

“Bear and Fill”

The hit song by R.E.M. “It’s the End of the World” has been on my mind recently because I get the sense that some Christians wonder if it is the end of the world. Well, let me suggest to you that it is already the end of the world because the last days began when Christ ascended as king.

The “last days” is a term used to describe the period between Christ’s ascension and his second coming. Through his death and resurrection, Christ has already inaugurated the new kingdom. He is already the king of all creation (Eph. 1:20-21). The new creation has already started in his people (2 Cor. 5:17). We are already living in the last days. How should we respond?

Instead of filling our minds with “end of the world scenarios,” let’s make better use of our time by bearing the fruit of the Spirit and filling our minds with the Scriptures. Paul instructs Timothy to live a godly life, following the conduct, patience, love, and steadfastness of Paul (2 Tim. 3:10). We live a godly life by bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). We live a godly life by building up each other (1 Thess. 5:11). We live a godly life by being rich in good deeds (1 Tim. 6:17-21). We live a godly life by feeding the hungry and giving the thirsty a drink (Matt. 25:36-37). But remember that godliness is not something new thrust upon Christians. It is what God already expects of His people, for we are called to be holy in all our conduct (1 Pet. 1:15). Christian, how are you living now? Are you bearing the fruit of the Spirit?

Paul also instructs Timothy to fill his mind with the Scriptures, “which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). Because the Scriptures are “breathed out by God”, they alone are profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training (v. 16). It used to be the case that the language and images of Scripture saturated our society. I don’t think this is the case today. Instead, the Scriptures are now devalued as the product of unenlightened human imagination.

It seems to me that this presents an opportunity for the church to cultivate its own imagination, thoughts, and desires with the Scriptures. For some, that might mean to reacquaint yourself with God’s Word by wiping off the dust and picking it up. For others, it might mean to keep doing what you’re doing, just “do so more and more” (1 Thess. 4:1).

I don’t know if Christ will return tomorrow. But I know we are now called to bear the fruit of the Spirit and to fill our minds with the Scriptures.

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