

THOUGHTS

By Douglas W. Schroeder

SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

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ZOMBIE NATION

Turn away from the Lord and what do you get? Zombies! Who hasn't noticed the proliferation of junk programming and weird social gatherings related to zombies? It seems the "undead" are everywhere these days, and it matches the lack of applied spirituality (read "practicing faith") prevalent in North America.

Humans are created to be spiritual beings; we are wired for faith. So, if people deny God, which is trendy now, they will still exhibit spiritual activity. Much of this spiritual activity is ridiculous, as evidenced by the fascination with zombies.

Sadly, be on the lookout for even more foolishness from our culture. I say this because we have way too many deadbeat Christians. James 2 describes zombie faith this way, "... faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead (v.17)." He goes on to say that faith without deeds is useless (v.20). All of those purportedly "spiritual" people, who don't want to spend any energy on practicing faith? They are zombie Christians – dead. Their faith won't save them, just as the "faith" of the Israelites who rebelled against God in the desert wanderings didn't save them. There is a very stern warning in the book of Hebrews chapter 3 about the need to repent today of thin commitment to God (see Hebrews 3:7-19).

Make no mistake; if you or someone you know is dead in their practice of the faith, then they are dead inside, a "zombie Christian". They are in mortal danger and need to wake up (get active)!

INTERESTING JOKE

A Roman priest at the health club told me this joke today; a priest and a Rabbi go to watch professional wrestling. A Jewish man climbs into the ring, jumps around, flexes his muscles and goes to his corner to await the fight. A Catholic man climbs into the ring, jumps around, makes the sign of the cross on himself, and then goes to the corner to fight. The Rabbi turns to the priest, "That won't help him win, will it?" The priest replies, "Not unless he knows how to fight!"

Is the joke considered to be a dismissal of our reliance upon God? Or is it a reinforcement of what I stated above, that faith without actions is dead? I am going to make an illustration of this joke; I don't think it's a good joke for Christians because of the potential to cast doubt on faith. I think it can be offensive, depending upon the maturity and mood of the listener. As Christians we should spend some time assessing jokes to see whether they are spiritually benign or cancerous.

2015

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

November

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One point I would like to draw from this joke is that I feel far too much energy and thought is put into God supposedly being interested in our sports entertainment. I don't think we are supposed to waste our time on such trivial things as praying for sports teams to win for our gratification. I certainly do not pray for the outcome of sports entertainment, Further, I feel too many people get "bent out of shape," their emotions flying off the handle and temper flaring due to sports viewing. That is not a godly habit.

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Many years ago I found that I could be put into a grumpy mood just from watching a game! I decided that it was not healthy spiritually, nor fair to my wife and children to model an ill attitude, especially because of something as unimportant as the outcome of a game. I decided it was unacceptable to allow something to alter my mood negatively for no good reason. At about that time I read that the incident of spouse abuse climbs when NFL games are broadcast. The thought of people (typically men) disrespecting and even assaulting their spouses verbally or physically disgusted me. Consequently, I watch very little professional sports now, preferring to listen to music and read as alternatives. I don't recall the last time I was upset at the outcome of a sporting event.

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Some people actually pray for the outcomes of sports events because they have bet on it! Imagine asking God to bless you because you were a poor steward, spent it foolishly, and want it back with more added to it! Do you think that impresses God? I don't think so.

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"GUEST CHECK"

I recently published a small evangelism pamphlet entitled, "Guest Check." God gave me a fun idea to bring the Good News to servers at restaurants. The pamphlet speaks of our tip given out of generosity, and how God is a big tipper!

I encourage you to keep these in your car and when you dine out at a restaurant where you will leave a tip, put the tip with the pamphlet. Your server will not miss the pamphlet, because they will be looking for their tip!

Don't be stingy! Leave a good tip, as discussed in the pamphlet. Whenever I intentionally am generous for the sake of the Gospel I recall what Jesus said, "I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings (see parable in Luke 16:1-9). If we are shrewd (a good shrewdness for God's purposes), we will use the power of money to make our witness more appealing! We're not buying someone's salvation, merely "putting our money where our mouth is," so to speak.

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder