

Fidel Castro and Me

By Kent Heaton

The leader of the Republic of Cuba died November 25 at the age of 90. Fidel Castro was a larger than life story for all those growing up in Florida during the late 50's and early 60's. His exploits on the island just 90 miles south of Florida brought a lot of fears and worries to the western hemisphere. Taking control of the nation in 1959, Castro led Cuba into a pro-communist state with fearful consequences. His tenure of rule was characterized by ruthless oppression over the nation, executing thousands who opposed him, and imprisoning tens of thousands. His policies created a repressive society ruled by secret police and death squads. He will be remembered in history as a tyrant who ruled his nation with an iron fist oppressing the people into submission. He will not be absolved of his legacy. What happened November 25 is what makes Fidel Castro exactly like every person on the face of the earth: he died.

The world is filled with despots who bring fear and death. In our time, people remember the days of Adolph Hitler, Hirohito, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Muammar Gaddafi, Saddam Hussein, and Osama bin Laden to name a few. These were leaders who brought terror to the world – for a time. Among a list of many others they share the same fate as all men with the reality that death waits for all. Fidel Castro falls in line with every man when on November 25 he crossed the river of death and became a believer in the Almighty Lord God. He is not standing on top of an armored tank spouting communist rhetoric or denouncing brutally those who believe in God. His life is now in the hands of the One who created him and he is bowing before something bigger than he dreamed could be. A man who was larger in life is now equalized in the darkness of death as one who is exactly like all those he oppressively ruled over.

It matters not what history says of Castro or whether he is remembered as a great leader or dictator. At this moment, the only thing on the mind of Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz is God. And less we think there is a justice in this, let us remember we will all be standing before the judgment seat of God thinking about one thing. It is appointed for all men to die and we share the common place at the judgment seat of the Lord. Kings will stand next to peasants. Tyrants will share the same destruction as those they oppressed. Righteous and unrighteous people from all nations and every generation of Adam will assemble in the hall of judgment to receive the things done in the body. People die every day. Some die with notoriety, most die unnoticed in the annals of man. Death is the common denominator that reminds man we all come from Adam. What separates the few from the many is Jesus Christ. Do not rejoice in the death of another. His death will not matter in your death. What will be of utmost importance is your obedience to the will of God.

“Men shun the thought of death as sad, but death will only be sad to those who have not thought of it. It must come sooner or later, and then he who has refused to seek the truth in life will be forced to face it in death.” (Francois Fenelon, Spiritual Letters of, c. 1700) “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27).

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).

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).

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).

A One-in-Five Chance of Dying

One out of five Americans now suffers from a sexually transmitted disease. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, 56 million people in the United States are infected with a sexually transmitted disease, and more than half of those sufferers have sexual diseases that are incurable. These awesome statistics mean that young women and men have a one out of five chance of getting a spouse (or significant other) who is infected. Those are pretty depressing odds. You wouldn't ride in an airplane if you had a one-in-five chance of crashing. Conclusion? "Safe sex" isn't safe; it's high-risk. "Free sex" isn't free; it's very costly. The only safe sex is chastity until marriage and fidelity afterward. (From Phyllis Schlafly)

Not only does one face the danger of being infected by some dreadful disease when he commits fornication, but he sins against Almighty God. When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, he responded, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). God Himself makes the rules and we would be exceedingly wise to abide by them. "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1Cor. 6:18).

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).

A Moments Wisdom

- All television is educational. The question is: What is it teaching?
- The one thing worse than a quitter is the person who is afraid to begin.
- Listening is a kindness everyone can show.
- Lord, when we are wrong, make us willing to change. And when we are right, make us easy to live with.