

THOUGHTS

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By the father/son team
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SPEAKERS ON THE WORD TODAY

S E P T E M B E R

RAIN

He bestows rain on the earth; he sends water upon the countryside. Job 5:10

Rain amazes me. There are lakes of water overhead in the clouds and rivers of water under the ground. Three-fourths of our planet is water.

Yet, when it rains, it comes slowly down in little drops. Amazing!

In most cases the rain is so gentle it doesn't even destroy the rose petals or bend the grass.

God loves water—obviously! So, it isn't strange that He would use water as a special element in baptism. To the water He adds the presence of His Word, the power of baptism.

We are to baptize. We are to go into the world and preach, teach, and baptize.

God does the converting. He uses His Word. He uses water. He even uses us.

As a "new child" of God I rejoice in my baptism!

GROWTH

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. John 15:8

Everything alive must grow to stay alive. That is true of birds, whales, bugs, fruit trees, giraffes, weeds, flowers and humans—everything alive.

When something alive stops growing, it is *dead*.

Even faith must grow to stay alive. That is why Scripture repeatedly urges us to *grow*. Through the process of repentance God changes our lives and enables us to become more mature and obedient.

The more we use God's Word the more we will grow in the Spirit. The more our faith grows, the greater will be our desire to obey.

The more we obey, the more witnessing we will do. It will become an automatic way of life. In fact, that is the best witness of all—a consistent lifestyle that proclaims by word and action—Jesus Christ is my Lord.

Help me grow, Lord.

Sincerely,
Paul R. Schroeder



*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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HEALTH CLUB FIASCO

I belong to a health club which charges the exorbitant fee of a mere ten dollars per month to be a member, allowing use of dozens of machines, free weights, a lap swimming pool, and a locker/shower facility. Evidently times are so hard, or the general public now so corrupt that recently changes had to be made in order to prevent sheer thievery of membership.

When people joined the club, they obtained a bar coded card to swipe at a card reader at the front desk. Initially it was conducted on an honor system; the user swiped their card to check in. As time went on the place became enormously populated, until it was found out that many were simply bypassing the card reader – because their trial membership had expired. They simply wanted to use the club indefinitely for free!

I'll opt for the explanation that times are not that rough; people are still buying cars, clothes, movies, dinners, etc. I believe this is a sign of a general attitude in contemporary North American culture which is spreading like spiritual Ebola. The sickness of Amoralism is flourishing, that is, the mindset that one simply does what they consider expedient, morals be damned.

You can thank generations of "religion-free" (really, only Christianity-free) public education, ever more degrading media (both news and entertainment), and public policy which rewards dishonesty in programs such as welfare, food stamps, promotion of gambling, etc. Essentially, the Christian worldview under which most citizens operated, and along with it the sense of pride not to lower one's self to such petty thievery, has dissipated. Now, hundreds of persons would think little of shafting even a business offering a good bargain.

The manager of the facility shared the even more incredible news that when confronted several people attempted to argue why they should be allowed to do so. Then, they went online and gave highly negative ratings to the facility! How's that for a small slice of the graft and corruption running amok in the hearts of people? Don't answer, because the answer is not good.

Increasingly Christians are going to stand out from the crowd! I am reminded of the admonitions in Ephesians; "... you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking," or "You were taught... to put off your old self... to be made new in the attitude of your minds," and "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children...(4:17, 22; 5:8)."

Paul described the worldly, "last days" (following the Ascension of Christ) culture in this manner, "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived (I Timothy 3:13)."

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder

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