"THE BELL"

BANGOR LIBERTY FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Prince of Peace

Well, the days seem to fly off the calendar anymore. In a couple of weeks Christmas will be but a memory. We will have moved on to the New Year and new resolutions that will likely be forgotten before we even get to Spring. In the rush to live life at the speed of light today we run the risk of simply counting the days on the calendar and not really living. We bounce from one social event to another, work consumes our days and our nights provide fitful sleep as we worry about what tomorrow will bring. In this environment we approach Christmas to often with dread and fail to remember the real purpose behind the lights, tinsel, gifts and eggnog. If you have kids and an extended family you understand the dread of Christmas break with the kids at home and restless. If you are newly married then likely you are dreading trying to juggle at least two different Christmas celebrations with your family and your spouse's. And if we are honest, many of us feel loss at Christmas. The loss of a parent who is no longer with you. The loss of a relationship broken by imperfect people. Or maybe it's just the loss of any sense of peace you feel at this time of the year because making sense of the world seems impossible. While this might all seem like the problems of the modern world there is little difference between our situation and that of the people living in the first century.

I know many will scoff at this idea, but our lives while seemingly more complicated today are little different that they were for the people experiencing that first Christmas so many years ago. Yes, we have: technology, email, snapchat, horseless carriages, music in our pockets and who can forget, 1,423,002 different cable channels. However, there is a great deal of difference between what we have and what we need. Our diversions in life are greatly multiplied today as opposed to the first century Judean, but our need has always been the same.

Nearly eight hundred years before Christ, God saw the need of the people of a city called Nineveh. In response God sent a prophet to preach a message of salvation to a population weighed down by their sin. Nineveh is described as a great city. Great in population and wealth but still in need of something they could not provide for themselves. Jonah resist God and tries to run from his calling. The prophet could not get past the sin of the people. The people of Nineveh had for many years persecuted the Jewish people. Jonah had experienced that persecution, that hate first hand. Sending Jonah to preach to the Assyrians was the modern equivalent of God sending a Jew to preach salvation to the Nazi war machine in the 1940s. Jonah, mad at God and hateful of the Assyrians, ran from Nineveh because he couldn't get past the sin committed by those people. God, full of grace and love for his fallen creation, saw only their need for a Savior to deliver them from the darkness of their lives. Jonah served as the imperfect messenger, preaching a perfect message to a broken people. Likewise, nearly two thousand years ago, God recognizing the need of His creation for a Savior sent His only son. Not just to serve as a perfect messenger with the perfect message for a broken world, but to be the answer to the question, "How?"

In the beginning God said, "Let there be light." Today God has given us His son, or as Jesus described himself, "The light of the world." And just as God chased the darkness from the face of the earth so long ago, Jesus stands at the door offering light to chase the darkness from your life. This light provides peace for a troubled world, peace not just with God but with yourself if we are willing to follow.

"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.(Luke 2:10-11) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Might God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.(Isaiah 9:6)