

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

THE WORLD'S GREATEST THIEF

Sin is a spiritual disease that is far more dangerous than any physical disease mankind has ever known. It is a disease that robs its victims and leaves them feeling empty inside. Let us notice a few things sin can steal from us, if we are not careful.

Sin Robs us of our Innocence

When God created Adam and Eve, He created them in a state of perfect innocence. They were created having never known the guilt and shame of sin. Their consciences had never been pricked by the sting of sin. But then Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit and the world changed forever! After they sinned, God came looking for them. Do you remember what they did? They hid themselves (Genesis 3:8). But why? Why did they feel the need to hide? They felt the need to hide because for the first time in their lives that guilt-free feeling was gone. They had transgressed the commands of almighty God, and they knew they had done wrong. They were ashamed. Their innocence had been forever stolen from them by the snare of sin. Today we need to be aware of the same snare that exists in our lives. Sin can corrupt our minds as well (II Corinthians 11:3). As a disease destroys the body, so does sin destroy the soul, robbing us of the innocence we once possessed.

Sin Robs us of our Influence

Jesus spoke of our influence in Matthew 5:13-14. In this passage God's people are called salt and light. Just as salt preserves, we are also to be a preserving influence in the world, preventing spiritual decay. Jesus also called us light. We are a light to a world in spiritual darkness. But what happens when a child of God turns from their first love and entangles themselves back into a life of sin? Well, that sin then robs the child of God of their influence. No one wants to be around a person who claims to be one way and does the opposite. If a Christian is faithful then his influence is powerful, but if he turns back to a life of sin, his influence is pitiful. Let us beware of the damage sin can do to our influence.

Sin Robs us of our Integrity

Influence deals with the things we do that others see. Our integrity involves the idea of what we do when no one is looking. Integrity speaks to our true character. You will remember the Bible account of Joseph, how that Potiphar's wife made advances toward him yet he refused her. Why? He could have gotten away with it. Nobody else was watching. Joseph possessed integrity, and he did not let sin rob him of it. In our lives we must ever fight the sins that Satan throws our way. Especially those that no one but God will know about. We must not let sin steal our integrity.

We need to be careful, lest we allow sin to rob us of our innocence, our influence, and our integrity, thus robbing us of a home in heaven!

-Randall Evans

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

HOLY OBJECTIVES OF A HOLY PEOPLE

Text: _____

I. _____

Notes:

II. _____

Notes:

III. _____

Notes:

UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY

Text: _____

I. Understanding _____

Notes:

II. Understanding _____

Notes:

III. Understanding _____

Notes:

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

During the first three days of July, 1863, in the midst of America’s great Civil War, the armies of the North and South clashed decisively at Gettysburg. For the first three days of the battle, the fighting was inconclusive, but then the tide began to turn against General Lee and the Confederate forces. The northern troops under General G.G. Meade were winning. Lee began to retreat southward on the night of July 4, while storm clouds drenched the East Coast with rain. When Lee reached the Potomac, he found that the river was swollen with rain. He could not cross it. Behind him was the victorious Union army. Because him was the river. He was trapped.

Here was the great, golden opportunity for General Meade to end the battle. Meade could have attacked immediately, destroying Lee’s army and, in effect, ending the Civil War. President Lincoln actually ordered him to attack. However, instead of attacking, Meade delayed. He held a council, then delayed again. Eventually the water of the river receded, and Lee escaped over the Potomac. The war was extended two more years. Meade never regained his lost opportunity, and it was to General Grant that Lee eventually surrendered on April 9, 1865.

This story shows us the tragedy of having missed a great opportunity. But if this principle is true in the physical realm, as we realize, it is certainly more true spiritually. The Bible recognizes this when it says, “*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*” (Matthew 16:26). Again, Jesus affirmed: “*...for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light*” (Luke 16:8).

THE BEST SERMON REVISITED

Many years ago a farmer had an unusually fine crop of grain. Just a few days before it was ready to harvest, a terrible hail and wind storm destroyed it. The farmer and his little son went out on the porch after the storm. The little boy looked at what was formerly the beautiful field of wheat, and with tears in his eyes looked up at his dad, expecting to hear words of despair. All at once his father started to sin softly, “Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.” Years after, the little boy, grown to manhood, said, “That was the greatest sermon I ever heard.” The farmer lost a grain crop, but gained a faithful son.

“HOW MUCH MORE ARE YE BETTER THAN THE FOWLS?”

It is often the case that mankind is a worrisome creature. As Christ is teaching his followers about the futility of undue anxiety, he turns our attention to the birds of the air and the grass of the field: *“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these”* (Matthew 6:26,28-29). The futility of worry is clearly spelled out in these words of our Savior.

Worry accomplishes nothing good. Undue anxiety is unproductive. *“Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?”* (Matthew 6:27). Worry accomplishes nothing beneficial in our lives. As a matter of fact, worry can and often does accomplish only evil or harmful things. When we realize that worry and anxiety are completely unproductive, perhaps we can then formulate a plan to deal with the stresses of life. Those things about which we so often worry fall into one of two categories: there are those things about which we can do something, and then there are those things about which we can do nothing. Separate all of your anxieties and fears into these two classifications. Those things that rest within your ability to control should be acted upon. Most of those things about which we worry fall into the latter category. They are events that lie outside the realm of our ability or control, yet, how many people worry about the crash of the stock market, or losing their lives to the violent actions of a terrorist, or so many other things that are not within our power? The Christian has a place to deposit these cares and anxieties: *“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you”* (I Peter 5:7). Turn those things over which you have no power over into the hands of Him who has power over all things!

Worry shows a lack of trust in God’s promises. Fretfulness in the life of a Christian is the product of a lack of conviction about the faithfulness and willingness of God to keep His promises. God knows our every need—*“For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things”* (Matthew 6:32). He has promised to provide those things that we need if we are willing to put Him above all else. The promise of God still holds true: *“but seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Matthew 6:33). First indicates priority. If God’s righteousness and His kingdom are not the most important things in our lives, then we have much about which to be worried! But if we are willing to enthrone God in our hearts, and place no other before Him, then we have every assurance that He will take care of our needs! May we, like Paul, say, *“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day”* (I Timothy 1:12). The hymn writer understood the futility of worry and the needless burden it brings when he wrote, *“Of what peace we often forfeit; oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.”* Such conviction will alleviate worry and anxiety, which plagues the lives of so many.

Worry borrows from an uncertain future. Worry often causes us to reach into the future and attempt to bring its problems to bear on today. Listen to the words of our Savior: *“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”* (Matthew 6:34). Yes, this is precisely what so many of us do when we worry. The Christian understands that he must prepare for what lies ahead. We must make adequate provision for our families and ourselves for the future (Proverbs 6:6-11). We must be ready to stand before the Lord in the judgment (II Corinthians 5:10). While we must prepare for what lies ahead, we must also realize that we live one day at a time. We know not what the future holds (Proverbs 27:1), but we know Him who holds the future! We must render our best in service to the Lord today, while it is called today (Hebrews 3:13; John 9:4). We must put our all into the work of the Lord, fully trusting in God to bless and provide us with those things that we need. We must use the time that we have right now, for we have never been promised another day (James 4:13-14). Don’t borrow from tomorrow, and allow worry to rob you of the joy that could be yours right now!

We are the crowning jewels of God’s creation. As God surveyed all that He had made, He saw that it was good (Genesis 1:25). Only after creating man did God say that it was very good (Genesis 1:31). Knowing then that we are the apexes of God’s created order, and knowing that God provides freely for His lesser creatures, we can have every confidence that God will care for us! For the faithful Christian, the promises of God are even more abundant. *“Be not dismayed, whate’r betide, God will take care of you.”*

-Patrick Morrison