

THOUGHTS

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

SPEAKERS ON THE WORD TODAY

SACRIFICE

...Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 11:39

M

We have been called to die. Die to ourselves.

At first glance, this seems quite negative. In some ways it is. It is painful and it doesn't lend itself to fulfilling our basic drives and urges.

Yet, we are to die. Not only to ourselves, but also to the things of this world.

A

Jesus urged those who followed Him to "take up their cross" and follow. He reminded them it would not be easy. Some would even have enemies who would try to kill them. It would not be a soft and easy commitment. Even the birds and foxes would have more of a "home" than they would.

They followed. They couldn't help themselves—they were filled with love and a passion to serve the Lord.

R

Ridicule, rebuke, anger, courtrooms, beatings, not even death could stop them from following Christ.

Nothing can separate us from Christ, who loves us.

C

PLAN

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? Luke 14:28

When a ship misses the harbor, it is hardly ever due to the fact that the harbor moved.

Staying on course is important. That assumes there is a course—a plan.

Reaching the world for Christ requires planning. It doesn't just happen.

H

Preparation is needed. Training will help. Motivation and encouragement will also contribute. And, count on it, funds will be needed.

So, do some planning. Whom will you talk to today? How will you prepare for that contact? How will you proceed to "create" the opportunity? (Yes, God can even choose to let you create the opportunity.) How much will you plan to give for missions? When? Why not sooner? Why not more?

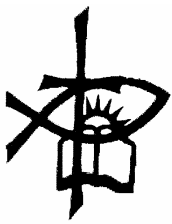
Plan. Plan. Plan. Then, stay flexible. Often God chooses to change our plans. That's fine, but don't use that as an excuse not to plan.

I am planning on serving you, Lord.

Sincerely,
Paul R. Schroeder

2014

Thoughts
Box 77
Greendale
WI
53129



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

March

GETTING BACK TO YOUR ROOTS

The article in the paper was about a woman who was raised Roman Catholic, but converted to Judaism. She spent inordinate amounts of time tracing her Jewish roots back 22 generations after her Sephardic (Spanish-Portuguese Jew) grandmother left her a hamsa (a "hand of God" trinket) and an earring with the Star of David. This somehow lends legitimacy to her defection from Christianity? I think not!

Trace the roots of Judaism *forward* and you get – Christianity! Rather than backtrack to the Jewish faith, this woman should have been educated that the Old Covenant under Moses, established at Mt. Sinai, has been *fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ!* There is no spiritual advantage to a person to regress to Judaism. That is not a sleight to Jews; it's a simple fact about the revelation of God in the New Testament. The *Church* founded by Christ was comprised of Jews initially, and then expanded to Gentiles. However, as surely as Christ rose from the tomb, the Faith of Abraham underwent metamorphosis to the Body of Christ, the Church. This is not opinion; it is the clear progression of faith as outlined in the Bible.

Consequently, this once Christian woman has now dumped the New Covenant in the blood of Christ for the Old Covenant of the blood of animals! I suspect she doesn't have a clue how much she has forfeited in the process; she has enriched her family tree at the expense of forfeiting her salvation! The reason the Old Covenant was retired was that Jesus has supplanted it entirely (for extended discussion of this read the New Testament book of Hebrews). There is no harm in excavating one's spiritual past, unless there is failure to see the point in time when God established the New Covenant in Christ!

"TO THE CROOKED YOU SHOW YOURSELF AS SHREWD"

That is what King David said in 2 Samuel 22:27. He also said, "To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure... (v.26-27a)." It seems that the perception that an individual has of God may be informed by how they relate to God!

Consider, if you had to interact with a person who was shifty, calling their motives or actions into question, how would you relate to them? Cautiously and with some buffer in terms of closeness, I would suspect. What if, conversely, an individual showed great integrity and consistency? You might be more inclined to trust and show a warmer side of your personality.

Considering God, why should he not show a more stern side of his personality to those who disdain him? I suspect that in the majority of instances (there are exceptions, like the Biblical man, Job) a person has an attitude that they've been wronged by God, or hard done by him, *there's a reason for it, and it likely lies in the way that person has been behaving toward God.* Perhaps our perception of God's character toward us could be improved if we did a bit reflection upon whether we are relating well toward Him!

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder