

THOUGHTS

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By the father/son team
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SPEAKERS ON THE WORD TODAY

DECEMBER

OOPS!

This has not happened before. But now, we are slipping. The third quarter of this year we received 57% fewer gifts than last year from our radio audience. This October it was 42% less than last year. And in November, it was 63% less than last year.

Fortunately the members of Our Shepherd are holding firm. In fact, last Sunday they once again voted to increase their giving for 2015. Let's all pull together! Can we end the year with a joyful offering? Let's hope and pray it will be a great gathering of offerings to praise the Lord!

A GIFT FOR YOU

Everyone on our mailing list will be receiving a beautiful Holy Land book for Christmas. I know you will love it!

NEXT YEAR

The years roll along—next year I will have been here at Our Shepherd for 49 years. I will be 82 years-old. So, Sylvia and I will be leaving Our Shepherd in September and moving to Florida.

LISTEN

If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. Mark 4:23

The human mind is able to comprehend and process speech at a rate of 500 words per minute. Most of us speak at around 150 words per minute. That gives us a lot of time to listen!

Those who have developed the art of listening always have friends. We enjoy people who care about us and are interested in our thoughts. It is important to listen with our heart—not just our head.

Try listening more. Your heart will become involved. You will learn a new level of love.

As we love more, our desire to witness will grow.

As we love more, our witness will be more acceptable and personal. Our love will be apparent and they, in turn, will want to listen to us.

Please, God, teach me to listen, especially to You.

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.*

December

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EMPTY NEST

My wife, Connie, and I are now “empty nesters,” which is a phrase intended on eliciting joy, but somehow is melancholy. Mothers certainly seem to grow melancholy when they confront the obvious, that a great portion of their purpose in life has been fulfilled – the kids have become adults, no longer needing a “mommy,” but rather a mother. It takes a bit of adjustment for a mother not to be continuously available to serve the children. Some become depressed, as they see their role as a huge part of their identity, and it’s evaporated.

It is a great time for couples to get acquainted again! It’s a joy to spend an uninterrupted evening chatting, or sitting at the dinner table with no schedule interruptions due to school activities, or persons en route to work. We had a good communication pattern as a couple prior to the arrival of children, and in a sense it seems we have picked up right where we left off. I’m not long into the empty nest time period, but so far, I recommend it!

THE NASTY PERSON IN THE FAMILY

At Christmas time it is not unusual for me to counsel members of our congregation who seek help for a seemingly intractable problem, dealing with a relative who ruins nearly every get-together. They know that as believers they should be peaceful, forgiving and kind. But, they also struggle with being codependents for people with serious issues. In the past they have spoken up, only to be shamed or attacked verbally.

In Titus’s letter from Paul the Apostle advice is given to, “Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him (v.10).” Granted, this is discussion about the fellowship of the church, but it is a principle which might be applied to situations of contention in extended families, to avoid the trouble maker! When it seems always heartache follows connection to such people, it may be a sign that they are not healthy mentally and spiritually. One should expect grief and pain when interacting with such people, whether relatives, co-workers or strangers. We need to assess whether we are spiritually strong and even tempered enough to make a good Christian witness by interacting with them.

The goal is not to harden our heart, for getting revenge hurts ourselves as well as them. We should continue to pray for them sincerely, and not just that God would “fix” them, but that we would be Christ-like toward them should we encounter them again. Is it possible to love the cantankerous people in our lives perfectly by avoiding them? No, but neither is it ideal to chafe under anger and resentment. My goal is to let peace prevail, and sometimes that means distance

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder