

A Cloud Of Witnesses

David Wilkerson:

Hebrews 12:1 tells us that the world is encircled by a cloud of witnesses who are with Christ in glory. What does this multitude of heavenly witnesses have to say to the present world? We live in a generation that is far more wicked than Noah's. What can these witnesses say to a human race whose sins exceed even that of Sodom?

Our day is one of great prosperity. Our economy has been blessed, yet our society has become so immoral, violent and anti-God that even secularists bemoan how far we have fallen. Christians everywhere wonder why God has delayed his judgments on such a wicked society.

We who love Christ may not understand why such gross evil is allowed to continue. But the cloud of heavenly witnesses understands. They don't question the mercy and patience that God has shown.

The Apostle Paul is among that cloud of witnesses, and he bears witness to God's unlimited love for even "the chiefest of sinners." Paul's life and writings tell us that he cursed the name of Christ. He was a terrorist, hunting down God's people and dragging them off to be jailed or killed. Paul would say to us that God is being patient with this present generation because there are many who are like he was, people who sin in ignorance.

The apostle Peter is also among the cloud of witnesses, and he too understands why God is so patient. Peter's life and writings remind us that he cursed Jesus, swearing he never knew him. God withholds his judgment because there are multitudes still who curse and deny him, just as Peter did. The Lord won't give up on them, just as he never gave up on Peter. There are many like him whom Christ still prays for.

As I consider this cloud of witnesses, I see the faces of former drug addicts and alcoholics, former prostitutes and homosexuals, former gangsters and pushers, former murders and wife-beaters, former infidels and pornography addicts—multitudes whom society had given up on. They all repented and died in the arms of Jesus, and now they are witnesses to the mercy and patience of a loving Father.

I believe all of these would say, in one unified witness, that Jesus didn't judge them before they received his mercy. God still loves this mad, immoral world. May he help us to love the lost as he does. And may we pray to have the love and patience he is showing the world right now.