

The Fate of Sand Castles

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2Cor. 4:16-18).

You've watched it, too. I know I'm not the first or only person who has seen it. But there is a lesson in it that we both may have overlooked. There are some children on a beach. They're playing and giggling -- building sand castles all the while. They seem so intent on the project. You get amused at how meticulous and careful they are with crumbly corners and towers. The looks on their faces as they screw their mouths around and stick out their tongues make you smile. Their resolute concentration on the task is priceless.

Then a big wave begins building and starts toward shore. But the kids don't panic. Instead, they do the strangest thing. They jump to their feet, scream with delight, and watch the torrent of water wash away their creations. There is no panic. No sadness. No bitterness. Even children know the inevitable end of sand castles. They are neither surprised nor angry about what has happened.

You and I should be so wise. The stuff of this world is about as lasting and durable as children's sand castles on the beach. Yet we grownups can get so caught up in it, defensive of it, and depressed over the loss of it. God didn't create you to be famous, get rich, live in the biggest house, or drive the fanciest car. He created you for his glory. He put you in the world to love people and do holy things. Your destiny is not bound up in physical things, but spiritual. So living to be a hundred is far less important than living well -- even if for a short time. Beautifying your body is far less urgent than purifying your soul.

Children know that their sand castles are brief joys destined to disappear with an incoming tide. So they don't fret as the waves approach. They watch their creations get swept away without shedding tears. Again, we should be so wise. Everything about this life is fleeting and perishable. The incoming wave of human mortality is going to sweep it all away. Like sand castles, nothing done for the sake of this world can last. Only what we do for eternity will survive.

What would the loss of your job or business do to you? What if your house were lost to fire or storm? What if a strange pain sent you to your physician and led to the discovery that you have only a few weeks to live? These things really do happen to people, you know. We are all as vulnerable as sand castles. Life is God's gift. Revel in every good thing. But as you enjoy your creations in the sand, just remember not to get overly attached to them.

Narrow Bridge

Driving down a country road, I came to a very narrow bridge. In front of the bridge, a sign was posted: "Yield." Seeing no oncoming cars, I continued across the bridge and to my destination. On my way back, I came to the same one-lane bridge, now from the other direction. To my surprise, I saw another "Yield" sign posted. Curious, I thought. I'm sure there was one positioned on the other side. When I reached the other side of the bridge, I looked back. Sure enough, yield signs had been placed at both ends of the bridge. Drivers from both directions were requested to give the other the right-of-way. It was a reasonable and gracious way of preventing a head-on collision.

When the Bible commands Christians to "be subject to one another" (Eph. 5:21), it is simply a reasonable and gracious command to let the other have the right-of-way and avoid interpersonal head-on collisions.

“Submitting to one another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:21). “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble” (1Peter 5:5). (Stephen P. Beck)

Living in a World

“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26). We are living in a world in which we have tremendously increased our information without having appreciably increased our wisdom. We are living in a world in which we have fantastically multiplied our riches without having fully learned to use those riches wisely. We have developed our natural resources without having developed correspondingly greater resources of the spirit.” (Robert E. Wilson)

“Amen Let Her Walk”

There was once a country preacher who was trying to get the congregation to respond generously to the Lord's work. He said, “This church is going to get up and walk.” Came a response from the amen corner, “Amen, let her walk.”

The preacher continued, “This church is going to get up and run.” The reply was heard, “Amen, let her run.” Then the preacher went further, “This church is going to get up and fly.” To which was heard, “Amen, let her fly!”

But then the preacher said, “If this church is going to fly, it's going to need money and lots of help from you.” Weakly came the reply, “Amen, let her walk, let her walk.”

Parable of an Ignorant Church

A preacher once entered a Bible Class while it was still in progress. He asked the children a question: “Who made the walls of Jericho fall?” One little boy piped up, “I sure didn't do it.” The preacher turned to the teacher and asked, “What do you have to say on behalf of this student?” The teacher said, “This boy is honest and I believe him. I don't think he did it.”

Leaving the room in bewilderment, the preacher encountered one of the deacons and explained what had happened. The deacon said. “I have known the boy for some time and I am convinced he would never do such a thing.” By this time the preacher was heartsick and reported to the elders. They said, “We see no point in disturbing the congregation over this matter. Let's just pay the bill for any damage to the walls and charge it to maintenance.”

A Moments Wisdom

- If you set out to keep the Word of God, it will also keep you.
- Patience is the ability to count down before blasting off.
- The way to get anywhere is to start from where you are.
- No one finds life worth living; he must make it worth living.
- Christ established His church to save sinners, not to serve dinners.
- Nothing sets a person so far out of the devil's reach as humility.
- Too much intelligence and too little wisdom causes too much trouble.
- Some people are like blotters: they soak up everything but get it backwards.
- Nothing is easy to the unwilling.
- Let your conscience be your guide. Let God be your conscience's guide.
- Life is like a ladder, every step we take is either up or down.