

Taken for Granted

One afternoon a man came home from work to find total mayhem in his house. His three children were outside, still in their pajamas, playing in the mud, with empty food boxes and wrappers strewn all around the front yard. The door of his wife's car was open, as was the front door to the house. Proceeding into the entry, he found an even bigger mess. A lamp had been knocked over, and the throw rug was wadded against one wall. In the front room the TV was loudly blaring a cartoon channel, and the family room was strewn with toys and various items of clothing. In the kitchen, dishes filled the sink, breakfast food was spilled on the counter, dog food was spilled on the floor, a broken glass lay under the table, and a small pile of sand was spread by the back door.

He quickly headed up the stairs, stepping over toys and piles of clothes, looking for his wife. He was worried she may be ill, or that something serious had happened. He found her lounging in the bedroom, still curled in the bed in her pajamas, reading a novel. She looked up at him, smiled, and asked how his day went.

He looked at her bewildered and asked, "What happened here today?" She again smiled and answered, "You know every day when you come home from work and ask me what in the world I did today?" "Yes" was his incredulous reply. She answered, "Well, today I didn't do it."

We often take for granted those things that others do for us, and it sometimes takes their absence for us to appreciate what they do. Now think... what if God took the day off? Psalm 145:1-3 - "I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable." Acts 17:28 - "For in Him we live and move and have our being..."

"Put Him Down Right There"

A pioneer preacher was called to administer the funeral over the remains of a man who had always refused to come to church. As the pallbearers neared the door of the little church house, the old preacher stood in the doorway and beckoned to them saying, "Gentlemen, I have never taken an undue advantage of any living person, and I am not going to begin by imposing on the dead. If this man were living he would not enter this building. Put him down right there and let's respect him enough to finish his earthly pilgrimage as he lived it."

The service was conducted from the door while the remains rested upon the lawn of the church building. Perhaps the preacher was a bit "hard," but certainly he had a point.

God is going to fill heaven. You decide in the here and now whether you will be numbered among those chosen to enter there (Matt. 22:2-10).

It's Not Fair!

John Selden wrote an essay on Equity and Fairness in his book Table Talk in 1645: "Equity is a roguish thing. For Law we have a measure, know what to trust to; Equity is according to the conscience of him that is Chancellor, and as that is larger or narrower, so is Equity. 'Tis all one as if they should make the standard for the measure we call a 'foot' a Chancellor's foot; what an uncertain measure would this be! One Chancellor has a long foot, another a short foot, a third an indifferent foot. 'Tis the same thing in the Chancellor's conscience."

Fairness and equity are often defined by the times. 300 years ago, slavery was considered fair. Today in Africa, Muslims are enslaving Christians, and no one in the world

considers this fair except African Muslims. It changed. Who is to say that in another 300 years slavery might be accepted again among the ungodly. It happened among the children of Israel.

What our culture, leaders, and judges consider fair today has changed over the years, not always for the better. Equal pay for equal work is fair. Yet, victims of crime suffer, while criminals are pampered. That's unfair. And it will change again in another 50 years. Man's conscience is always changing to conform to evolving philosophical fashions. It is comforting to know that the true standard, by which all other measures of fairness are judged, remains the same. "The word of God that lives and abides forever" (1Peter 1:23).

Nor does the Chancellor, the Judge, change His conscience with the times. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). We tend to overlook a few things in our own lives. He will judge us carefully. Some judge themselves too harshly. He will judge with mercy. We judge ourselves by our culture's standards of fairness and ethics. He will judge us by the eternal standard of fairness.

My admonition is to get acquainted with and practice what is written in the eternal standard of fairness and right (John 12:47-50). Do not judge God's word by what you think is fair and right. Judge yourself by what God has said is fair and right.

Worried!

We often worry about things which are unlikely to occur. There is a story told of a man standing on a crowded bus. A young man standing next to him asked, "What time is it, sir?" The man refused to reply. The young man moved on. The silent man's friend, sensing something was wrong, asked, "Why were you so discourteous to the young man asking for the time?"

He answered, "If I had given him the time of day, next he would want to know where I am going, and then we would talk about our interests, and if we did that, he would invite himself to my house for dinner, and if he came, he would meet my daughter, and if he met her, they would both fall in love, and I don't want my daughter marrying someone who can't afford a watch."

Let's not worry about something that might happen in the future. We have enough on our plate in the present without adding tomorrow's fears. (Matt. 6:31-34; Phil. 4:6-7)

I can think of only one kind of person who needs to fear tomorrow: the one who is unprepared to meet God (Heb. 10:26-27). May your sleep be troubled, your meals unsatisfying, and your quiet moments fretful until you obey the Gospel of Christ. Your soul is too precious to treat casually.