

The Forest *Behind* the Trees

Another Thanksgiving has come and gone. Hopefully everyone is coming out of their food comas and able to move about without too much difficulty. My sincere thanks to all the wonderful cooks, Andrea, Joann, Siw, Jen, and Ashley for adding to my waistline.

I was reminded again just how thankful and blessed I am as on Friday evening I was able to spend time at Robbie and Kirsten's house with all five of my grandchildren. Mary and Logan have been staying with us (as has Kristin) all week so it was an evening for the cousins. I got to witness the "Lewis Grand Prix" as Robbie has amassed 4 battery powered Power Wheels type jeeps for kids. He has since tricked them out with lights and upgraded the batteries and motors as 5 MPH is far to slow and not near enough to get anyone into the ER. Just kidding...Emma does have a heavy left foot as she qualifies as a NASCAR driver.

We even had pizza, a camp fire, and s'mores, which I tried my first one in 67 years! That is correct, I have never had a s'mores before in my life. I found out what I had been missing. Grandchildren are truly the crown of this old man.

Proverbs 17:6- "Children's children *are* the crown of old men, and the glory of children *are* their fathers."

Having viewed these blessings, I thought about this week's essay. How can people be so ungrateful? I can understand how most out in the world can be that way, but there are so many so-called Christians that are unthankful described in 2 Timothy 3:1-6. I believe the issue boils down to, "they do not know God." Those that say they do, do not obey God fully, which negates knowing Him at all. When I say they do not know God, I mean they do not have an intimate personal connection. I know I have been harping on this for quite some time but they cannot see the forest for the trees. They play church and go through the motions but there is no substance and God knows it.

This past week, I saw an article written by a Pastor who is a well-known Capital Commission Chaplain and Doctor of Christian Ministry. He is also known in the circle of Christian Leadership and shall remain nameless in this lesson. The following is the brief article he posted:

SILENT SATURDAY: FINDING HOPE IN THE WAIT

Not many people pay much attention to Holy Saturday. Friday and Sunday get all the attention. There is limited biblical material on Saturday but many of our days feel like Silent Saturday: confusing, hopeless, silent.

Imagine hiding in a locked upper room all day “for fear of the Jews” (John 20:19). What trauma. Hopes dashed. Guilt for abandoning Jesus. Confusion. The disciples sat with their strong emotions. There was nothing left to do except join a dead messiah support group or find a new messiah. Remember, no one was saying, “Don’t worry! Something great is going to happen on Sunday. I cannot wait!”

Silent Saturdays are hard. Life is hard and exhausting. Pain is real and struggles linger. All hope can seem lost. Silent Saturday reminds us to press on. Jesus is at work even when you cannot see him. Most importantly, we remember Sunday is coming.

When I read this, my jaw dropped. Silent Saturday? Not many people pay much attention to Holy Saturday? There is limited biblical material on Saturday? I am sorry, this hit me like Goliath spewing crap about God to David. Or the other TV preacher with the wire microphone in the ear waving the Bible, “I’ve been in the word 30 years...” a pity they do not live a word of it. What the dickens is a “silent Saturday? I am not sure what Bible he is looking at for limited material on Saturday, perhaps the term “sabbath’ is beyond his comprehension? Oh, that’s right, like that other pastor told me one, “we choose to worship on the Lord’s Day.” He should have started the article, “once upon a time...”

Anyway, As I may have mentioned, the time to turn over tables is drawing near and I had to post a response, not out of anger but one of sharing scripture, God's undisputable truth. The following is the post shared:

The reason they were paying attention is they were keeping God's true Sabbath!!

This was not a Sunday.

Genesis 2:2-4- "And by the beginning of the seventh day God finished His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.

3. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

4. This is the account of the heavens and of the earth when they were created; in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

(AFV)

There were no Jews for another 2000 years at creation, Constantine was not alive yet to change the Sabbath to a Sunday to appease man, God established His Sabbath at creation. Who are we to change it?

Galatians 1:8-9- “8. But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you that is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!

9. As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!

(AFV) Jesus Christ kept the true Sabbath AND Holy Days. Read Leviticus 23.

They are God’s feasts not the Jews! Wake up church.

Time to pay attention- 1 Peter 4:17.

The person writing this post is supposedly a learned man of God. What I find surprising was there were no responses to my post save one. It was a positive one from the author himself. I was not seeking “likes” as so many do. However, there were over 238 likes for his posts with numerous “amens” and “looking forward to Sunday.” It made me realize that people can become so enamored with a man, they can miss the message. They will fail to listen to the words and fail to see the Source from which they come. These captivated fans, no matter how sincere, are just as far off base as their “idolized” hero. They throw their arms out of socket to praise a nationally known person to get recognized rather than stand up for the truth. Their recognition is coming someday but probably not in the reward they are hoping for.

Matthew 7:23- “And then I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.’”

Remember, God is no respecter of persons.

Romans 2:11- “Because there is no respect of persons with God.”

It will not matter one bit how many sermons he posts, how many tracts they handed out, or how many charities they donated too, God knows the heart, the motive, and the individual.

God gave us His Word as our source of truth. Jesus Christ confirmed this.

John 14:6- “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”

We that have a relationship with God are set apart in His truth.

John 17:17- “Sanctify them in Your truth; Your Word is the truth.”

If we do not trust Him fully, we will have doubts. We will have doubts when we do not know Him. When we put our trust in God, 100 % of His word is pure and He becomes a shield to us.

Proverbs 30:5- “Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.”

The only way we will ever achieve this relationship is to let go of this world and love Him first. Period. I cannot put it any other way. This is the greatest commandment.

Matthew 22:37-38- “And Jesus said to him,” ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is *the* first and greatest commandment;”

We can read books and sermons until the pages crumble. We can listen to tapes until our ears bleed and watch videos until our eyes cross. It will not make a bit of difference to our God if we do not have a personal relationship with Him.

We discussed this with our young adults a couple of weeks ago:

As a parent, you tell your child to mow the lawn for their allowance. Instead, they wash the car and expect to be paid. Did they do something bad? Should you pay them? Do you reward them for disobedience? God gave us His only Son, Who gave His life for us. God Gave us an inheritance for that life so dear with a set of commandments to be followed to the letter. Should He reward those who come close? This clearly emphasizes the importance of following God's instructions in His Bible the way He says to and not the way we think it should be done. The Bible is of no private interpretation.

2 Peter 1:20-21- “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone's own *private* interpretation; Because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit.”

Loving God, knowing God and trusting God, makes it so easy to be thankful for the blessing He bestows upon us. It simplifies seeing Him in the world around us and gives us His peace, especially during this season of chaos surrounding this upcoming pagan holiday. Aside from the tremendous blessing of family and friends, I think back on one of the best blessings we mentioned last week. Of all the people that have ever lived, we have been blessed with the truth and knowledge

of God's word and His way of life. Even of those alive today, we have been called out from among them and set apart.

Matthew 13:16-17- "But blessed *are* your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see what you see, and have not seen; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard."

To this end, we can see God all around us, we can see the forest and the trees behind them too.

Psalm 100:1-5

A Psalm of Thanksgiving.

1. Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
2. Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing.
3. Know that the LORD, He is God. He has made us, and we are His; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

4. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise;
give thanks unto Him and bless His name,

5. For the LORD is good; His steadfast love is everlasting; and His
faithfulness endures to all generations.

Amen

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