



# DUDLEY'S MONTHLY MESSAGE

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## ARE CHRISTIANS DANGEROUS?

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There is an ideology moving through contemporary culture fueled by a four-toed claw of a spiritual principality. This ideology seeks to clamp down on the minds of people, enslaving them to a depressing darkness. It begins with the myth that truth is subjective and then progresses to the idea that the last word of authority is “self” (including the idea that sexual identity and practice is personal). Moving on, it embraces the concept that justice is essentially racial and finally concludes that Christianity is dangerous. This predator’s claw is invading the primary institutions of our society.

Let’s explore that last conclusion:

Christians are crazy at best and most likely dangerous because we confess that Jesus is the truth and that creation has order based on the eternal justice of God. In a sense, our accusers are right. To those who cannot see the invisible kingdom nor hear the quiet voice of the Father, Christians do seem crazy and even scary. After all, we share the very life of our God who is holy. That is, He is unique and distinctly different. He is one of a kind. Those who share His life are also holy. They are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who gives them insight into the abundance of things God has prepared for them.

*But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor*

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*the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him”—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit... (1 Corinthians 2:9-10 NRSV)*

The Spirit doesn't repress our being, but liberates us to embrace the full redemption Jesus paid for. We finally get to be human as God originally designed. But those under the influence of the claw feel threatened by those who are genuinely free. Secular culture tries to dull and minimize the difference between Christianity and other religions, seeking to reduce all of them to a common goal to "make nice." Being good and refusing to be judgmental is all that is required to be a worshiper in our culture. However, we know that the life of Christ being manifest in believers makes us either attractive to those who are thirsty for life or scary for those determined to eliminate God from their existence. We either emit an aroma of life or death (see 2 Corinthians 2:14-15).

The Apostle Peter addressed this concept wonderfully in 1 Peter 1:3-9:

*Blessed be the God and Father of*

*our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

We are captured by mercy. We have nothing to boast about. He loved us first, sought us, bought us, sealed us, and gives us His own life. We are not idealists who feel that life owes us comfort and ease. We are not entitled, but we are confident that we are loved. Messes don't deter us.

Delay does not quench our faith. His faithfulness is the anchor of our souls.

We are born again to a lively hope. We are not trying to improve on our sketchy resume nor make our flesh less offensive. We have been born again into a new realm of reality that allows us to see past the obvious into the eternal. We know things we can't prove, but also can't deny. Hope is not based on some document or creed, but on the living Lord, who was raised from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father where He sits now ruling over all that is His. Israel was born at Sinai when the Law was given to Moses. We are born at the tomb when our Substitute was raised to live forever. Israel received an inheritance of land, Law, lineage, and legacy. We have received the life of Christ with all His attributes. We are not impressed by little pieces of land on earth when we are walking with Him in heavenly places now and forever. We are not defined by human bloodlines when we have been purchased by the blood of Jesus who makes us sons of almighty God. We are not guided by an external law written on stone or paper. We have received new hearts where the law of God is written,

and we are empowered by His own Spirit to align with His order in all things. Israel's land could be taken by stronger nations. Our inheritance cannot be taken because no nation is great enough to dethrone the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Israel was impressed by the glory on Moses' face when he met with God. We have that glory in and upon us as sharers with Jesus. They feared the fading of the glory. Ours cannot fade. Israel exalted the temple where God had chosen to touch earth. They made pilgrimages to the holy place. We are the temple of God, and He dwells with us wherever we go. They were given a land to discover and develop. We are given a relationship to the Trinitarian God where we can live forever discovering the depth of His grace and glory.

In the text, Peter gives some ways to identify these "dangerous Christians." First, we live with irrepressible joy. It is part of the life that Jesus gives us. He lived on earth with joy in every moment, because He was always conscious that the Father delighted in Him. He knew He was not being measured by His actions. He enjoyed being delighted in, so He delighted in all the Father was doing. Delight in the Father bred

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delight in doing the Father's will. Obedience was a natural response of joy.

Second, dangerous Christians suffer well. Instead of viewing suffering as unjust and stifling, we are able to see that each need we have is an opportunity to discover a new level of God's abundant grace. God is continuously expressing the glory of His grace, and messy people can model it. We also know that our family mission is to carry on the role of serving. That includes suffering because those we serve are suffering and we must be able to empathize. We have also discovered the nature of true wealth: gold tried by fire. Until our faith goes through the fire of suffering, we only have the ore. The fire purifies the faith, and we are rich beyond measure.

Third, dangerous Christians die with hope. Sharing the life of the resurrected Jesus, we know that life wins over death. Light wins over darkness. Love wins over hate... every time. The Spirit within us testifies that complete adoption is ahead. What Jesus purchased in His blood, He will reclaim in His time. We get new bodies. We get a new heaven and a new earth. The story

has a fantastic ending.

Yes, some say we are crazy or dangerous. To the witnesses in heaven, we are simply the redeemed. We have been sent by the Ultimate Authority with the message that cannot fail. It is our time to show the majesty of His glorious grace. We represent another reality that can redeem and restore the world held in darkness. We can expect His active partnership. He intervenes. He shows His love in millions of ways in daily life as well as monumental events. I hope the skeptics are right when they say: "Those Christians are dangerous!" Dangerous enough to reach out to them with love and grace.



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