

THOUGHTS

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By the father/son team
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SPEAKERS ON THE WORD TODAY

N O V E M B E R

TIME

You know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 1 Thessalonians 5:2

He has been gone a long time! The congregation at Thessalonica had assumed Christ would return during their lifetime.

Now, some of their loved ones were dying—and Christ hadn't returned yet. What did this mean for their departed family members? Were they saved?

No doubt a letter had been sent to Paul asking these questions. His answers to them are found in his first letter to the Thessalonians. He assured them their loved ones were merely "sleeping" and were certainly with God. He encouraged them not to mourn in a hopeless way—as the world did.

Time changes things, But, God is timeless. He is eternal. A day for Him is as a thousand years—and vice versa.

He hasn't been gone long. Just a moment. Soon He will break through time and come again.

Come, Lord Jesus.

JOY

So the woman hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy. Matthew 28:8

The women who went to the empty tomb that first Easter morning were afraid. But, as Matthew records in his Gospel, they also were filled with joy.

The world only thinks in terms of satisfaction and happiness. The circumstance dictates the mood.

But, the joy the women experienced was supernatural—God given. That joy brings with it a peace and contentment that is unknown to the world.

Paul referred to that joy when he told the Philippian congregation about joy in Christ. See Philippians chapter four. In verse seven of that chapter he refers to a peace that transcends all understanding.

True joy will become yours as you are patient with others (Philippians 4:5), commit everything to God in prayer (verse 6), and have your heart and mind fixed on Christ (verse 7).

I will rejoice in the Lord always.

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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SEEDS APPEAR TO GROW SLOWLY, AT FIRST

Jesus shared an illustration with his disciples about the phenomenal growth potential of the Kingdom of God. He compared his spiritual Kingdom to a mustard tree seed, which is miniscule, but grows into a great tree (Mark 4:30-32). Elsewhere, even faith as, "small as a mustard seed," "small" is considered to have potential to move mountains (Matthew 17:14-21).

20th century science revealed that a stunning amount of activity takes place in seeds, just as in every living thing with DNA. The seed which "dies" in the ground, that is, decomposing, is furiously generating another phase of its existence, one where it develops into a rapidly growing plant! The initial phases are unseen to the eye, but when the plant emerges the growth is spectacular.

It is no coincidence that the analogy of the seed is used to illustrate the growth of the Kingdom; just as the work of the seed producing a tree is small, unseen, so also the work of the Holy Spirit producing a Christian movement in a country begins "under the radar," too small for sociologists to detect. We Christians of this generation in North America have never seen it in our land.

But, we can observe it in China, where a repressive and consistently persecuting atheistic regime has unsuccessfully attempted to kill Christianity. While the nation seemed spiritually barren, the Gospel has been shared countless times among the population, causing a harvest of faith to spring up! A recent article from *The Economist* portrays growth in Christianity among the Chinese at 10% annually. A befuddled communist party is attempting to grasp the breadth of the surge of spirituality!

This didn't come out of nowhere; for decades evangelists, clandestine Bible smugglers, faithful, and sometimes martyred preachers, and multimedia ministries like *The Word Today* which broadcasts in Mandarin in China, have played a part in sowing the seed of the Gospel – and God has been growing the harvest! The Chinese people, so starved of personal spirituality, are embracing Jesus at such a rate that one estimate shows 250 million believers in China by 2030, making it the highest population of Christians in any country! Many Chinese see in the West the roots of Christianity in the development of social justice, civil society and rule of law. There are growing numbers of Chinese Christian doctors and academics.

Do not for one moment think Christianity is dead. It seems to be atrophying in North America, even as believers labor to keep our land alive spiritually for God. But, even if our country is moribund, China is surging ahead! The Church universal of Christ Jesus *will be built on the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it* (see *Matthew 16:13-20*).

Savor this news, as a global Christian, and thank God that you have lived to begin seeing the emergence of the "new plant," the Chinese Christian society!

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder

THE WORD TODAY reaching the world with GOD'S WORD