

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." – **Psalm 119:105**

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What If?

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Asking "what if?" can be an exercise in futility because "what if?" does not express what really happened. On the other hand, asking such a question at the right moment can be extremely useful in motivating one to do right.

A case in point is **2 Kings 5:9-14**. Naaman the leper became furious when Elisha, a prophet of God, sent a messenger to him to tell him to dip seven times in the Jordan River to be cleansed of his leprosy. Naaman already had his mind made up what the prophet would do and say and was stunned when his preconceived ideas did not happen. Naaman went away in a rage. His servants came to him and asked him if Elisha had asked him to do some great thing wouldn't he have done it? Their conclusion to Naaman was had he not rather wash and be cleansed? When Naaman got over his anger and did what God's prophet had instructed he was cleansed of his leprosy.

Two New Testament examples of "what if?" are found in **Luke 14:25-33**. In verses 28-30 Jesus spoke the parable of a person intending to build a tower. If such a venture were being considered the builder would sit down and figure whether or not he had sufficient funds to complete it. If he didn't but started it anyway, others would mock him when he ran out of money and had to abandon his half-built tower.

In the second parable Jesus asked what if a king had 10,000 men and had to face an enemy king who had 20,000 men? If he couldn't figure out a way to win against a much larger army, he'd better figure out a way to make peace with the enemy king. Both parables illustrate a person's need to consider the cost of following Jesus.

In the remainder of this article I want to use the principle of "what if?" to show the simplicity of God's will and to motivate any who may read this article to do God's will. What if, for example, you were on a TV game show and the host said, "If you believe in me and are baptized you will win \$50,000!?" Do you think anyone would have a problem understanding what had to be done? People would be running over each other to get to the baptistery! What if you had a fatal disease and were

told by a doctor, “If you believe in me and are baptized you will be cured instantly!”? Do you think anyone would argue that their cure ought to be by faith alone? Do you believe anyone would quibble about whether or not baptism can be accomplished by sprinkling or pouring rather than by immersion, which is what the word *baptism* means?

Jesus said, “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned*” in **Mark 16:16**. There is no “what if” about this. It is a plain statement of our Lord. Some quibble by saying, “The Lord did not say, ‘He who does not believe *and is not baptized* will be condemned.’” True, but do you believe that in the two what-if illustrations already mentioned that a person who did not believe the game show host would be baptized anyway? Do you believe a person would be baptized anyway if he did not believe what the doctor told him he had to do? Similarly, the problem with people who reject the necessity of baptism for salvation is that they don’t believe Jesus. They may believe in Him, but they don’t believe Him.

Consider the following questions:

1. Would you be willing to do for money what you refuse to do for the Lord?
2. Would you be willing to do to save your life what you are unwilling to do to save your soul?
3. Consider the following “what ifs?”:
 - What if others deny Jesus, will you?
 - What if you had died yesterday, where would you be now?
 - What if you were in torment now, what would you give for just one opportunity on earth to obey the gospel of Christ?

I recently saw a lady on TV allow herself to be covered with worms, snakes, and cockroaches in an attempt to win \$50,000. She lost that particular challenge but was allowed to continue to the next because she ate three of the live worms (she refused to eat one live cockroach). It is truly amazing to see what difficult things people will do for money and to see what simple things they refuse to do for the Lord and the salvation of their souls!



News and Notes

Members:

- * Margie Frizzell is having trouble getting around and has an appointment with a neurosurgeon on the 21st.
- * Thelbert Frizzell continues to have blood pressure problems.
- * Estelle Hayes is doing better after her recent fall.
- * Cotton Read was out of CCU at Centennial Hospital for a day but is now back there.

Friends and Family:

- * Marshall Hunt will have back surgery tomorrow for scoliosis. He will be at Baptist Hospital for several days after the surgery.

Absent: None known.

New Reports: Ron Chaffin (South Africa), Alessandro Corazza (Rome), Bob Nichols (Japan).



“Establish Your word to Your servant, as that which produces reverence for You.”

Psalm 119:37