

The Applause Meant Nothing

A young man had studied under a world-renowned master musician. Eventually the time came for the student's first recital. Following each selection, despite the cheers of the crowd, the performer seemed dissatisfied. Even after the last number, with the shouts louder than ever, the talented violinist stood watching an old man in the balcony. Finally, the elderly one smiled and nodded in approval. Immediately, the young man relaxed and beamed with happiness. You see, the man in the balcony was his teacher, and thus the applause of the crowd had meant nothing to him until he had first won the hearty approval of his master.

Let us diligently seek the hearty approval of our Master, and not be overly concerned about the approval of men. "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" (John 13:13). "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord" (Matt. 10:25).

Never Learned to Feed Themselves

The story is told of a small fishing village where, for many years, a flock of sea gulls fed on the scraps the fishermen left. All was fine and good for the sea gulls until eventually the fishing became poor, and the villagers moved down the coast to a location where fish were more plentiful. The sea gulls did not follow the fishermen and, because they had lived off the scraps of the fishermen and never learned to feed themselves, the entire flock of birds died.

Believers who feed only on what others teach them are like those foolish sea gulls. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2Tim. 2:15).

How To Protect Your Mind

"In describing one of the new movies of the day, a critic wrote, 'The plot moves rapidly down the sewer.' It would not be so damaging to those who watch such trash if the mind could be equipped, like your kitchen sink, with a garbage disposal. Then, you could flush away all the filth and be done with it, but the mind does not work that way. It stores up impressions for a lifetime. The only way to protect the mind is to expose it to only the BEST!"

Certainly, if one is so inclined, there is mountain of garbage he can focus his mind on today, not only by means of television and the movies, but through books, magazines, and the Internet. Let us, in obedience to Christ, think on the holy, righteous, spiritual things. "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

We Need Each Other

The giant Sequoia trees of California tower as much as 300 feet above the ground. Strangely, these giants have unusually shallow root systems that reach out in all directions to capture the greatest amount of surface moisture. One will not find a giant Sequoia tree standing alone because high winds would quickly uproot it. Instead, they always grow in clusters. Their intertwining roots provide support for one another against the storms. Let us, as members of the body of Christ, support and sustain one another so that we can weather the storms of life.

"And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary... But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part

which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually" (1Cor. 12:21-22, 23-27).

No Faith in the Future

Years ago, a hydroelectric dam was to be built across a valley in Maine. The people in the town were to be relocated, and the town would be submerged. During the interim time between making the final decision and actually evacuating the people, the town, which had once been well-kept, fell into disrepair. The townspeople saw no reason for maintain their town. One resident said, "Where there is no faith in the future, there is no work in the present." We must have some hope for the future. With Jesus Christ, we can." (Bits & Pieces, Feb. 6, 1992, p.15)

The Bible Humbles

The Bible humbles or hardens the human heart. If we hear it and do not do what it says, we deceive ourselves. It is not like Homer or Shakespeare. We do not go away the same after we have heard the word of God. We have to do something about its message, for we cannot leave it alone. We may think we have done nothing about it, but it will do something to us. (Vance Havner, 1901-1986)

Listening In

"He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends" (Prov. 17:9). "Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters" (Rom. 1:29-30).

The word "eaves" is defined as "1. the lower border of a roof that overhangs the wall; 2. A projection edge (as of a hill)." (Webster) The term "eaves-dropping" means literally, "one standing under the drip from the eaves; i.e., to listen secretly to what is said in private" (Webster).

It is easy to picture in our minds an "eaves-dropper" as he stands outside of a house with an open window trying to hear what is being said inside the house. People are truly "full of deceit whisperings, and backbitings" when they listen secretly to what others say so that they can repeat it to someone else. Let us never meddle in other people matters, but seek and promote love at all times.

Here I Sit

--Just sitting in a church building won't make one a Christian, anymore than sitting in a henhouse will make one a chicken.

--On why the Texas cowboy stands in church: "When Ah sit down, Ah sit loose. When Ah sit loose, Ah relax. When Ah relax, Ah fall asleep. Ah'm betta off standin."

--Ever notice that the same folks who want fifty yard line seats at football games and front row seats at the theater, want the back seats in church?

--Ever notice that some folks will sit for four hours in the blistering sun to watch a baseball game, but can't sit for more than one hour in an air-conditioned building to worship God?

--Does it seem that some folks are more concerned over where they sit in church than over why they are in church? (via The Exhorter)