

December 18, 2022

Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

Important Things

By Bob Pulliam

Week before last I was about fifteen seconds ahead of a wreck. I had just turned onto the street next to the building and had to wait for a beige car to pass the parking lot entrance before I could pull in. I particularly noticed the car and driver because he blocked the entrance with about two car lengths ahead of him open. If I had a persecution complex I would have thought he just didn't want me to get in. But I particularly noticed him because he was looking down. Now the gap in front of him made sense. I see many people do this when they are texting. I guess it makes the practice safer.

I wiggled behind and got in, and as I pulled up to the front door I heard the unmistakable sound of automobile parts meeting unexpectedly, and tires skidding across concrete in directions that they were not designed to travel. I got out and saw a vehicle in the middle of Fry Road. And on the diagonal corner sat my friend in his big beige car. Nobody seemed to be hurt, but more than one person was having a bad day. *And it only took a second.* Just a second of carelessness. What the driver of the red SUV that

ran the light was doing I cannot say. But I do know what she wasn't doing. *She wasn't paying attention to the important things.*

So many important areas of life can find us distracted so that we don't pay attention to the important things. It may be in the area of family, where we allow other things to keep us from giving attention to the important things. Sometimes, it takes tragedy to wake us up and realize this. A loved one dies, and we begin to regret our lack of attention to the important things. And many times the distracting details held their own importance, but we let our priorities get tangled up. We become careless in these moments, and sometimes find our lives sideways across two lanes of life with angry passers-by honking at us.

Nowhere is this problem more prominent than in serving our God. All of mankind is obligated to serve the creator, whether everyone realizes it, or not. As Solomon put it, fearing God and keeping His commandments is the "whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). It is our highest duty, just as all of creation is to glorify God (Psa. 19).

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As I put this article under the title of important things, you may realize where I am going. In Luke 10:41 & 42 Jesus said, “*Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.*” Jesus was not saying that eating is not important. But to allow it’s distraction to take away from the bread of life is a grave error in priorities. Hospitality is also important, but all of Martha’s preparations could have waited. She, and guests, would benefit far more from the words of Jesus.

It only takes a moment of distraction and carelessness for us to end up sideways on the spiritual highway. Take the tongue, for example. There are things you know that you have no business telling others. In a moment of unguarded caprice, you make it known to someone else. It may be 100% accurate information, but that does not remove it from the category of “talebearing” (Prov. 11:13; 18:8; 26:20). Gossip is a problem of passing on information that one does not have a right to broadcast, not of faulty information. I have not yet found a passage that justifies the dissemination of tales simply because they are accurate. Coupled with “gossip” is the word “busybody” in 1 Timothy 5:13. Busybodies make everyone else’s business their own. And I have always found it leaning toward the darker side of things. Can you honestly say that your tongue has

never given you trouble on life’s highway? (James 3:2)

At times we find things that are important to us, and allow them to get in the way of God’s kingdom. It may be our job, or the family. These are important, without a doubt. But are they getting in the way of what should have top priority? Have we become distracted in careless moments, and allowed ourselves to take charge, rather than giving God His rightful place. We excuse our choices by emphasizing the fact that we haven’t done anything “immoral”. But not killing, stealing, or cheating is not all that God expects of our lives in the kingdom. Have we not been crucified? Doesn’t Christ live in us? Are we “new creatures”, or do we look like the rest of the world, except for a hobby in religion? (Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:17)

As we swiftly approach a new year, let’s put down the distractions and remember who God expects us to be. Let’s count the cost, and carry our cross (Lk. 14:27-35).

Sentence Sermons

Christ did not come to make life easy, but to make men great.

He who is poor in faith will bankrupt hereafter.

What a person does is the result of what a person is.

A truth worth uttering is a truth worth remembering.

The Birth Of Jesus

By Joe R. Price

Only God knows the day on which Jesus was born. The Bible does not say; only that he was born in the days of Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.) and Caesar Augustus (27 B.C.-14 A.D.) (Matt. 2:1; Lk. 2:1), and that there were “shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night” (Lk. 2:8). Those who observe December 25 as His birthday should know this, yet many do not.

- Historians do not know the date, although many have speculated on it.
- The Roman Catholic Church does not know the date. During its early development there was much disagreement over the date and its celebration. In 354 A.D. Liberius, the Bishop of Rome, declared December 25 to be the day for celebrating the birth of Christ. This date gradually became the prevailing view and practice.
- The Orthodox Churches do not know the date; they choose to celebrate the birth of Jesus in January.
- The Protestant Churches do not know the date; they have retained the Catholic view and practice.

Likewise, the Bible does not command, show an example of or infer the practice of a “Feast of the Nativity” (i.e., Christmas). Men began and continue the religious celebration of Christ’s birth; not the word of God.

Here are some things we do know about the birth of Jesus:

- It was prophesied centuries earlier (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:22-23). His birth was divinely planned and accomplished (Lk. 1:30-31). The virgin gave birth to a son whose name was Jesus (“savior,” Matt. 1:21, 25).
- It was the right time for God to send His Son into the world. *“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law”* (Gal. 4:4).
- It was the day on which God became flesh. *“... that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God”* (Lk. 1:35). Jesus is Immanuel, which means *“God with us”* (Matt. 1:23). On that day the Word, who is deity, became flesh (Jn. 1:1, 14). A body was prepared for him that would be sacrificed for the sins of the world (Heb. 10:5-10).

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• It was troubling and joyous. Unrighteous men were troubled. Men like King Herod, who feared the prophesied ruler (Matt. 2:3-6). He was so worried that he murdered the babies of Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16). On the other hand, angels praised God, wise men worshiped the child and shepherds glorified God (Matt. 2:11; Lk. 2:8-20).

• It was never observed as a religious festival in New Testament days. “There is no evidence of the existence of a Feast of the Nativity before the 4th century” (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, III:601).

Since God did not command a religious celebration of Christ’s birth, we do not offer Him one. Instead, we continually rejoice, praise and worship God for His wonderful gift of love: a Savior, a King . . . His Son! (Jn. 3:16)



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Read Your Bible!

Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our worship together and hope to see you again.

December Birthdays: The 8th Melton Yarbrough; The 14th Jacob Hisaw; The 16th Doug Morgan; The 20th Ian, Landon, and Kevin Collins; The 23rd Ricky Thomas; The 24th Robin McCartney; The 29th Gail Justice; The 30th Alicia Threadgill.

This Bulletin is a weekly publication of the Valley Grove Church Of Christ, Southaven, MS

Sunday
Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M.
Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday
Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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