

THOUGHTS

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SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

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LIVING IN THE REAL UNIVERSE

The Metaverse is all the rage recently. It is novel, supposedly will be quite exciting, and promises to open new vistas for humans. It's computers. It's an escape from reality by entering an immersive, sensory overload fake reality. I wonder how well humans will do when spending more time escaping the real world for a fake one? All other healthy forms of escape do not necessitate isolation of the senses from the real world. If video gaming has been a scourge of addiction, what will it be like with VR and the Metaverse? Christian, go very slow with the adoption of such things and guard your children! They will be the supposed guinea pigs for that technology. We have seen how social media conglomerates have cared little about how teens are adversely affected by social media. Do you think they will care more about you and your children's health over profits? Whenever the world goes nuts about something, I step back and give it a thorough assessment as seen through the lens of faith. Often, once analyzed, it's not worth participating, at least not until it is modified (curtailed).

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Western culture no longer is an aid to faith but has begun to militate against faith. One of the enemies (I am thinking here of Satan) tactics is to distract Christians, to get them so wrapped up in the world's activities that they have no time (or so they say) for serious spiritual pursuits - no time for church, no time for Bible study, and nearly nil time for prayer. Busy, busy, busy...and rushing past the Kingdom. You don't want to be on the Highway to Hell (see Matthew 7:13-14). The narrow context of the analogy of the broad road to destruction versus the narrow path to life is that Christ is the narrow passage to eternal life and no other means. I apply the passage widely here, reminding that a plethora of even neutral activities as a substitute for being a disciple (trainee, apprentice) under Christ is unable to save us.

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ACTUAL FORGIVENESS

A conversation with a member of the church has reminded me to remind you that God's forgiveness is actual, not hypothetical. Perhaps because we don't kill animals any longer it doesn't seem as real, as visceral.

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You may be recoiling, asking yourself what I mean by talking about killing animals? Recall that in the Old Testament, forgiveness involved the sacrifice of animals. It wasn't the life of the animal that brought forgiveness; the animal was a stand-in, a "scapegoat" if you will, for the human. As He is a holy and perfect God, His wrath must be appeased, just as a judge who is not corrupted will seek to execute the dictates of the law. Every time an Israelite brought a sin offering of an animal to be executed, it was a reminder that it should have been them suffering the judgment of death.



*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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Don't cry for the animals; we are not Darwinists! Sin and death are brutal, and we had best remember that. The animals were not wasted. The meat portions were consumed by the Levites, one of the 12 tribes of Israel. The difference between what was done then and now is that the death of the animal symbolized the consequences that should fall upon the sinner. The guilt of sin can be very heavy and cause us to despair of being forgiven. Especially when the consequences of sin continue in life long after the misdeed, we feel the sting from the reminder of our offense against God. If things are not going well for us, we can wonder if God has really forgiven us.

God's forgiveness in Christ is actual, not hypothetical. Christ's suffering brings actual atonement and reconciliation with the Father. Our baptism in the name of Jesus and the giving of the Spirit to us brings us into the family of God actually, not theoretically. Jesus told people, "Your sins are forgiven (see Luke 5:17-26)," and we should believe that we are forgiven by Christ with the same certainty. The redeemed in Heaven have their sins washed away through the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:9-17). When He absolves, forgives (in the original language it means to cover or hide) it means He will not hold it against us. We may fail our Lord at times, but His love will not fail us. Authentic contrition over sin calls forth His clemency absolutely!

WHAT BLESSINGS ARE YOU MISSING? (TO OUR NOMINAL FRIENDS)

God has loving intent toward His people, and He delights in spreading His gifts abroad. But it seems not every Christian wants them. Reassurance and hope come from worshiping God in spirit and truth, so you would think Christians might be eager to worship nearly without fail. Wisdom is a gift appropriated by the Spirit of God as one studies (learns and models) the Word, the Bible. I'm surprised more Christians do not want to inculcate divine wisdom. Stewardship of God's material blessings comes through giving sacrificially to the spreading of the Gospel and wise management of the remainder. You wouldn't know it by watching what a lot of claimed believers do. When we invest our lives in the activities and behaviors of faith, we get a different outcome in life, not the least of which is calmness and assurance when faced with grave illness or death.

You would think more people who say they are Christian would want those things. Long term, what is all the rushing about for sports going to get you? Not much. How about the inordinate hours spent numbly on the internet? Poor return on investment of time. Do you want purpose? Do you want things to go better? Do you want the life you wish for? How about getting serious and doing what Christians do? You don't have any idea of the blessings the Father wishes to bring to you, much less the rock-solid assurance of salvation until you get with the program. Is all your life going to be an excuse why you didn't get with it? It's your choice, but why choose to miss out?

Blessings,
Douglas W. Schroeder