**March 3, 2019 “The Sword of the Spirit” Ephesians 6:17**

I believe if you were to ask most sincere Bible believing Christians to point to where we are at on God’s timetable for the world, most would say that we are in the last of the last days. I agree with this view of the prophetic timetable but I also think that in the Christian church in America today, many if not most of attending churches really do not understand the times in which we are living.

When Jesus was asked by His disciples what would be the sign of His returning, He did not point to signs in the earth below or to the heavens above but rather He uttered these words as the first and foremost sign of His return. (Matthew 24:3-4)

These words of Jesus can be followed up with similar Scripture texts. Here are just a few (II Timothy 3:1-5; I Timothy 4:1 and Matthew 24:12). Would you or would you not say that these verses clearly describe much of our society and to be quite honest, many of our churches of today?

We would not do justice to these verses if we did not ask ourselves why these apply to us today.

Here are a few reasons why I think our society and frankly the church in general is in great trouble.

* Many of our young and often time older people are being taught that they have a right not to hear or be offended by anything negative or upsetting
  + People are assaulted just for wearing a hat
  + Try preaching against sin
* Trust is waning… how much of the news that you hear is not just propaganda for one world view or another?
* Honor… how many of our politicians on national television lie with impunity? A few years ago, they said this and now they are completely opposed to that which they supported
* Marriage is vilified and now has been redefined
* All religions are basically the same
  + Glenn Beck… talks so much about being a Christian
    - II Corinthians 11:3-4
    - As man is, God once was: As God now is… man may be
    - Law of Eternal Progression
* Legalization of marijuana
  + 37 percent increase in murder
  + 25 percent increase in aggravated assault
* Modern church growth movement
  + Why do we have so many churches with thousands of people attending and others who struggle to just keep going?
  + How to build a large church with a number of people attending
    - Do not mention
      * Sin, righteous living or judgment
      * Satan, demons or Hell
      * Consecrated worship of God
      * Do not preach on end times

So then how do we live at this time free from these influences so that we may remain true to the Living God?

1. Psalm 119:11
   1. What does this mean?... “hidden in my heart?”
      1. In the depth of your being… what governs you??
         1. What people say to you or about you?
         2. Do your feelings mean more to you than what God’s Word tells you?
            1. I didn’t feel like praying today

Pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:16-18)

* + - * 1. I didn’t feel like going to church today

Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as are some accustomed (Hebrews 10:25)

* + - * 1. I didn’t feel like reading my Bible today

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a Light unto my path (Psalm 119:105)

* + - * 1. I didn’t feel like singing today

If they do not praise the very rocks will cry out (Luke 19:40)

1. When God’s Word is hidden in our hearts
   1. We understand
      1. How this world came to be
      2. Origin of sin
      3. Origin of death
      4. Marriage
      5. Understand the times in which we live
      6. History
      7. Prophecy
      8. Heaven
      9. Salvation
      10. Hell
      11. Satan
      12. Eternal life
      13. Judgment
      14. Truth
      15. Israel
      16. Environmental movement
      17. Transgenderism
      18. Sanctity of life
2. So where does that leave us today?
   1. Many if not most Christians are not students of the Word
      1. Most Christians… come to church on Sunday
         1. Most of us spend far many more hours on
            1. Our phones
            2. Our computers
            3. Our televisions
            4. On social media
         2. Than we read our Bibles
   2. If we are not students of God’s Word
      1. How can we not be deceived?
      2. What then is the foundation of our lives?
      3. What have we built our lives on?
         1. Sand… that shifts constantly?
         2. Rock… which does not change?

Can we honestly say… “Thy Word have I hidden in my heart”

It is the only weapon that has been given to us… why would we not learn how to use it?