

A Horrible Life

About the time we think things can't get worse, they do. From politicians to preachers to people in general, the disappointments multiply exponentially as humanity tracks along that long winding road to reaping what they sow. Those who so myopically see only the hear-and-now will, as a result, miss a fact the wise man, Solomon, stated, "... there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

This is especially true of immorality. There seems to be a level of perversion that exceeds all time but, in reality, it's nothing new. Two-thousand years ago, Paul was writing the church about the culture in which they were expected to be the salt of the earth and a shining light in the dark (Matthew 5:13-14). Paul condemned the perverts of his day (cf. Leviticus 20:13), arguing that their sin was without excuse (Romans 1:20), dishonorable (v. 24), living a lie (v. 25) and unnatural (v. 26), even condemning those who supported the commission of these abominations. Sodom and Gomorrah remain the consummate example of God's disgust with immorality. In Genesis 19, the entire cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim were laid waste. Who knows what moral degradation the antediluvian world had to come to in order for God to decide "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth..." (Genesis 6:7). No, our culture is not better or worse than what's ever been.

However, because our current state of moral affairs is one big fail, it does not mean that all hope is lost and, certainly, it does not mean that we should jump ship. In fact, quite the opposite. When Paul lists his role-call of the damned, articulating every cultural "ugly" imaginable (1 Corinthians 6:9-10), he states directly to his audience, "And such were some of you" (1 Corinthians 6:11a). And, it's always been ironic to me that nearly every time God, through inspired writers, asks a rhetorical question like: "Do you not know...", it is obvious that they always know!

Paul's statement is one of the most encouraging in the book when it comes to departures from God, where the quagmire of sin becomes so defeating. Note: "And such were some of you" is immediately followed by the most beautiful and glorious words a soul soaked in sin could hear: "But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (v. 11b).

Hope reigns supreme in the heart of true believers, who refuse to allow their past to define them. No matter how abhorrent, repulsive or reprehensible the sin you may have committed, if you are willing to be washed, repenting of your sin – that means, quit it! - and live a life dedicated to being closer to God today than you were yesterday (Romans 12:1-2), God will see to it that it happens (Philippians 4:13). Leave that horrible life for hope.