

When the Undertaker Died

I was still pretty young when one of the funeral directors in my home town died. To a young mind, that seemed so strange. He was always supposed to be there when other people died. Now, his family needed the services of a funeral director.

Have you ever wondered who cuts your barber's hair? To whom does your doctor go when he gets sick? Who puts the fillings in the teeth of your dentist (in case he doesn't follow the advice he gives you and gets a toothache)?

Those who usually serve need, at times, to be served. This is just as true in the church as it is in the world. Remember that Paul admonishes us, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

What about the person you usually rely on for support? Do you try to observe moments when you can serve and support him or her? There are those times when they need you, you know. All of us, including the spiritually strong, need somebody to talk with, cry with, laugh with - somebody who has no particular talent other than the ability to care.

- by Jim Faughn

How We React

We have all seen different temperaments in our children. One child must be spanked continually, while another one breaks out in tears with a word or look of disapproval. As parents, we are always trying to get at the heart of our children. We continue to train each child, according to their need, so that when they are teenagers they will heed our words without the use of a rod. With some children, this is a challenging job.

But how hard is it for God to train us? Do we have the easily touched heart when we are confronted with sin? Are we truly grieved and repent quickly when we disappoint our Father? Like David, do we turn from our sinful ways in full repentance when we learn that we are the man? Or, are we like Pharaoh, so hard hearted that lesson after lesson, plague after plague does not soften our hearts to God's love (Heb. 12:8)?

Determine now to soften your heart. Repent quickly and completely and return to your Father who only wants the best for you and loves you. "Rebuke is more effective for a wise man than a hundred blows on a fool" (Prov. 17:10).

- by John McPherson

Don't Get Cheated

In Colossians 2:8, Paul warned his brethren: "*Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ*" (NKJV). The KJV translates it: "*Beware lest any man spoil you...*" The idea is that false teachers would lead them away from truth if they were not careful. These Christians could become the booty or spoil of wicked men who could pervert their minds through error.

There are few who enjoy cheaters or being cheated. In sports, the possibility that Barry Bonds cheated to become baseball's home run king has thousands of fans frustrated to no end. The fact that an NBA referee cheated players and fans through gambling schemes has outraged scores of hoops enthusiasts. While these may have a legitimate beef and justified concerns, there is a greater problem today. Let's get worked up about the cheating of Colossians 2.

The cheating Paul spoke of is as real now as when he penned it. Those who fail to respect the authority of Christ cheat themselves and others. Give me the Bible. Preach God's word. The doctrines and opinions of men when advanced in the religious realm are destructive. Beware friend. Check the preacher. Don't get cheated.

- by David McPherson

"Nobody Is Doing Anything!"

From time to time we hear this complaint expressed by members of a local congregation. The grievance may arise out of a genuine frustration at the lack of progress in the work of the church. Such failure may be the result of poor leadership, or it may be the consequence of internal strife, or it might just be the outcome of spiritual laziness. Whatever the case, these matters need to be addressed and corrected. If, in fact, 'nobody is doing anything,' that situation cannot be tolerated. We must find out why. We must fix the problems and get to work

However, this objection ('nobody is doing anything') is often muttered by negative and cantankerous brethren who seem to think it is their exclusive job to point out the failings of all others in the church. Unfortunately, these constant fault-finders tend to exist in every congregation. We have a couple of questions for these continuous complainers:

- 1) How do you know that nothing is being done? Are you fully aware of everything that everyone else is doing? There are good-hearted souls that are working hard every day. They are not trying to make a 'big splash' to make a name for themselves. Rather, they are trying to accomplish God's will and bring glory to His name. Do not assume that nothing is being done simply because it is not being publicly announced to you.
- 2) What are YOU doing? Think about that expression: 'nobody is doing anything.' Are you somebody? Is there something that you can do? If there is a job that needs doing, why don't you step up and do it? The energy you waste in complaining could go a long way towards fixing the problem. Get to work!

Yes, real problems in the church need to be identified. And, yes, issues must be resolved. But, are you willing to be part of the solution? Think!

- by Greg Gwin