Why? Well, because we’ve already got ours! We believe ourselves to be saved,.. but that poor, angry, deluded, scary humanist, or that ridiculously woke and judgmental Social Justice Warrior **deserve** their present world of misery and darkness that they have created for themselves, AND they **deserve** the future judgment, condemnation, and wrath of God! Our co-worker might be anti-social and makes us angry all the time. So we have no plans to share Christ with them and do not even pray for them. **But**, that is **unwholesome** thinking! We forget that we deserve the very same! In fact, everyone does! Our job, commissioned by Christ is to indiscriminately drag people from the fire they are so mindlessly walking into! We are to love the unlovely, and by any **good** means direct them into the arms of Jesus, for we were once such as these unlovely people! As Peter points out at the end of chapter 3 – it is a disgusting thing for a Christian to go back to what they were!



Peter brings up the prophetic forecasts of the Old Testament! They predicted a catastrophic event called "***the day of the Lord***"! It was a day of the Creator's judgment upon the earth. There is a time coming when the well-spring of God's patience will run dry and the damn of God's grace and mercy that holds back His terrible pent-up wrath against such a fouled creation, will break, and the great wave of its raging torrent will fall upon the earth and smash and wreck the world and the enemies of God! Jesus affirmed this in **[Matthew 24:17 -31]**! Peter is saying that we have the upper hand, knowing what is to come. God has decreed it and it **WILL** happen! Christ taught it and the apostles did likewise! But the scoffers think that Christians who believe this are nuts! They ridicule us for believing something so ridiculous! It has been over 2000 years they say, and things go on as they always have! The book of the Revelations of John reveal "***the Day of Lord***" in terms of a *period of time*, not just a 24 hr. period, where the Creator will finally bring this sorry era of human history to a close! It is the end of the end, climaxing with God's justice and wrath. In Ezekiel the prophet's book, you saw waves of judgment against Israel, but the object was always "***so that they may know that I am the Lord***". You see that phrase again and again and again throughout Ezekiel! It was the only way to break through to very hard-headed and heard-hearted people who were supposed to be the people of God but who, over time, had become **worse than** Sodom and Gomorrah! But at the end, that is not the objective. At the end of this era of creation and human civilization (if you can call it that), it is **just the end**. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, but it will happen at the Great White Throne judgment of God. There they will not be *asked* to bow the knee, but will be *forced* to bow and acknowledge the True God and the Savior of humanity, before they are condemned and swept from God's Presence forever! I don't doubt that someone will say to them, "***Now try scoffing, you fool!***"



[Revelation 21:1-5] – The ultimate goal of God. He wins! He cleanses and rids the world of its curse! He recreates! He dwells among us once again!