

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”-Psalm 119:105

March 21, 2004

“Church Happenings”

Troy Nicholson

Our local newspaper, *The Star News*, contains a section entitled “Church Happenings.” The contents on this page in a recent issue (3-12-04) caught my attention.

The newspaper listed the following activities as “church happenings”: fish fry (sponsored by a “church youth group in conjunction with Captain D’s”), “a ‘Crop ‘Til You Drop’ scrapbooking workshop,” children’s consignment sales (two different ones), U.S. Navy Band, chili supper and silent auction, Easter egg hunt, “a sampling of vegetarian holiday cuisine,” free cholesterol screening and blood pressure reading - with door prizes, singles’ luncheon, etc.

I hope that no one reading this article is disappointed to learn that the church here does not engage in or support any of the aforementioned activities. Why do we not? Is it because we are just behind the times? No, it is because we are behind the scriptures.

Read through all that the Bible records about the early church, and you will notice that the Lord is silent about any such “happenings” happening in His church. He did not come to this earth and die so that we could enjoy a meal, find a bargain, listen to a concert, hunt eggs, or even improve our physical health. He came and died so that we, as His church, may be “the pillar and ground of the truth”(1 Timothy 3:15) and be about improving our spiritual health.

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”(Colossians 3:17). We must always make sure that what is happening in the Lord’s church is what He wants to be happening — nothing more and nothing less..

“But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me!”—Psalm 66:19-20

“Rich Toward God”

Troy Nicholson

Jesus concludes the parable of the rich fool by saying, “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:21). What does it mean to be rich toward God? In what ways would that make us rich?

Rich in Knowledge

Paul says of those whom he has not personally met, “My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God” (Colossians 2:2). Peter says to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Becoming richer in knowledge will make us rich toward God and keep us from being led away from Him (:17). This is why the proverbial writer says we need to “buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding” (Proverbs 23:23).

Rich in Faith

Jesus rebukes His disciples on various occasions for having “little faith” (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8). On one occasion when He rebukes them for having “so little faith,” He says, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (17:20). Just imagine what can be done with an abundance of faith! God wants us “to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him” (James 2:5).

Rich in Goodness

Why does God bless us as He does? Here is one reason: "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work... You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God" (2 Corinthians 9:8, 11). Paul told Timothy concerning "those who are rich in this present world" (That is us!) to "command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share." Why? "In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life" (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

John said to Gaius, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2). How rich would you be materially if this were true of you? It depends on how rich you are toward God. If you have the desire to be rich, then have a desire for "true riches" (Luke 16:11) and "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20).

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"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it"
(Psalm 118:24).