

PathLights

“Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path”
Psalm 119:104

May 15, 2015

Neglect

by Frank Himmel

Neglect is a sad word. It refers to paying too little attention to something, to omission because of carelessness or indifference. *Neglect* is a synonym for failure, yet at the same time it implies what could have been had we been more alert or zealous.

The New Testament cautions us not to be negligent...

About salvation. “How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3). Too many seem concerned about most every aspect of life except their eternal welfare. What a sad confusion of priorities! In context, however, this question is not addressed to the lost; it is directed at Christians. It reminds us of the danger of not regularly feeding our faith and growing (5:11-6:2); of not building relationships with brethren who can encourage us (3:12-13); of getting sidetracked by things that do not matter (13:5-6); of not often enough drawing near to God in prayer and worship (4:16; 10:22-25). “Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall” (4:11a).

About commands. Jesus said, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness;

but these are the things you should have done, without neglecting the others” (Matthew 23:23). God’s commands might be neglected for many reasons: they are looked at as minor matters, they would cost too much time or money, they are too stringent, they are out-of-step with modern thinking, and so on. In some cases the problem is ignorance. Often, however, they are just not what we want to do – neglect born of self-will!

About sharing. “And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased (Hebrews 13:16). The word rendered *sharing* here is the one commonly rendered *fellowship* in the New Testament. The author is certainly not thinking about coffee and donuts! Showing hospitality to strangers (v. 2) and helping those who are persecuted (v. 3) illustrate the kind of fellowship in view. Opportunities to do good for others abound. We must not be so self-centered that we either miss them or dismiss them.

About service. Paul urged the young preacher Timothy, “Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you...” (1 Timothy 4:14). Timothy’s gift may well have been miraculous in nature (see 2 Timothy 1:6). Regardless, the principle applies to any gift, any resources, any ability God has entrusted to us. Romans 12:6-8 mentions gifts of teaching, giving, leading, etc. Whatever you can do, do it. Do it the best you can. Then work at doing it even better. You will be blessed, brethren will be benefitted, and God will be glorified. ■



My Kind of Preaching

by Frank Himmel



The Apostle John warned that many false prophets have gone out into the world. He said of them, “They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:5-6).

Worldly minded preachers speak in worldly terms and use worldly reasoning. They reach worldly conclusions. And, as John notes, worldly minded people relate to what they say. They like the message. “He’s speaking my language.”

The apostles and other faithful preachers, in contrast, preach the truth. They do so in plain terms, “avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’” (1 Timothy 6:20). Godly people relate to what they say. They like the message. “He’s speaking my language.”

John’s simple analysis is that these differences in preachers and their messages say as much about the hearers as they do about the preachers. Doubtless some preachers and hearers took offense at John calling them worldly, but the plain-spoken apostle was right on the mark.

The world says there is no such thing as absolute truth. Everything is relative. It is therefore arrogant to say one way is right and another is wrong. Ecumenism is the order of the day. The Bible counters that God’s word is truth (John 17:17), and Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6). Which do you prefer: a sermon that plainly says there is just one right way to live, or a sermon that commends Christianity yet leaves open the door that alternatives may be just as acceptable?

The world has no real moral standard. It is much like the time in ancient Israel when “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). The Bible, on the other hand, has a specific moral code. It governs everything: how we do business, family relations (including divorce and remarriage), how we act, what we say, even what we think! Which do you prefer: a straightforward sermon that kindly, yet firmly, identifies right and wrong conduct and calls on you to repent if need be, or a sermon that effectively dismisses the Bible standard and makes you feel better about yourself while you continue the same behavior?

The world often denies existence beyond this life. If heaven is allowed into the picture, just about everyone goes there. The Bible, conversely, clearly differentiates the saved and the lost. Bliss awaits the saved, but Jesus plainly said they are few (Matthew 7:14). Terrible retribution awaits those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Again, which message would be preached if it were up to you? Remember, John’s point was that the answer reveals the kind of person you are.

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Paul Richmond	Mark Clifton	Carlos Garcia
SONG LEADER	Clifton Lefort	J B Williams	Albert Lee Harrison
OPENING PRAYER	Brian Wilson	TBD	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Mark Clifton	Mark Clifton	
CUP	John Baucom	John Baucom	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Josh Baucom		
SERMON/INVITATION	Greg Winget	Singing	J B Williams
CLOSING PRAYER	Adam Gibson	TBD	Kerry Gray