

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

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

EARTHLY THINGS ARE TEMPORARY

Our time on earth is just that—**TIME**. It will eventually run out. James speaks of life as a vapor (James 4:14). If we are wise, we will invest our energy in the eternal rather than the temporal. In order to do this, we must be able to discern the difference between the two.

Let's consider some things that fall under the category of "**temporary.**"

Our Earthly Sojourn is TEMPORARY

The great men and women of faith (Hebrews 11) understood their life on earth was temporary. These faithful pilgrims (I Peter 1:1-2; 2:11-12) realized they were just passing through this veil of tears and therefore exerted their energies in seeking a heavenly country (Hebrews 11:16). We would be wise to do the same. There is only one life to live and we must live it in view of eternity (Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 6:33).

Earthly Goods Are Only TEMPORARY

Everything belongs to God (James 1:17), and whatever we "possess" has simply been placed under our care (oversight) for a brief time. We must be faithful stewards (I Corinthians 4:2; Matthew 25:14ff). Eventually all earthly goods will perish (Revelation 18:17). Like houses and hotels from a Monopoly game, everything eventually goes back into the box. ALL things will eventually (after our departure) be Almighty God's to destroy (II Peter 3:9-10). We must be careful not to invest too much energy in the pursuit of temporary things (Matthew 6:19-21; I Timothy 6:9-10; I John 2:15-17).

Earthly Relationships Are Only TEMPORARY

Yes, it is true, the Bible teaches that relationship between faithful Christians will continue into eternity. However, we must not think we will be identical throughout eternity as we experience and enjoy life here on earth. On earth, there is no closer tie than that of holy matrimony (marriage). Still, Jesus made it clear there will not be marriage or giving in marriage in heaven (Matthew 22:29-30). Earthly relationships will pale in comparison to what we will experience in God's presence (Revelation 21-22).

Earthly Accomplishments Are Only TEMPORARY

Awards, degrees, achievements, test scores, promotions, etc. will be of no value in glory. Sure, they are valuable and treasured on here on earth. But we should value them for what they are—**temporary**.

The only accomplishments that have lasting value on earth pertain to hearing of our Creator; believing and obeying Him; serving the Living God until the time of our departure into eternity (Ecclesiastes 12:13; Matthew 25:46). Therefore, let us look for ways to glorify God even as we seek our necessary goals on earth (I Corinthians 10:31).

Pause and Consider

At best, our life on earth is a few decades (James 4:14; Job 14:1). All will die (Hebrews 9:27). This earth will be destroyed at the end of time (II Peter 3:9-10).

Upon our death—nothing will be important except our relationship to Jehovah God. Whether we are a follower of Christ, faithfully serving Him, fully learning and obeying His inspired law will determine our eternal destiny.

Paul spoke of the Lord's return, as He will come, taking vengeance on those who do not know Him as well as those who have chosen NOT to obey Him (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Friend, are you ready to face God in judgment?

-Paul Sain

THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE RICH FOOL

Text: _____

I. Because He Thought About _____,

but Forgot About _____

Notes:

II. Because He Thought About _____,

but Forgot About _____

Notes:

III. Because He Thought About _____,

but Forgot About _____

Notes:

JUMPING ON JONAH

Text: _____

I. God's Love _____

Notes:

II. God's Love _____

Notes:

III. God's Love _____

Notes:

NEVER TOO OLD

Old age is dreaded by many because it is often associated with loneliness, physical decline, and a retreat to inactivity.

However, history records that many people made some of their greatest contributions to society after age 65:

- The Earl of Halsburg was 90 when he began preparing a 20-volume revision of English law.
- Goethe wrote *Faust* at 82.
- Galileo made his greatest discovery when he was 73.
- At 65, Winston Churchill became British Prime Minister for the first time, and started the epic struggle against Hitler.
- At 72, Golda Meir became Prime Minister of Israel.
- At 80, Grandma Moses, who had started painting in her late 79s, had her first one-woman exhibit.
- At 81, Benjamin Franklin skillfully mediated between disagreeing factions at the U.S. Constitutional Convention.
- At 80, Winston Churchill returned to the House of Commons as a member of Parliament and also exhibited 82 of his paintings.
- At 80, Nora Crydrus became a child of God.

You probably won't read about Nora Cydrus in the textbooks of history, but this week she made the greatest decision of all history: she became a Christian, a child of God.

Nora has a dear friend, another octogenarian, named Thelma Clark. Thelma cared so much about Nora that she wanted her to know about Jesus Christ, and how one can be saved from sin through Him (Ephesians 1:7). So Thelma began to study God's Word with Nora, and began bringing her to worship and Bible class. Then, this past Wednesday, a Christian from the Cox Boulevard church of Christ in Sheffield, Alabama, Julia Counts, teamed up with Thelma to teach Nora about how to respond to what Jesus had done for her (and for all of us). They studied about how Jesus paid the price for our sins by dying on the cross (Romans 5:8-10).

They read in God's Word that in order to receive the blessings of Jesus' death, we must: believe in Him (Acts 16:30-31), turn from sin in repentance (Acts 17:30-31), confess Jesus before men (Romans 10:9-10), and be immersed in His name for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38).

Then, Nora Cydrus confessed her faith and was baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27) to have her sins washed away by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16). She became a Christian, praising God for her salvation!

Are you a Christian? You are never too old and it is still not too late!

Won't you trust and obey Him today?

-David A. Sargent

IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT

Witnessing the ever changing regulations and expectations that are imposed on various services and industries in the world one would think it to be amazing that things have survived as long as they have. Every new instruction seems to bear a resemblance to the idea that the people working in these particular fields have no idea at all of what they are doing. Certainly nobody can argue with the fact that with time and technology particular things can be done easier or more efficiently, but some imposed changes bring the thought to mind, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Basically when we use this old adage, we are giving respect to the quality of the way things have been done and the desire to not tamper with them. And I can find no area in which this is truer than things that pertain to the soul.

If any good thing is going to be done for the soul, its ultimate origin is going to be God. Why? Because man is incapable of doing anything inherently good for his own soul. Jeremiah recognized that very fact, and his admission was, "*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*" (Jeremiah 10:23). Jeremiah had personally seen the depravity of his brethren when they had relied upon their self-dependence to worship, live, and interact with the nations of the world. Man's way had failed because they had tried to fix a way that was not broken, God's way. But in a few thousand years' time would mankind not learn from the mistakes of the past and quit trying to improve upon a way that is already perfect and unbroken? You would think so, but such as simply not been the case. Man still thinks he is smarter than God and can fix a decrepit way that is outdated and outmoded. But we loudly proclaim, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"

Take for example the topic of worship. God stated a very clear and concise plan as to what He desires out of the worship of His children. He has commanded us to sing (Ephesians 5:19), pray (I Thessalonians 5:17), teach (Acts 2:42), partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7), and give of our means (I Corinthians 16:1-2). This is what He has commanded and thus all He has authorized. "But," cries the world, "it is so boring. Can't we liven it up a little bit?" And by "livening it up" they include the mechanical instrument, exclude gospel preaching, minimize the importance of prayer, secularize the Lord's Supper, and over-emphasize the contribution because of their greed. Such is an acceptable worship service to the unlearned individual who has wrested the scriptures beyond recognition and has no concern for the sanctity of God's plan. But such is completely unacceptable to God (John 4:24) and to His faithful children. Why? Because if it ain't broke, don't fix it!

Think also about the arrangement of the church. The body of Christ was planned, prophesied, and established according to a very specific design. From its system of governing, to its function, to its terms of entrance, God has been very specific as to what His expectations for the church are to be. However, such has been completely unacceptable to the leaders of our "intellectual age." Now from all around are cries of inclusiveness, equal roles, and expanded functions. Instead of evangelizing, now we must entertain. And instead of instructing, now we must merely include. However, this simply does not resemble the tried and true method designed by God; and method that is proven to work. Thus, if it ain't broke, don't fix it!

And then, also consider the scheme of redemption. Does it not make sense that if God is going to promise a blessing to man that God should reserve the right to determine and set the conditions of that blessing? Well, it does make sense, and through scripture we find that that is the exact arrangement God has made regarding the topic of salvation. However, no longer in the religious world does the plan of God receive any respect or recognition. Now our concerns are on what the creeds, manuals, and catechisms state based upon the current reflections of a governing board. It now is too much to ask a person to upon faith, repent of sin, confess that faith, and be immersed in water to contact the blood of Christ and be redeemed from sin (Acts 2:14-47). The world now wants a more convenient and effortless way to achieve the same result. But upon what terms does man have a right to overrule God and determine his own conditions to be blessed? There are none! Because if it ain't broke, don't fix it!

That old country proverb seems so simple, but its application is broad and powerful. Enough changes, some needed and some not, occur everyday in our lives. What God has provided is something that is unchanging because it needs no change. It is perfect, faultless, and blameless (Hebrews 8) and it should be left that way. Because if it ain't broke, don't fix it!