

February 6, 2022

Viewpoint from the **Valley Grove Church Of Christ**

The Magpie And The “Best Nest”

By Robert F. Turner

An ancient fable has it that the magpie is the best nest-builder among all the birds. And, according to the story, once-upon-a-time all the birds gathered about the magpie to learn her technique.

“First, we find a nice sheltered spot,” said the magpie. At this point the eagle flew away crying, “I know, I know!”

“Wait!” shouted the magpie. “There is much more.” But the eagle was out of hearing, and henceforth made its nest in a sheltered crag among the rocks, thinking this the ultimate.

“Next, we interlace some sticks to form a pocket,” said the magpie. At this the crow flew away cawing, “I know, I know!”

“There is more — much more!” cried the magpie; but the crow was gone, to build her nest of sticks, and brag that it was the finest of all nests.

And so it went. Each bird was content with only part of the instructions, and flew away before the full story, with its relation of parts, could be told. According to the story the magpie is still the only bird that builds a perfect nest.

Think of this fable and its moral, the next time you hear some preacher say salvation is by faith ONLY. While it is true that the N. T. says we are saved by faith; it also says we are saved by HOPE. (Rom. 8:24) But we fly away with partial instructions when we conclude salvation is by “faith only” or “hope only”.

A good concordance will show you there are many elements in salvation. We are saved by GRACE (Tit. 2:11) HOPE (Rom. 8:24) FAITH (Lk. 8:12) WORD (James 1:21) BAPTISM (1 Pet. 3:21) GOSPEL (1 Cor. 15:2) and “more, much more.”

Of course CHRIST saves us, (Jn. 4:42) but there is a sense in which we SAVE OURSELVES. (Acts 2:40) We are saved by the BLOOD, WORKS,

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LOVE OF THE TRUTH, and CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD; and that without contradiction or conflict. All are related in God's one great scheme of redemption. To illustrate this inter-relation, read the following carefully:

Merciful God sent His Son to shed His blood, and by His Holy Spirit revealed His truth, that all who will hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized, may thus put on Christ, being sanctified (set apart) (added to His church): and being faithful until death, may have a home in heaven.

This is not set forth as the whole of God's plan, nor do I seek to put the PLAN before the MAN. We must not fall into the error of the Pharisees, by accepting one command or part of truth to the exclusion of others. We must seek the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

There are great foundation truths, generic in their nature, which embrace and include particular truths; just as the necessity for obedience (Heb. 5:9) makes the thing commanded necessary. (Acts 2:38) And he is a foolish "bird" indeed who changes or ignores any instructions from the builder of earth and heaven.

The Precious Word Of God

By Frank Walton

"The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces" (Psalm 119:72).

How valuable is God's written Word to me? Before the printing press, copies of the Bible were made by hand. One estimate is that it would take one copyist 3 years to copy the entire Bible. If copied onto vellum (animal hide), it would take 250 sheep to make one Bible. Such would make it extremely expensive to own an entire copy of the Bible.

Do we appreciate the great sacrifices of those who brought the Word of God to us? The English scholar William Tyndale was the first to translate the English Bible directly from the Greek and Hebrew. In 1526, his New Testament was printed in Belgium by the recently invented printing press and smuggled into England and Scotland. His goal was to bypass the clergy telling the people what God's Word means by giving each person the word of God in clear English, so each can study it for themselves. He said, "I defy the Pope, and all his laws; and if God spares my life, ere many years, I will cause the boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scriptures than thou [a priest] dost!" He was charged with heresy, among other things, "that the traditions of men do not bind the soul."

In 1536, the ecclesiastical authorities killed him by strangulation and his body was burned at the stake. His last words, with a loud voice, were, “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes!”

It is estimated that about three-fourths of the 1611 King James translation by 54 scholars was drawn directly from Tyndale’s translation. In AD 200, the Bible was translated from the original Hebrew and Greek into seven languages; by 1400, 28 languages; by 1900, 537 languages; by 1980, 1,100 languages; by 2006, 2,426 languages have some portions of the Scripture. Indeed, God’s truth “is the living and abiding Word” (1 Pet. 1:23).

Someone has said, “Someone who does not read the Bible is no better off than one who cannot read.” When we read the Scriptures, we are reading the mind of God in human language. When we study the Scriptures, we can think the thoughts of God. This, when received by a heart of submissive faith, is the power of human transformation. *“The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes”* (Psa. 19:7-8).

The Importance Of Thoughts

By Bill Crews

If you are concerned about your character, your conduct, your life and your destiny, then be concerned about your thoughts. *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life”* (Prov. 4:23). The heart is the mind, and the mind is the center of thoughts. *“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he”* (Prov. 23:7). A man may not be what he appears to be, but he is what he thinks.

What goes into your mind, then, is extremely important. Be careful about the interests you acquire, the tastes you cultivate, the desires you develop. They shape what goes into your mind. The conversations you listen to, the scenes you observe, the movies you view, the TV programs you tune into, the newspapers, magazines and books you read, the songs by which you are entertained, the jokes you laugh at, the things you are taught all have a part in feeding information into your mind.

You evaluate and monitor all that you hear and see. Your standard for evaluation and your conscience are vital and play their roles. You may seek out or receive what is vulgar or distorted, or you may reject and refuse it. You may pursue and embrace what is wholesome and true, or you may have no interest in

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it and neglect it. Be cautious, particular and selective about what goes into your mind. If you allow garbage to go in, then garbage will come out in the form of words and deeds.

What goes on in your mind is also extremely important. Be careful about your thoughts, meditations, desires, ambitions, daydreams and fantasies. You determine what goes on in your mind. You are the master of it because you have control over it. It is your own little secret world — except that God knows all about it, and will one day bring it to light when you have to answer for it in the judgment (Eccl. 12:14; Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10). And sooner or later it will find expression in your life and make itself known.

We cannot be like God without thinking the thoughts of God. We cannot know the thoughts of God apart from the revelation of the things of God in the word of God (1 Cor. 2:11-13). We cannot have the thoughts of God in our hearts apart from reverent study of and meditation upon the word of God, coupled with a sincere desire to do the will of God (Jn. 7:17).

February Birthdays:

The 1st Roseanna Carter; 11th Mary Lynn McCartney; 22nd Peggy Thomas; 25th Don Haynes; 17th Austin Hisaw; 6th Jay Stewart; 20th Shirley Pike; 16th Tommy Reynolds.

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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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