

THOUGHTS

BY DOUGLAS W. SCHROEDER
SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

STRENGTH AND HUMILITY

M

The old prison chaplain who often approaches me to chat, as he knows me as a brother in the Lord, is habitually trying to encourage and strengthen others at the health club. This morning, he had a particularly good phrase in store for me, to pray, "In my weakness, make me strong. In my strength, make me humble." Wow, what a great phrase to focus the mind! I began immediately to commit it to memory.

A

Though it is not Scripture, the phrase mirrors the discussion in 2 Corinthians 12, where Paul discusses his pedigree as a preacher of the Gospel. His ministry had been under assault by Judaizers who were seeking to discredit him. In response, he discusses at length his credentials before he concludes properly that they are nothing compared to the power of God in the Gospel. He recalls what appears to be an out-of-body experience he had previously but concludes that the Lord gave him a thorn in the flesh, an ailment, to keep him humble. He had an ecstatic experience but was taught, "My grace is sufficient for you" (see 2 Corinthians 11:16 – 12:10).

R

We all need to learn that. Our perceived strengths often are sinful weaknesses, so we should not be so boastful about them. The spiritual capacities we have could use strengthening. Why not pray for that to happen?

C

FROZEN PEOPLE

I remember a preacher once making a joke that the Lutherans, who tend to be relatively nonreactive in worship, are God's frozen people. Ouch! Lutherans do tend toward being severely self-conscious in worship. It's a big deal in our congregation for us to clap during a song or raise our hands while singing a doxology!

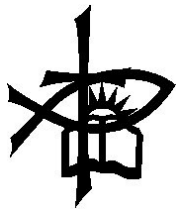
H

Thanks to the Alabama Supreme Court, we have one state that has gotten it right, recognizing personhood comes with human fertilization! Frozen or not, a fertilized human egg is a person. May this ruling be like a stick in the eyes of those who fight for the murder of babies and may the godly and good people of our country build upon the Alabama Supreme Court's ruling!

2024

As with any ruling on a touchy technological issue that involves sexuality and personhood, there is a catch. In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) clinics in Alabama have stopped their work, as technically to proceed and dispose of the unused embryos that are not transplanted into the woman's uterus would be murder. Continuing IVF would create a situation in which embryos with personhood would be killed. That has been the case all along, but now it is legally stated as such with legal implications. There likely will not be an easy solution to it. I suspect that exceptions will be given for IVF.

The Word
Today
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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.*

Humans can use technology to either bless or curse, heal or harm. It is about time that a state drew a line in the sand regarding fertilization and personhood! Hopefully, it will become a landmark for turning back the tide of national murder of the unborn!

March

Trump calls on Alabama to protect IVF treatment after bombshell ruling (yahoo.com)

NO SIGNAL

As I entered the church in the morning it was evident that the TVs in the sanctuary had been left on, for they each displayed in white letters "No Signal" on a black field. If not for the message, a person might not notice they were functioning.

Similarly, a person can be functioning but have no signal from the Spirit of God. The empowerment of the Holy Spirit is required to cause a human to acknowledge and worship Jesus, "Therefore I inform you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,'" except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3). People who do not acknowledge Christ have no signal from the Holy Spirit.

As beings that convey the message of the Gospel, humans have different complexity than a television when it comes to displaying the signal. TVs are complex pieces of electronics, but when they function, they are dumb; whatever signal is input will be output, shown. Humans have a far more circuitous process for handling and displaying signals. The Word of God is clear and we absorb it, however, due to the swirling motivations, fears, ignorant areas, and preconceptions, much less overt threats such as temptations and persecution, the signal often is not displayed well.

For consideration, ask yourself this question: Can others see the Holy Spirit's signal, the Word of God and my faith clearly enough to make out the message, the "show" that is my faith relationship with God? Further, could I do a bit of rewiring (reprioritizing) such that the signal of the Spirit of God is seen more clearly?

ULTRA-PROCESSED FOOD IS KILLING US

Not all food, just ultra-processed food. A study of more than 1 million people found as little as 10% of it in one's diet increases the risk of cardiac disease-related death (50%), anxiety (53%), obesity (55%), sleep disorders (41%), and type 2 diabetes (40%), among others! It comprises 60% of teens' diet! Is this why mental health disorders are spiraling out of control? Limit your intake of it and the temple of the Holy Spirit (you, believer) will be happier!

Ultra-processed foods linked to heart disease, diabetes, mental disorders, and early death, study finds (yahoo.com)

Blessings,
Douglas W. Schroeder