10-26-1965

Following Jesus Afar Off (2)

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FOLLOWING JESUS AFAR OFF

Bit of contemporary American history vital to an understanding of today's spr. message.

Historical background: U. S. policies and the effect on church from 1939 to 1972.

1. 1919-1941: Isolationism and non-intervention. (Church NOT carrying gospel to world!!!)
2. 1941-45. U.S. involved with enemies. G-I-J. (Church could not carry gospel to world)
3. 1945-1972. Foreign Aid, Korea, Viet Nam. (Church started world-evang. campaigns.)
4. 1965 Church not going fast enough. Supposed vacuum: New ambitious generation of youth!!


I. EARLY CHRISTIANS HAD SAME PROBLEMS WE DO---even though they HAD special gifts. Mk. 16:17---
   2. Followed afar off THEN 3. Few: walked close!!!

II. SOME WHO FOLLOWED AFAR OFF. (outer-circle)
B. Weakling disciples. Nicodemus & Joseph of Ara

III. PETER & APOSTLES FOLLOWED AFAR OFF. (inner-circle)
A. C. S. Lewis: "No man knows how BAD he is until he has TRIED to be good. There is a silly idea about—that good people don't know what temptation is." From Screwtail lett
B. Wm. Hickling Prescott: "Where there is no temptation, there can be little claim to virtue." (Conquest of Peru. Bk. 1, Ch. 5)
C. Peter vowed his undying fidelity. Lk. 22:31
1. Like many untrained-untried young and zealous Christians! Need: I Cor. 10:12. Full of ambition. Heavy with sincerity. Inebriated with good intentions!!!!

D. Apostolic Band pledged their loyalty too.

Matt. 26:30-35

1. When crisis came, they failed. 26:56.
2. Peter did no better. v. 57-58.

IV. SERIOUS QUESTIONS WE NEED TO CONTEMPLATE:

1. When ASSEMBLE irregularly--following afar off
   Heb. 10:25-27 urged regularity-faithfulness.
2. When STUDY little or none at home or in our Bible School program? II Tim. 2:15.
3. When GIVE of leftovers---after satisfying self??? I Cor. 16:2. II Cor. 9:6-7.
4. When LIVE a questionable life, wear questionable clothes, improper speech. M.5: 16

V. GOOD NEWS: Peter WAS restored. Did strengthen others.


CONCLUSION: Thrills us to KNOW men who dared to be great and faithful Christians. II T. 4:6-

INV. SINNER FRIEND: He wants you to believe? Close! Hope you are ready now to repent, confess Him, be baptized.

UNFAITHFUL CHRISTIAN BROTHER:

How far off the Chr. standard is your life? Want to come back home?


III. Not easy to BECOME or BE Christian!

But it is being done under trying circumstances.

GOSPEL MEETING AT NOWE MISSION, RHODESIA.

One man came 170 mi. on foot from CHI-WE-she village to be baptized. Was. Asked for help. Now a cong. of 5 members there. Growing.