

THOUGHTS

By Douglas W. Schroeder

SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

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2020

Thoughts
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NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

Sanctification is the process of the Lord making us holy, growing us in godliness. The Holy Spirit brings the Good News of salvation to us and works faith in our mind, such that we recognize our sin, repent of it, and become disciples of Jesus. As we are matured, we resist sinful temptations and seek to live as new, or “born again” persons in faith.

So many put their efforts into New Year’s resolutions pertaining to the body, which is not a bad idea. How much more beneficial is a commitment to physical *and spiritual* improvement. How does one “improve” spiritually? We cannot remake ourselves; that is the domain of God, who credits us with the righteousness of Christ in place of our sin. But, we can give the Spirit of God a chance to whip us into shape in our spirit by making use of the Word of God – joining a Bible class, reading or listening to the Word of God daily, discussing our thoughts with God as we, “pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).”

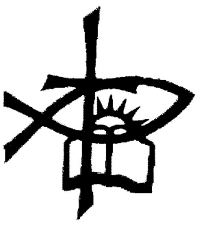
Martin Luther said we should revisit our Christian baptism every day. Why do that? It is a reminder that without Christ we are *lost*, and can quickly be lured by our sinful flesh to backslide into wickedness and unbelief. Being reminded of our baptism admonishes us to live a new life, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17)!” The old sinful self tries to reassert itself daily, and we must drown it/kill it daily. It is good to be aware continually of God’s grace, and that we are made new in Christ. Perhaps you have never thought about this continually, daily. Well, maybe 2020 can be different!

“YOU’RE NOT A SERIAL KILLER, RIGHT?”

That was the text sent by college student Sarah Butler on a social media app called Tagged, when she was solicited by Khalil Wheeler-Weaver to have sex for \$500. It turned out he was a serial killer, and Butler was victim number three.

One of the truths we taught our sons growing up was, “You can choose to sin, but you cannot choose the consequences.” Such things are not taught in public schools. Parents who do not ensure the family is in church and Bible class will likely not instill deep morals into their children. It is a contributor to how “good girl” college students prostitute themselves for \$500. Perhaps miss Butler was from a solid Christian family and her behavior was hidden to her family.

Perhaps; but the odds are much more likely she was not attempting to live as a new creation, a Christian. People who give in to sin can learn *quickly and decisively* that the consequences can be devastating, even fatal.



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In all sincerity, I hope that as she was dying Sarah Butler repented and reached out for Christ. The Lord is merciful, and forgiving. In addition, we should not wish for Wheeler-Weaver to go to Hell. We should wish for him to receive the full punishment of man's law, and for his salvation from damnation. That's right; we should pray that he be turned, come to repentance and become a Christian. That would be a victory for Heaven, because God desires people to repent and be saved, rather than have to send them to Hell. It is not right to hope for the salvation only of victims, as we are all sinners and stand condemned if not for Christ's atonement.

LIKE THE FIVE FOOLISH VIRGINS

In a modern revisiting of the famous parable from Jesus, English golfer Eddie Pepperell was disqualified from the Turkish Airlines Open when he *ran out of golf balls*. He encountered a particularly challenging water hole, and in an attempt to conquer it hit five (some accounts say four) balls into the water. Having no more to continue, he was DQ'd for failure to complete a hole.

The applications to finishing the race in Christ, humility, etc. are many.

HOPE FOR ADDICTS (SOMEDAY)

A Newsweek article, "Scientists Find Compulsive Drinking-Linked Brain Circuit in Mice, Hope It Could One Day Be Used to Treat Alcoholism," indicates that overdrinking in mice was controlled by manipulating a part of the brain called the cortical-brainstem circuit. By activating the pathway researchers were able to reduce consumption of alcohol in the mice. The hope is that someday these findings may result in means to assist persons wishing to escape overdrinking. I hope that it may lead to assistance for all addicts!

I believe that through spiritual battle with addiction some people can overcome the physiological battle and achieve long-term control. However, not all Christians are able to do so, and additional assistance from the medical community is welcome.

A tangential thought I had was, why not discover a means to reduce incidents of homosexuality, transgender, and other forms of sexual illness? I have long held that if there is a genetic connection to such behavior, also with alcoholism, we should be seeking to genetically eliminate them rather than promoting them. God willing the day will come when no one should have to suffer such problems.

That LGBTQ lifestyle is unhealthy is underscored by a recent article that noted such people in the southern states suffer a 54% depression rate! Transgender people think about suicide twice as much as heterosexuals. Lack of access to medical help is being blamed, but I suspect that the lifestyle leads to such mental health disorders. That likely will not be studied, and most likely resistance against genetic cures for such conditions would be strong. But what a blessing it would be to these individuals and culturally if dysfunctionality such as this could be eliminated over time!

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder