

THOUGHTS

By the father/son team
Pastor Paul R Schroeder
Douglas W. Schroeder

SPEAKERS ON THE WORD TODAY

F
E
B
R
U
A
R
Y

2015

Thoughts
Box 77
Greendale
WI
53129

THE SHOCKER

Are you ready for the jolt, the drop, and the “rug being pulled out from under you”? At such times we consider nasty developments in our or another person’s life a shocking turn of events. But, why is it always so shocking to us? We seem endlessly surprised by the emergence of evil, the disappointment of failure, the incessant creeping of age until we succumb to illness or death. How come we see such things as rude interruptions of our expectations rather than the inevitable outcomes of a Fallen world?

There are plenty of wicked and pernicious people who wallow in sin, casting their wretchedness upon everyone nearby, and now thanks to the internet, even people halfway round the world. These are the ones Scripture warns are, “... like chaff that the wind blows away (Psalm 1:4b).” They are not to be emulated, for they will not stand in the Judgment (v.5).

We should expect the roller coaster effect of life to touch our experiences as well as that of others. Why is it we expect otherwise, that we will have an escalating experience right up to the point that we fall into the grave? Perhaps some of this is due to the bombardment of advertising which promises to restore, extend, rejuvenate, and recharge our physical lives. Also, gadgets and products promise to yield happiness, though we know this isn’t true.

Perhaps in our hearts we simply wish for sin not to be so evil, so vile, so ruthless, and so awful. We hope it will stay isolated – out there, somewhere else! But it isn’t, it’s nearby, it’s approaching, it’s working in us messing everything up. Will we ever finally understand that though we are in Christ, we will still have to follow initially a downward trajectory in our corporeal state prior to being exalted in the resurrection state?

The joy of salvation that we claim does nothing to stop our physical existence – or else it would kill us, slowly or quickly, to claim Christ. However, it does bolster our spirit and enlighten our minds such that we know that despite the jolts, drops and rug pulling we’re not doomed to a pitiful end. We have assurance that there will be a cessation to the rude surprises of life. Heaven will be a marvelous escape from the torturous tumult of bearing sinful bodies, to the point that our existence will be so transformed as to be described as a no-more-tears Heaven (Revelation 21:1-4). Only then will the rude surprises stop!



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

February

2

0

1

5

BIG FORGIVENESS

I counsel many couples who teeter on the verge of divorce. *Sadly*, I counsel too many couples who teeter on the verge of divorce. I wish there were none; I wish all Christian marriages were solid, joyful, growing rather than withering. The toll that poor communication habits, angry outbursts, disrespect and improper handling of money, not counting a major transgression, takes is enough to bury a marriage.

A phenomenon which is very frustrating to me as a pastor is the decision of one partner to simply quit, and usually what stands behind this is a decision to not forgive. This is frustrating for two reasons; it took *so long* for the stubborn heart of the other partner to admit their fault and sincerely seek to change, and when they finally want to change, the other often *no longer feels like forgiving them!* They have been emotionally depleted, ready to "throw in the towel," on a marriage which they consider defeated.

This drives me crazy! What is the big prize won by a spouse who is so hard-headed that they refuse to change to better their marriage? Conversely, what is the major advantage of damning a marriage versus showing Big Forgiveness? Big Forgiveness is the decision to say, "I'm willing to stay in this to recover our marriage." It's swallowing hard and *on principle* giving the spouse the opportunity to really change, even though you are emotionally numb.

The most bizarre reaction often takes place rather than forgiveness; the "offended" spouse gets *mad* at the other for taking so long in repenting! Now, while this is perfectly *understandable*, this is not a *proper* reaction to someone who wants forgiveness. Usually, the offended one disbelieves the sincerity or capacity of the other to turn over a new leaf, so *they* don't put in a sincere effort to reverse the course of the marriage, then can console themselves after that "they tried." *But, really, they never forgave.*

This is a twisted scenario, pushing so hard for our spouse to change all those years, then when they have the big revelation, the massive guilt trip and struggle to reverse course, they're damned by the one who supposedly *wanted* the change. It all seems to come down to forgiving even though we don't feel like it. When did Jesus say we could opt out of forgiveness just because we are emotionally drained?

I recall seeing a survey of couples wherein those who divorced were typically still angry ten years later, but those who didn't were significantly happier five years later. I would suggest it all hinges on forgiveness. Sometimes it has to be Big Forgiveness, the kind we cannot summon, save for the power of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts through much prayer and support.

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder