

October 1, 2011

“HEAVY DOCTRINE & LITTLE CHILDREN”

Dear *Friends & Family*,

(9/7) Here it is October already, & I still feel the need to give you a synopsis of what occurred at our annual jr. camp this past August. Why so late? Given the very busy summer camps' schedule (I did four instead of usual two) coupled with the burden to write when I did, the events had not yet occurred when the newsletter went out. The sermons these 9-12 year olds heard in the evening chapels this past August at camp were heavy & intense enough to sober adults! On the opening evening of camp, they were challenged to avoid the disastrous example of **Esau**, who forfeited his birthright, place in the Messianic line, & favor of God for a bowl of soup! The kids were asked at the end what *their* “bowl of soup” might be. As the counselors prayed for their campers at the end, the Spirit of the Lord’s “thick” presence—& rich, deep, & sweet as it was thick—entered the room. Hearts broke under conviction; weeping began; entreaties went up to the Lord. On the 2nd evening, the sermon was one we adults rarely hear: that we cannot do one thing to increase or decrease the level & intensity of the love of God for His people, that God is FOR you. “But”, it was repeatedly asserted “it only applies to those who believe!” The following evening I preached on “The Coming Harvest & The Fat Of The Tares”, re: Judgment Day & Hell. Was I apprehensive to do so to ones so young? You bet! Yet, I told them the more I meditated, studied, & preached on Hell, the more tightly it made me cling to Jesus & His cross, till I got splinters on my face, so to speak. I dramatized this on a life-sized cross in the front of the chapel. A number of children during Friday morning’s testimony time referred to this message as one that stuck out to them. I was relieved that it did *not* place an unhealthy fear of God in them, but just the opposite as it does to me. Thursday night they heard re: Solomon, who had everything from the Lord his heart could desire, & yet, in his later years, he was led to worship & sacrifice to other gods via his many wives. It was emphasized *others* often lead us to do the very same thing in our day, even at a very young age. Various obnoxious lessons were shown descriptive of present day “idols” in children’s lives. At the end, once again, the Spirit of the Lord moved mightily upon these children, as they virtually thronged up to the front of the chapel to lay before the Lord on the floor. This is what camp is all about: rich, biblical preaching, the Holy Spirit’s results moving upon the hearts of those who believe & apply the preached Word, & time, yes, precious time, to respond to the Lord & His Word to allow what they heard to sink more deeply into their hearts & lives. This is why I keep coming back to camp year after year. This is why I ache inside when I entertain the thoughts re: when it might be my last camp.

"GET THE 'HELL', OUT OF HERE!"

An unexpected & uninvited visitor came to this Thursday night’s chapel setting where the Lord’s presence was so very deep, rich, sweet, & holy. “It” came into the room like a battering ram upon a city’s gates. It came so abruptly. It was as if someone took a knife & slashed my heart & spirit with it! It was the din of death—the revelry of the world. What happened? On the laptop being used to play sweet worship music to the Lord after the service, there was a hugely popular rock song from the 80’s right after it. I assume the laptop’s owner had it on there because it had to do with “faith”. I’ve heard it & liked it many times. Yet, in this holy setting, it was such a “demonic intruder”, so to speak. I had to get it out. I felt like Phineas purging infidelity from Israel. I virtually rushed to the sound table to get it off. “Michael, how can you be so vehemently against a song you previously liked?” Ps. 73 relates the Psalmist’s insight, spiritual acumen & sensitivity, etc...*after* he entered the sanctuary of God. It was the same with me. It’s amazing what time spent in Jesus’ Word & presence does. T

more prolonged the time spent in His precepts & presence, the more acute the sensitivity to & hatred of things worldly.

“WHY I WORK WITH CHILDREN”

My opening article in last month’s newsletter was entitled, “**Viewing the Young Through 3D Glasses**”, re: the three “dimensions” I try to envision them in from time to time to enhance both vision & burden for them. The following poignantly & soberly confirms both the necessity & benefit of doing so. It is slightly edited.

“An Italian artist seeing a little boy of exquisite beauty & loveliness, painted the child’s portrait, & hung it up in his studio as a type of Heaven, his ideal of the spiritual & good. The artist resolved that if ever he found a living contrast to that sweet boy he would paint it also, and hang it by the side of the other as a type of Hell, his idea of the sensual & the wicked. Many years later, in a distant country, in a prison, he saw the most frightful & horrid demon in human flesh he ever beheld. The prisoner’s eyes were ablaze with lust & his cheeks bore the deep imprints of crime. The artist remembered his former resolution that he had made to himself years before, & hence painted the hideous face, & upon his return home hung this criminal’s portrait beside that of the little boy’s that he had painted so many years before. The painter’s dream was now realized, the extreme, exact opposites of the moral universe hung upon the walls of his studio, side by side. But imagine the painter’s surprise when he found, upon inquiry, that the portraits he had painted so many years apart, *were of the same person*—that loathsome wretch was once that little boy. His picture in innocent childhood, his picture in criminal manhood, are now hanging side by side in a Tuscan picture gallery.”

[Taken from “Eternal Retribution”, by William Elbert Munsey; written sometime in the mid-19th century; c.1951 by Sword of the Lord Press; pp. 35, 36]. Hence, Beloved, do you now understand a bit more clearly why the heavy doctrines mentioned above must needs be preached to the very young? “When I was a son my father [&] tender...he taught me...” [Pr.3:3,4].

“TOO SERENE AFTER IRENE’S SCENE”

Some of you may recollect my ponderings in last month’s newsletter re: the power outage I encountered after a tornado hit our area. I “ached” for the Lord, when I reflected re: His position, when He finally enable the power companies to turn the power back on, resulting in countless human beings’ continuous offenses before Him, via various electronic means. Human nature did not let my expectations down once again during the recent hurricane “Irene’s” storming of the East Coast. Here was this massive storm, measuring 400 miles in diameter, a “cat. 3” storm, with sustained winds of over 100 m.p.h., & foolish, frail, men were endeavoring to report the news in the midst of it, surfing in it, & deciding to ride it out, despite the urgent warnings of the powers that be. Perhaps the most grievous to me was to hear repeatedly how much money the casinos in **Atlantic City** were going to lose over the several hours that the storm would pass by & shut them down! Here, in the midst of a terrifying display of nature’s immensity & power under the hand of our Sovereign God, dwarfing men in comparison, they’re worried re: how much money they will be losing! Ugh! If that is not spiritual blindness, I don’t know what is! And, as with most natural disasters, the nature of sin is to “get back to things as usual” as soon as possible. I’ve often said disasters do not convert & regenerate humans—only the Spirit of the Lord can do that. Otherwise, human nature, after a very short time of “fear”, always reverts back to its sinful ways.

“PAYBACK TIME!”

(9/14) For whatever reason, our street has been “hit” twice by Jehova’s Witnesses in the past couple of weeks! But, this time, I got ‘em back! I snuck two Chick tracts into their car while they were down the street a first! May the Lord use them to rescue these poor misguided souls, blindly being used by “the other side”! Speaking of payback time, it happened in another sense just a few days before the JW incident related above. I got a collect call from Chester County Prison from an inmate I had never heard of. I don’t know how he got my phone number either! We had very special & rare company from out of town, so for all of these reasons I didn’t take the call. When our company left, I did call the prison & explained what happened. They said they’d check it out & assumed it was a wrong number. Of course, I don’t believe in chance & accidents, I wrote the inmate & sent him some gospel tracts. May the Lord move upon his heart. Under the inmate’s info on the prison website, it had an “**H**” for his reason for being incarcerated. I guessed for “**H**”omicide, maybe! so, it won’t be the first time the Lord saved a murderer. Just ask Moses, David, or Saul of Tarsus! I thank you for taking the time to read this. I pray it was worth it. Jesus bless.

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