

LESSONS LEARNED ON A FARM**THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE**

I was reared on a farm on which we raised hogs and cattle. Our main crops were corn and soybeans, though we usually also sowed a few acres of wheat each year. With my first twenty years of life having been spent on the farm, I have a lot of memories. Here are some things that I learned and remember well from “way back when.” Some of these experiences, or similar ones, may sound familiar to you because you have “been there and done that.”

On the farm I learned that:

Work Comes Before Play!

It was simply a case of first things first. That approach to things helped even know-it-all kids like me learn the benefit of self-discipline and getting the stuff that really mattered done first. Members of the church of the 21st century know how to pray up a storm, but do we put His work above play and pleasure? Are we not instructed to abound in the Master’s work (I Corinthians 15:58)?

Somebody’s Gotta Do It!

One the farm there were, shall we say, some less than desirable chores. Some tasks were just plain no fun at all, but if they were going to get done, somebody had to do them. In the Lord’s Cause, there is so much work to be done. A great deal of it goes on behind the scenes. Serving others out of love, which all saints are to do (Galatians 5:13), can require the performance of some mental tasks. But, just like on the farm, somebody’s gotta do it. In the Lord’s work, no one is “too good” to lend a helping hand.

Don’t Count Your Chickens Before They Hatch Is True!

Eggs could look so promising, but a lot can happen before the chick actually hatches. The same is true about row crops. It might be called “the best lookin’ corn crop we’ve ever had,” but a lack of rain or hailstorm can ruin what looked so promising. Jesus taught that the first shall be last and the last shall be first (Matthew 20:16). Some who look so promising in the kingdom turn out to be betrayers, like Judas. There is, as they say, so “sure bet” when it comes to picking out which young person will turn out to be the church’s most faithful workers in the future.

Sweatin’ Probably Never Killed Anyone

Farmers know all about hard work. They know the toil and sweat that farm work requires. In the Lord’s work, there are some tasks that involve the kind of work that produces perspiration (That is the city word for “sweat”). Like Nehemiah and his fellow Jews that rebuilt Jerusalem’s wall, today all of us need to have a mind to work (Nehemiah 4:6). The harvest is plenteous and the laborers are few (Matthew 9:37). Let us all be ready to work for Him, even if we have to do some sweatin’ in the process. It won’t kill us.

The Prettiest Tractors Don’t Always Produce The Best Crops

Each farmer has his preference of tractors, but whether it was International red, John Deere green, or Allis-Chalmers orange, a brand new or cleaned up tractor was a mighty pretty sight to those of us that grew up in the country. And yet, having a good-looking machine was no guarantee that you would have good crops. So it is in the spiritual realm. Boys, just because a young woman has a pretty face does not mean that she has a desirable character. Real beauty is the beauty of the heart (I Peter 3:3-4). Churches “feel proud” when they have a good-looking meeting place, and there is nothing wrong with that. But, having a nice-looking facility is no guarantee that we will bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) or get more sinners to repent and obey Jesus (Acts 2:38).

Not Having As Much As Other People Doesn’t Mean That You Are A Lower Quality Person!

I grew up two decades after the Great Depression, so I was not raised in poverty. However, we had less than some of the other folks in our area, though we may not have noticed it at the time. How we all need to see that man’s life does not consist of the abundance of things that he possesses (Luke 12:15). Material things do not make a man or woman anymore special than those people who do not have a bunch of things. We will be

“...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel...” (Amos 7:8)

WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?

Text: _____

I. The _____ of _____

Notes:

II. The _____ of _____

Notes:

III. The _____ of _____

Notes:

NO MORE NINEVEH

Text: _____

I. The Destruction of Nineveh is _____

Notes:

II. The Destruction of Nineveh is _____

Notes:

III. The Destruction of Nineveh is _____

Notes:

When Matthew Henry was robbed, that very night he prayed: "I thank Thee, first, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, and not I who robbed."

judged by our personal deeds, not by our bank accounts (Romans 2:6).

Animals Don't Seem To Smell So Bad If You Are The One That Gets The Money When They Are Sold!

When we would pass a hog farm, my dad would often say, "Smells like someone is making money." City folks usually find such an aroma disgusting. But, when the livestock was yours, and you got the money when they were sold, well, the smell did not seem to be all that bad. In the church, we may be inclined to quickly write off another person, counting him/her as a hopeless cause, while at the same time, we tend to have more patience with those to whom we are really close. Why? Maybe because we see the potential in them. Each member of the body is important to the Lord and to the local church (I Corinthians 12:14-16).

Just Wishing The Rocks Would Get Out Of The Field Didn't Get Rid Of Them!

Rocks left in the field can ruin plows, disks, planters, or hay balers. I hated picking up rocks and throwing them into a loader. But, it was job that really needed to be done. And, just wishing the rocks away did not make them go away. Again, in our lives there are a lot of things that need to be done. Someone must do these jobs, or they remain undone. Are you are worker or a watcher?

It's Better To Try And Tame An Animal When It's Still Young Rather Than Wait Until It Gets Big!

When that sheep, horse, or steer is already grown, forget about taming him. It will not happen. In the same way, God surely knew what He was talking about when He told dads to "bring up" their kids in His nurture and admonition (Ephesians 6:4). Timothy was blessed in that he knew the Bible from his childhood (II Timothy 3:15). Proverbs 19:18 says to chasten a child "while there is hope." Many parents have learned a sad lesson the hard way; wait until teen years, and then try to discipline them, and you will have a genuine lost cause on your hands.

Doing A Job As Quickly As Possible Does Not Always Produce The Best Results!

Hurrying with that bucket of feed for the cattle just might result in spilling it all over the ground. Then you have a big mess to clean up and more work to do than when you started. Opening up the throttle on the tractor and speeding down the row of corn with the cultivator may get the job done sooner, but you can be assured that you will tear out and ruin a whole lot more corn that way. Yes, on the farm you can readily see how "haste makes waste." We sometimes see this in our lives.

I hope that some of my reminiscing just might help up to pay attention to some important spiritual truths.

-Roger Campbell

THE BOOK OF ASSYRIA'S CONDEMNATION

The book of Nahum is one peculiar in its arrangement because the ones about whom he writes are not those to whom he writes. About one hundred years prior to Nahum's prophetic efforts, Jonah had reluctantly gone up to Nineveh, Assyria's capital, and preached repentance unto the people. His work was fruitful in that at the command of the king, the people repented of their evil ways thus sparing their city and their lives. However, about a hundred years later, in the days of Nahum, Nineveh had proven their repentance to be short-lived and returned to their barbaric and idolatrous ways. Thus Nahum's written work is dedicated to condemning Nineveh and foretelling of her destruction. What makes it peculiar, however, is that though he writes concerning Assyria he writes to Judah possibly with two purposes in mind. First, he encourages them by letting them know that their enemies, who had caused them so much trouble for so long, would be destroyed for their sins and no longer would they be a nuisance to them. Secondly, though, there is an implied, but obvious, warning that sin will bring destruction. Assyria was powerful and seemingly invincible, but God was tired of their sin and iniquity and brought His judgment against them. Judah was involved also in similar fits of iniquity and she needed to realize that if Assyria, as powerful as she was, could be brought down because of sin, Judah could as well.

God's anger is an obvious theme in this book seeing as some eight words are used to portray that anger in just five of the first six verses:

*“God is **jealous**, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is **furious**; the Lord will take **vengeance** on his adversaries, and he reserveth **wrath** for his enemies. The Lord is slow to **anger**, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his **indignation**? And who can abide in the **fierceness** of his anger? His **fury** is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him” (Nahum 1:2-6).*

It was this anger that brought the wrath of God's judgment as is vividly described by Nahum. At least ten times Nahum made reference to this destruction with the following description: “(1) the fierceness of the onslaught (2:4-6; 3:1-3); (2) Nineveh despoiled (2:9-10); (3) ‘where is the dwelling of the lions,’ the national symbol of Assyria (2:11-12); (4) Nineveh, ‘the well-favored harlot,’ stripped and filth thrown on her (3:4-6); (5) her people no more forceful than defenceless women (3:8-13); (6) her rulers, helpless, flee (3:17); (7) the people are scattered (3:18); (8) all who hear of her fate will clap their hands (3:19); (9) it is really the Lord who is her attacker (2:13); (10) Zephaniah also predicted the fall of Nineveh (Zephaniah 2:13-15).”

What made this destruction such an amazing sign of the power of God was the size of the city and the magnitude of its destruction. Dunn wrote about this wonder when he said:

“According to Diodorus Siculus, pagan historian, Nineveh was 60 miles in circumference, surrounded by walls 100 feet high, so broad that three chariots could drive abreast upon them, having 1500 towers 200 feet in height. Jonah's mention of 120,000 innocents (Jonah 4:11) suggests that it may have had a population of nearly a million. The city appeared to be impregnable, but because of her sins, she was doomed, soon to be thrown down by the Lord at one stroke. Its destruction was so complete that the site was soon forgotten. When Xenophon and his 10,000 passed by 200 years later he thought the mounds were ruins of another city. When Alexander the Great fought a famous battle near the site in 331 B.C., he did not know there had been a city there. So completely had all traces of Nineveh disappeared that many scholars came to think that the references to it in the Bible and other ancient histories were mythical; that in reality the Assyrian empire had never existed.”

While there is no direct messianic prophecy found in Nahum, the divine attributes of Jesus Christ as judge of the earth are seen in God's judgment of Assyria. Surely any found in opposition to God are subject to such an utter end as were these people. Thus the lesson remains for all people of all time that the only true prosperity that can be enjoyed is realized by the blessings of God received because of faithful service to Him and Him alone

-Andy Brewer