

THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS MESSENGER

July 5, 2009

What A Waste

By Greg Litmer

Someone that I once knew died a couple of weeks ago. A homeless man found dead behind the K-Mart in Newport, Kentucky. He had built a fire to warm himself and became so intoxicated that he fell into the fire and died. As it turned out, I knew him. He actually took over an apartment that I had many, many years ago. We broke bread together and celebrated a few holidays together, but I had not seen or talked to him in over fifteen years. There is a natural tendency to look at his end, and the life leading up to it, and say, "What a waste!" I suppose that is true. It was a waste, but he was a very sick man, and we can at least look at what happened and know that there was a physiological reason for it. Thankfully, God is the Judge.

In the weeks that have gone by since his death, I have thought about it quite a bit. I have thought about him all alone, with nothing really but the clothes on his back, building a fire in a vacant lot behind a K-Mart to try to knock off the chill and spending what little money he had on alcohol. I have thought about all those folks who read about his death in the newspaper as they sat at the breakfast table drinking coffee and munching toast who said to themselves, "What a waste!" And I thought about Paul's words in Romans 2:21, where he wrote, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" Whether a person is rich or poor, lives in a mansion or shack, dies in a private hospital room receiving the very best of care or behind a K-Mart all alone, if he lived his life without God by choice, his life was a waste. All the accumulated wealth of a life spent without God doesn't change that truth one bit.

Ecclesiastes is a fascinating book that chronicles Solomon's search for meaning and fulfillment in life. He was in a position to deny himself nothing in his quest, including tremendous wealth, great learning, and physical pleasures. Consider chapter 2:1-11 where Solomon wrote:

"I said in mine heart, go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, it is mad: and of mirth, what doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. I made great works; I builded me houses; I planted my vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all who were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasures of kings and of the provinces: I got me men signers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in

Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor: and this was my portion of all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

At first glance this almost appears to be a statement of utter despair. Solomon knew wealth like few men know it. He knew power to a degree that most men never know. He was in a position to partake of every pleasure he wanted. From a worldly standpoint, he had it all! But when it was said and done, he said it was all useless and without meaning. If Ecclesiastes stopped there, my inclination would be to say what a depressing and discouraging book. However, Solomon didn't stop there.

What he taught us is that the life that is truly wasted and without meaning, is the life that is lived without obedience to God. All of the things upon which man places so much importance are vain and useless if we choose to leave God out of the picture. I think it is even worse when we deceive ourselves by giving God just a little part of our lives in order to appease our conscience and make ourselves feel good.

When it was all said and done, Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, :Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or bad, or whether it be evil." The life that can be truly characterized by the statement, "What a waste!" is the life lived without being a faithful Christian.

In Need of Prayers	General Information
<p>Remember Sister Kimberlin.</p> <p>Sharon Tirey's treatments are making her quite ill.</p> <p>Keep Will Markem in mind.</p> <p>Remember Kristy Kidd in her pregnancy.</p> <p>Remember Kristen Osterling's unborn baby.</p> <p>Remember David Blakeman and his health concerns.</p> <p>Rachel Knollman will be traveling to Ann Arbor for her test and possible treatment this week .</p> <p>Ruben Amador's daughter, Pamela Clayton, is struggling mightily with colon cancer. It appears that they will pursue some experimental treatments.</p>	<p>Remember that the prayer service will be held Friday, July 10 (2nd Friday of the month) at 7:30 p.m. There is a box in the back in which you may leave your prayer requests.</p> <p>The men's meeting will take place next Sunday afternoon at 4. Please make your plans to attend.</p> <p>Remember the Bible Summer Series which will be conducted by Casey Head begins July 19 and will run through the 24. Please make your plans now to attend and to have your children attend as well.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">University Height Church of Christ 445 Columbia Avenue Lexington, Ky 40508 859-255-6257</p>

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