
THE SOWER

ARTHUR (IL) CHURCH OF CHRIST
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MORAL ABSOLUTES?

How many times have you heard such statements as, “What you consider to be right or wrong may not be right or wrong to me”, or if you express a judgment on a moral issue, you hear the reply, “That is your opinion, but I have a right to my opinion”? This is moral relativism—the belief that there are no absolutes. It is more and more commonly held that morals are to be determined by evolving societal standards, with no absolute standard of right and wrong, moral and immoral. Such is the growing sentiment that is displacing the Bible as having validity in public life. As a consequence, human life is viewed as less sacred, and sexual purity by biblical standards is outdated.

What it comes down to is that many now believe we have no clear word from God, such as in the Bible, What was once regarded as a God-fearing nation, a “city set on a hill”, is now being submerged in a cesspool of godless philosophies. Polls indicate that well over 60% of Americans do not believe in moral absolutes.

As we, as a nation, have abandoned God, is it any wonder that we are confronted with a growing threat of terrorism and lawlessness? A new generation is indoctrinated with secular humanism in our government-schools, where the Ten Commandments are anathema. Can divine judgment be far behind? We need to heed the words of the prophet Jeremiah, as he prayed, “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). We need to hear again the prayer of Jesus for His followers: “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). —Ron

HOW COMFORTABLE ARE YOU HERE?

“Having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth,” (Hebrews 11:13b): “But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them” (Heb. 11:16). The great men and women who are examples of faith had not even received the promises, but knew that the world was not their home. They understood that they did not belong here, and that God had something better for them. Like them, our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). Because you are in Christ you need to “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Colossians 3:2). This world is full of suffering, problems, trials, and great sorrow. Yet we can be comfortable living here because it is all we really know. We sometimes fail to look ahead, trusting that God has said that there is a much better city prepared for those who place their faith in Him. In heaven, God will be with us, and all the things

that cause sorrow, pain and crying will be gone (Revelation 21:3-4). As I write this, I am reminded of all my aches and pains that I am dealing with at seventy four. I rejoice as I think of the words in 2 Corinthians 5:1-5. This body is compared to a tent, a temporary dwelling place for my spirit. What I have to look forward to is a new body which will be greatly better than a tent, and fit for eternity. May we all be looking for our real home and live like strangers here. – Ed Wittlif

This life is a temporary testing ground where God selects those who will live with Him eternally. Like this life, death is also temporary. It’s where we wait until Jesus comes back to give us our permanent bodies and to take us home with Him (John 5:8, 14).

--Shelbyville, IL Bulletin

THREE POWERFUL WORDS

A funny story is told about General George Patton from his World War II days. He once accepted an invitation to dine at a press camp in Africa. Wine was served in canteen cups, but, obviously thinking he was served coffee, Patton poured cream into his cup. As he stirred in sugar, Patton was warned that his cup contained red wine and not coffee.

Now, General Patton could never, never be wrong. Without hesitating, he replied, “I know. I like my wine this way.” And he drank it!

I relate this story because I see something of myself, and perhaps most of us here. It is difficult to admit mistakes. It is hard to admit when we are wrong.

Three of life’s most difficult words to say are, “I was wrong.” But they are also three of the most powerful words we can utter. “I was wrong” breaks down barriers between people. It brings estranged people together. And it creates a climate where intimacy and love may flourish. You may be surprised at how positively many people respond to the words, “I was wrong”!

Naturally it is a risk. But to admit when you are wrong is not to confess that you are a “bad” person; simply an honest one. And true friends will appreciate you for it.

Whole and happy lives are built by people who have learned the power of intimacy, in part, through the use of the words “I was wrong.”

--From Riches of the Heart by Steve Goodier

CAN'T SWIM, BUT DOES

The Byram River in Greenwich, Connecticut at the crest was running twelve to fifteen feet deep.

A family picnicking at the edge watched in horror as their two-year-old daughter fell into the water. Her 23-year-old mother, who could not swim and was terrified by water, jumped in and pulled her little girl to safety.

The headlines the next day said, “Mother Who Couldn’t Swim, But Does, and Saves Daughter.”

Provided proper motivation, we all can do far more than we believe we can. Many who are afraid of water have been baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Some who are afraid of public speaking have become preachers of the gospel (Romans 10:14-15). Some timid souls have won many to Christ (Proverbs 11:30). A lot of folks who thought they could never serve Christ effectively found a spark of zeal and love and became great workers.

“AI can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13)

--House to House/Heart to Heart

“DETERMINING TRUTH” will be today’s message, with John 17:9-16 as the reading.

UPDATE: I am to have more treatments on my left eye this Thursday, preparing me for cataract surgery in October. So far, attempts to lower the pressure in my eyes sufficiently have been unsuccessful. Pray for their success.