

Secret Things

Recently, in the high school class, we were studying Luke's account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Luke 19:28-34 details that Jesus sent two disciples to go find a colt that was tied in which nobody had ever sat upon before. The disciples were to find this colt and bring it back to Jesus. The colt would be used for Jesus to ride upon into Jerusalem.

It's interesting that Jesus told these two disciples that if anyone were to ask what they were doing with the colt, they were to respond, *"The Lord has need of it."* This did in fact happen, as they were untying the colt, the owners approached and asked what they were doing. Several questions come to mind when reading this passage. Who were the owners of the colt? Surely there was some dialogue there between themselves and Jesus' disciples. Perhaps they were believers in Jesus and didn't ask any further questions and being told the Lord needed their colt. Have you ever thought about whether Jesus returned the colt to them? The Bible details that Jesus was received like a war hero returning from battle. He rode into Jerusalem on this colt while his disciples were spreading articles of clothing on the road along with palm branches, but there's no details provided about whether the colt was returned to the owners or not.

The Bible does not record every historical detail, and for some, that's very troubling. However, the fact remains that the purpose of God's Word is not to satisfy all our curiosities. In fact, it wouldn't be practical for us to have every historical detail recorded. The apostle John put it this way, *"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."* (John 21:25 NASB)

Although some unanswered questions are intriguing to us, we should spend more time focusing on what *has* been revealed to us rather than what has not. Moses said, *"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."* (Deuteronomy 29:29 NASB) We need to accept that there are some 'secret things' that continue to belong to God. He has revealed many things to us and has chosen to not reveal many other things. So, rather than insisting that we have the answer to every question we can imagine, we need to accept that *"...His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness..."* (2 Peter 1:3 NASB). Rather than focusing on the unknown, we can have peace in our lives because the God who knows all, has given us exactly what we need to live godly lives.

- by Josh McCord

Positive Preaching

I like positive preaching. I like to hear it. I like to do it. It is like watching the sunshine glisten on the dewy leaves of the apple tree by my window, fresh from a springtime shower. I appreciate the knowledge that the sunshine and the rain will make the tree grow, bloom and bring the delicious ripened fruit. I know that it takes positive preaching to make the Christian grow in grace and knowledge, blossom in faith and fervor, and bear the delightful fruit of a mature working Christian.

Only one year, however, made me see that it takes more than sunshine and rain to produce a bountiful harvest of golden apples from the tree. I saw that the tree needed annual pruning. It needed spraying or some other natural preventive of disease and contamination of the fruit. Otherwise, a pretty little moth would find a lodging place for its egg in the bloom and every apple would be wormy and ruined.

It took no longer for me to learn that positive preaching is not enough to produce the good fruits of Christians. It takes pruning, cutting away the superfluous growth, the weak limbs, the diseased branches, and the crossed branches which would abrade other good ones. This is after the order of the Lord's parable of the vine and the branches (John 15:1-8).

Some negative preaching and work has to be done to clear the church of such branches; including "strife, jealousy, wrath, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults" (2 Corinthians 12:20).

- by Robert Welch

Should We Let The Kids "Decide For Themselves"?

Occasionally we hear parents who say that they don't want to force religion on their children. These misguided folks think they are doing their kids a favor by letting them "decide for themselves". They're afraid that there will be some resentment in the children later if religion has been "crammed down their throats."

If we may be absolutely blunt in response, that is one of the most ridiculous ideas anyone ever suggested! We force many things on our children. We insist that they bathe, brush their teeth, change their clothes, etc. We "cram" education down their throats by making them attend school regularly. We demand that they do their homework. We force them to eat good food, get adequate rest, and do other things that are important to their health and development. We do all of this because we know it is in their best interest. And, we do it even when the kids don't like it. Why is it that this common sense approach is neglected by parents who are determined to "let the kids decide for themselves" when it comes to religion?

Dr. James Dobson once wrote: "There is a critical period when certain kinds of instruction are easier in the life of children. There is a brief period during childhood when youngsters are vulnerable to religious training. Their concepts of right and wrong are formulated during this time, and their view of God begins to solidify. The opportunity of that period must be seized when it is available. The absence or misapplication of instruction through that prime-time period may place a severe limitation on the depth of the child's later devotion to God. When parents withhold indoctrination from their small children, allowing them to "decide for themselves," the adults are almost guaranteeing that their youngsters will "decide" in the negative."

God's word has always taught us the truth on this subject: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

- by Greg Gwin