

THOUGHTS

Newsletter for The Word Today

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SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

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Thoughts
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DRUGGED CULTURE

Millennials are more interested in smoking pot than drinking beer. This has the alcoholic beverage makers in a spot. If recreational marijuana use becomes legal, we are in serious trouble as a country. If that happens, expect a cascade of unfavorable political figures and laws to invade our republic. We are seeing the decline of American culture right before our eyes, primarily due to indifference toward God and covetousness that seeks to leach off the government and pay no heed to the price that future generations will pay for the excesses of today.

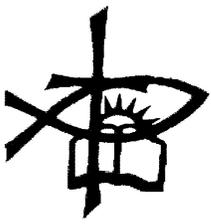
This is no surprise, however, to the student of the Bible, which teaches that *all cultures* are inherently skewed toward the sinful flesh, even the Israelite community that so displeased the Lord in the Wilderness. The Lord raised the Jews to conquer the Canaanites of the Promised Land not because the Jews were so good, but because the Canaanites were far worse! Note the commentary of the Lord regarding the Jews as they were set on the course to occupy Canaan, "... do not say to yourself, 'The Lord has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.' No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is going to drive them out before you (Deuteronomy 9:4)."

Hundreds of years later this very people group had become corrupted, secularized, and condemnable just as the Canaanites whom they vanquished generations before. *The only reason the Lord spared the Jews was to bring forth the world's Messiah, Jesus, since he had made an absolute promise to do so.* Let us not be surprised, then, to see our culture disintegrate, as have all others historically. Cultures rise and fall like weeds, but thankfully the Kingdom of Christ prevails. If America were to fall, the Lord could transform a different land that would use the template of America's history to establish a state with freedoms and liberties similar to what we enjoy. The seeds of such a transformation are already sown in places such as China, India and South America.

MARRIAGE DISAPPOINTMENT

The Christian educator nearing the end of his career shook his head and frowned. He was saddened at the number of students at Martin Luther High School whom he saw graduate – and now are divorcing. He sounded defeated. Why had not these fine young Christians been successful in marriage? How had their zeal for the Lord not translated long term into zeal for each other? Another recent Facebook announcement of a divorce had deflated him.

It is not his fault, of course. These couples were ignorant of the "Love Bank" discussed in Willard Harley's books, the emotional scorecard that operates whether one is a believer or not. They let the balance fall into the red and consciously or unconsciously decided to red line the relationship. They stopped seeking agreement and began to opt for unilateral decisions. Perhaps angry outbursts crept in, and/or disrespectful judgments increased. Love points were flushed massively.



*The Bible is God's Word . . . Jesus is God's "Word" made flesh . . .
His death and resurrection, the message needed Today.*

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There are times when I also feel overwhelmed by the state of marriage in our culture regarding how much is sacrificed on the altar of contemporary living and the secular agenda. It seems at times that all relationships have a degree of dysfunctionality; the question is, to what degree? It's a daunting enough endeavor to put two sinners together when not sniped at, distracted, and seduced by the world, but it's a herculean task in contemporary Western culture. Pray for the well-being of heterosexual marriages, and pray for the repentance of those in alternative arrangements.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR FUNERAL PASSAGE, OR "YOUR LAST WITNESS?"

It sounds morbid, but it is not! For the believer, selecting your funeral passage(s) is preparation to give your great testimony regarding your Savior, Jesus. It is also *anticipation* of what God has promised us in Christ – eternal life with God! I encourage you to tell your pastor and your family not only your "last wishes", but also your "last witness"! Funerals are *very different* when the deceased was a strong Christian, that is, they are very positive! Rather than the useless phrase, "He died doing what he loved," the bereaved of a believer hear words of hope such as, "You will have a wonderful reunion with them in Heaven!" Walking solidly with the Lord is one of the most profoundly beneficial things you can do to show love to your family!

DISTRACTION

This morning I was focusing on the account of Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7) playing on the car audio system as I turned into the church parking lot. Wham! I drove over the corner of the curb. I thought, "Well, there's a scuff or a dent in that wheel..." Thankfully, not. Ten minutes later, I was positioning a large cardboard piece in the upper window of my office to block the direct sunlight when my shoulder caught the edge of a very special piece of pottery, nearly knocking it to the ground. Thankfully, I hesitated and the cessation of motion allowed me to catch the pottery.

Wow, can we get distracted! There was not even a phone involved! The powers of Hell will try to *distract* you from commitment to Christ. Worldly activities, interests and desires can entice you to give little time and money to God. Heed the call of the Holy Spirit, "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage each other daily, as long as it is called *today*, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness (Hebrews 3:12-13)."

BEWARE

Mobile money lending is making debt slaves of millions of people. Never short term borrow in place of cash! That is how you wind up broke, or worse!

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder

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