

A DESERT STREAM

Ministries of love and mercy go flowing into the barren places of the world where little children cry and are not comforted, where women suffer in silence, and men are beaten inside. The gospel of Jesus, indeed, is like a stream in the desert flowing out to give life, joy, and blessing to all who receive it.

The most urgent business of our generation is to share the gospel with the whole world. The gospel of Christ can transform the world. We have come into a day where humanity is almost despairing of peace. Efforts for world peace are so precarious that it is like a man walking

on a tight wire across a great chasm with a high wind blowing.

All efforts for world peace must rest ultimately upon a broad base of good will in the hearts of men. That good will can come only when man loves his fellow man because he loves God. When a man is conscious of his own sin and has received forgiveness from God because Christ died on the cross, he becomes aware that every other man in the world is the object of his love. His life thereby is spent to bring to mankind, as far as he has any opportunity, the blessings of salvation. This brings him to a sense of brotherhood with mankind and a longing to help rather than to hurt.

INTERPRETING OUR TIME

BAPTIST HOUR

May 12, 1957

Scripture: Luke 12:54-59

Jesus said, "Ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?"

Tragedy resulted when the people of Jesus' day failed to interpret their time. They had the inspired scriptures for their guide, and much careful study had been given by their leaders to these sacred writings.

Jesus preached, taught, lived, and performed wonderful works in keeping with what was foretold in the scriptures. Never before had there been seen in their land such a ministry as Jesus performed.

The people failed to understand it. They were blinded by their own pride, self-righteousness and pre-conceived notions. They had anticipated a Messiah who would set up an earthly kingdom and drive out the national enemies of Israel. They were not prepared for a Messiah who would come to die for the sins of the world.

Even though Jesus performed such marvelous miracles of mercy and love, the people kept asking for a sign. They rejected God's clear word and demanded signs according to their own fancy.

Their leaders were filled with envy and jealousy. They so completely misinterpreted their day and their responsibility

that they rejected their Messiah and King. Their voices rang out, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." They said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." Their leader said, "We have no king but Caesar."

The tragedy cannot be overstated. Our Lord foretold it when He looked at Jerusalem and wept over the city saying, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not."

The terrible siege by the Roman armies came upon the city of Jerusalem, and its people suffered death by famine and the sword. Thousands were carried away captive, and the nation was scattered. All this resulted when the people failed to interpret their time.

DAY OF DESTINY

The time in which we live cries out to be rightly interpreted.

It is no ordinary time. Even a casual observer can see it is a day of unparalleled opportunity. Scientific progress in the world has made possible production of the material things of life on a scale never before imagined. It is a time when the forces of history converge upon this generation making it a day of destiny.

We live in a day of shocking contrast.

On one hand we have more wealth than the world has ever seen. On the other hand there is poverty on a scale never before known.

This is a day of plenty and a day of hunger. It is possible to produce at a rate never before known, but the people of the world are hungry, ill-clad and sick without medical care.

It is a day of vast emphasis upon education with great universities, schools for the young, and literacy movements for the masses. It is on the other hand a day of illiteracy on a scale never before known.

This is a day of emphasis upon freedom. Two vast world wars have been fought to preserve freedom. It is on the other hand a day of bondage wherein 800,000,000 people have in recent years been brought behind the Iron Curtain, and the threat of further steps in the same direction still remains.

DAY OF PERIL

This is a day when the world is longing for peace, and yet preparations for war are going forward.

This is a day of explosive developments. We are witnessing in our generation the end of a colonial era and the emergence of intensified nationalism. Down-trodden peoples are now demanding a new way of living. Those who have been hungry and miserably clad are demanding a better way of life.

Those who have lived under colonial status are demanding national sovereignty. Since the end of the second world war, vast changes have been made in the world's map.

We are witnessing in this day the resurgence of mighty world powers. China, Japan, and Russia have come forward in the world's picture in a new way. India stands with a greater voice in the affairs of the nations than ever before. The countries of the Middle East have now become focal points of tension and strategy.

We witness today ancient hatreds in new settings. The world is imperiled by the ancient hatred between the Arab and

the Jew. It arises into sharp crisis in the problems between the Arab world and Israel. This hatred, however, is not a new thing. It dates back to the days of Isaac and Ishmael.

We live in a day of fearful dangers. The world is divided into hostile forces. The breach in the dominant ideologies of the world is vast. The Communist world is led by the forces of militant atheism, unrestrained by moral and humanitarian considerations, as they consider any method of marching toward their goal of world domination.

Everybody realizes the vast danger growing out of the development of weapons for mass destruction through atomic energy. Warnings have come from the Communist world and the free world that in a new outbreak of war on a world scale every weapon of destruction will be used.

The delicate condition of international affairs and the dangers which continue to prevail leave us convinced that this is a day of peril such as the world has not seen before.

CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS

In the face of these conditions we observe that today we have widespread but nominal Christianity. There are more people enrolled in church membership than ever before. There are many who give lip service to religion, and yet in our own country the forces of evil are able to right a startling record in terms of crime, juvenile delinquency, vicious living, broken homes, and exploitation of human life for commercial gain.

It is evident that we must interpret our day in terms of finding and doing the will of God. This is the time for every man to take his stand without apology for Jesus Christ. We must individually repent of sin. We must turn to Jesus Christ in personal faith.

We must interpret our time in terms of vital dynamic Christian living in every area of life. Each person must look upon himself as Christ's ambassador wherever he may be. The worker in the factory must be Christ's ambassador among his fellow workmen. The student in the school must be Christ's ambassador among