Mt 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

1. Intro. The greater message for the sinner to grasp from the believer is that you speak the truth in love.

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 1Pe 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

* 1. The scribes and Pharisees did everything they could to provoke Jesus, and now they demand a sign from Him
     1. Their demand was swiftly denied but answered with the greatest demonstration of love. 39-41
     2. What more could He have done to convince them Isa.5:4
     3. The attitude that demands miraculous signs as a condition for belief is not the attitude that pleases God
     4. He called them an evil and adulterous generation – 39
  2. This an evil generation - II Timothy 3:1-5

2Ti 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, {false...: or, one who just foments strife}

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

* + 1. Paul informs that evil would be of greater intensity in the last days
    2. Evil is being accepted and promoted by society in a bolder way

2Ti 3:13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

* 1. What does this evil generation need?

1. This generation needs preachers that Obey God and love at all cost

2Ti 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Obedience to the truth brings repentance and reward - II Timothy 4:1-8

* 1. Charles G. Finney an old time preacher had a message entitled "How to preach so as to convert nobody"
     1. Talk about sin in general, but never name the sin
     2. A man does not truly preach, if he deals in generalities 67
     3. Vague preaching offends nobody,
     4. We are all going to have to give an account of our preaching
  2. Because we have a generation of people with itching ears is no reason to compromise our preaching to suit their condition – II Timothy 4:3
     1. The Preacher is an ambassador, messenger with a proclamation to be heard and heeded not an negotiator for sinfulness, but from sin.
        1. The Preacher is not to give them what they want to hear but what they need to hear.

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

* 1. Preaching that brings repentance convicts not condemns -

Ac 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Isa 58:1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Mic 3:8 ¶ But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.

* + 1. Man calls sin a mistake but God calls it disobedience
    2. Man calls sin an accident, but God calls it sin
    3. Man calls sin a sickness, but God calls it iniquity
    4. Man calls sin a liberty, but God calls it lawlessness
    5. Man says sin is no big thing, but God calls it a transgression
    6. Man calls sin a weakness, but God calls it willfulness
    7. Man calls sin an alternate lifestyle, but God calls it an abomination
  1. Preaching that brings repentance disturbs
     1. Light disturbs those in the dark, and if we preach the Word, we will preach light

Ps 119:130 ¶ The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. Mt 5:15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

* + 1. Light disturbs because it reveals dirt and disorder
    2. Light disturbs because it wakes people up.
    3. Modern day preaching does not save men, because it does not annoy men; but leaves them as they were, without a ruffle or the slightest disturbance
  1. Preaching that brings repentance directs –

Ac 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

* + 1. Unbelief in the person will produce darkness in the testimony
  1. Preaching that brings repentance separates from the world -Acts 2:40-41
  2. Preaching that brings repentance unites believers to love and fear God.

1. This generation needs to see a people that brings light to the world
   1. Respect to Christianity - Philippians 2:15

Php 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; {harmless: or, sincere} {ye shine: or, shine ye}

* 1. We are to shine in a crooked and perverse nation
     1. Don’t deprave the world of your distinct walk
     2. Many profess, but do not practice – Titus 1:16

Tit 1:16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. {reprobate: or, void of judgment}

* + 1. There is very little difference in the professing believer and the unbeliever.
    2. Most people's religion is secondary
  1. Christians are not respected anymore, there is a great need for Holy Ghost filled believers.
     1. To make a difference, we have to be different
     2. We cannot change anything by adding more of the same
     3. The early church was feared and respected – Acts 2:42-43
     4. The world looks at the church today and sees no difference between them and itself
     5. instead of making an impact on society, the church is ignored and treated as of no account

Heb 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

* 1. The church is not held in respect because it is so much like the world
     1. The church is entertained by the same pleasures – II Timothy 3:4 “lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God”
     2. They miss church for the same things the world does
     3. The church embraces the same drinks

Pr 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

* + 1. The church engages in the same perversions -
    2. No difference in dress, talk or manner of living
  1. The unfaithful saints will have to answer for this generation of sinners

1. This generation needs power that brings results

1Co 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 4:19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. 20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

* 1. Loss of power is the great tragedy of the church
     1. The Church stands paralyzed in face of her enemies
     2. The Holy Ghost does not lack power but only the opportunity in our lives to demonstrate it
     3. The early church was marked with great power; no foe could frighten them, and no fear could haunt them
     4. We need to see the power of God demonstrated in the lives of the saints and in the church
  2. We need the Power that changes the life

1Co 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

* + 1. Power to stand up, power to speak out, power to shine forth
    2. An appetite for the Word of God and the House of God

1. We need prayer that will bring` revival - II Chronicles 7:14
   1. All that God is, and all that God has, is at our disposal through prayer
      1. The devil can wall us round by the untoward actions of people, but he cannot roof us in because of God.
      2. Prayer has divided seas, made rocks gush with water, muzzled lions, burst open iron gates
      3. Lack of prayer has brought paralysis to our generation today
   2. Our generation will rise or fall on its praying

Jer 33:3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. Da 11:32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

1. This generation needs love that is genuine - I Peter 4:8

1Pe 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

* 1. "fervent" means without ceasing
  2. A Christian without love is lifeless and powerless
  3. This kind of love will cost us everything
     1. No such thing as cheap when it comes to God’s love
     2. We can give without love, but we cannot love without giving
  4. This kind of love will cover everything.
     1. Love does not publish another's sins
     2. How much gossip would be eliminated if we truly loved one another
     3. Gossip runs down more people than automobiles do every year
     4. Where love is thin, faults are thick; where love is thick, faults are thin
     5. Where love is, forgiveness is easier
     6. Man is most like a beast when he kills; man is most like men when he judges; and man is most like God when he forgives
  5. This generation needs to see Christians that have the love of God in their hearts – I Cor. 13:1-7 We will not serve our generation well unless the preaching, the people, the power, the praying, and the faith working by love is present.