

THE SOUTHEAST SOWER

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“IN THAT DAY”

(2 Tim. 1:16-18)

Vernon Teagarden

Onesiphorus is mentioned twice in the Bible, both times by Paul (2 Tim. 1:16-18; 4:19). He was a Christian at Ephesus, and some suggest a businessman who travelled (cf. 2 Tim. 1:17). He was the only one of Asia (Ephesus, the capital) with the love and courage enough to assist Paul, the prisoner.

Paul’s prayer for Onesiphorus was that he might find mercy in “that day.” There is a play on the word “find” in 2 Tim. 1:17—He “found” me; may he “find” mercy!

It is right and good to pray for the salvation of our family and friends. We often pray for others who are travelling and for elders and preachers that they may have long and useful lives of service in the kingdom. But really, the best prayer is one that we might find mercy of the Lord in that day. Nothing else matters so much.

There have been great days in the past. Creation, the flood, the law given at Mt. Sinai, the birth of Christ, Pentecost are among them. But “that day” will be the greatest day of them all. So, what is the identity of “that day?”

The use of the term, “that day,” clearly suggests the day of judgment. Christ used it (cf. Matt. 7:22; 24:36), and Paul used it frequently (2 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:8). The judgment day is also designated by Paul by the following terms: “the day” (1 Cor. 3:13); “the day of the Lord” (1 Thess. 5:2); “the day of Christ” (Phil. 2:16); “the day when God shall judge the secrets of men” (Rom. 2:16); “the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Rom. 2:5); “the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30). Further, Paul’s attitude toward “that day” is one of certainty (2 Tim. 1:12) - “I know...I am persuaded.” That day was as certain with Paul as God, His power, and His promises. But, what is the “purpose” of “that day?”

It will be a day of reckoning. That the judgment day will be a day of reckoning is clearly taught in God’s word. Elders must give an account of their oversight (Heb. 13:17). Preachers must give an account of their preaching (cf. Jas. 3:1). All Christians, as stewards, must give an account (Matt. 25:19); and all men must give an account (Rom. 2:16). However, for what must we give an account? For all deeds, words, and thoughts (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 12:36f); Eccl. 12:14). Further, use or misuse of opportunities (cf. talents Col. 4:5); and for our attitude toward our duty (cf. Eccl. 12:13).

It will be a day of rectifying. The day of judgment will be a day when all things will be made right. Often, God’s justice is difficult to see in this life. Why do sinners seem to prosper and saints suffer? At the day of judgment all inequalities will be adjusted by God.

It will be a day of recompense. The wicked will be rewarded according to their works and the righteous will be given the crown of life (Rom. 6:23; 2:5, 8f; 2 Tim. 4:8; 25:34).

As you think about “that day” the need of that day should be obvious to us. What is that “need?” It is “mercy!”

The mercy of God is needed from birth to eternity. Our very existence depends upon His mercy (Acts 17:28; Jas. 1:17). Our salvation from sin depends upon His mercy (Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8). Our eternal salvation depends upon His mercy (Text; Jude 21). Some

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say, “It is mercy in life, but justice in judgment.” The Bible teaches it is mercy in both! But, who are the recipients of God’s mercy in “that day?”

Those who show mercy to others can expect God’s mercy at judgment. Jesus taught the necessity of showing mercy to receive mercy (Matt. 5:7, 9-13; 18:23-35). Onesiphorus had shown mercy to Paul, so Paul asks that God might show mercy to him. Mercy may be shown in Christian service (Gal. 6:10); and in forgiveness (Matt. 6:14f). If I am unwilling to help others or to forgive others, I cannot expect to find mercy of the Lord in that day.

Those who realize their need of God’s mercy may find mercy in that day. The self-righteous who scoff at His mercy are hopeless (cf. Lk. 18:9-12). The self-satisfied who feel sufficient without His mercy will not find it (cf. Rev. 3:17). We must realize our nothingness without God’s mercy (cf. Lk. 18:13).

Those who appropriate God’s mercy now may find it also in that day. The rich man neglected God’s mercy in life and did not find it in eternity (Lk. 16:24-26). Felix spurned God’s mercy (Acts 24:25) and therefore, can have no hope of receiving it at the judgment. We must appreciate and appropriate God’s mercy now to receive in that day.

What is ironic is that many accept God’s mercy in the material things of life, but reject it in the spiritual. Yet, the call of the gospel is the call to God’s infinite mercy, and to find it in that day, we must accept it in this day. Will you find mercy of the Lord in that day? That will depend on what you do with it in this day!

PREPARING OURSELVES FOR PARTAKING OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

Vernon Teagarden

When we gather together on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord’s Supper we must keep in mind there has never been a supper of so much importance served, nor one of more significance than the Lord’s Supper. It is a time of the communion of the body and blood of Jesus. It is the “table of the Lord.”

Those who eat at the table are children of God; they are priests, part of a “royal priesthood,” “heirs of God,” and “joint-heirs” of Christ.” The one who has made this possible for us is Jesus, Who gave His life for us. It is at the Lord’s table that children of God have “communion” of the body and blood of Christ, in His kingdom. We should feel honored in having the privilege to be seated at the Lord’s table each time we gather and partake of the Lord’s Supper.

As a youngster, there was no time when mom was more particular about our dress than on Sunday morning when we were ready to go to “church” or to the assembly. The night before, preparation was made. The right clothes were laid out, including our bow-ties and hats (fedoras), I believe they are called. Come Sunday morning when everything passed inspection, including our shoes, we left for services.

Now my point is not about physical dress but making sufficient preparation for such an important occasion such as partaking of the Lord’s Supper. It is the table of the Lord and, as always, we are in His presence as we partake. On each occasion we should be prepared to honor Him in every possible way by already having prepared ourselves to partake of His supper in an appropriate way! Here’s what Paul about it in 1 Cor. 11:27-29, “ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, but let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” To eat and drink in an unworthy manner may involve many things but one thing is certain; if I partake of the supper in a way not properly taking into consideration what the elements of the supper represent, and in way not regarding what Christ has done for me, then I’m eating and drinking judgment to myself. Keep these things in mind the next time you sit at the Lord’s Table!