



The Southeast Sower

Southeast Church of Christ

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Have You Forgotten The Lord Your God?

by
Vernon Teagarden

God has richly blessed this country in which we live. The average American makes more money in one week than much of the world does in a whole year. In this nation we throw away more food in one week than many third world countries consume in a year. If I am cold, I can go to a little box attached to my living room wall, turn the dial to the desired temperature and a furnace comes on and heats my house. I could go on and list a myriad of such blessings we often take for granted, but time and space will not permit me to do so. Suffice it to say that we are, of all people, richly blessed.

With the coming of prosperity there exists a great danger. Whenever man is richly blessed, he in turn, often forgets that every good gift comes from above. When Israel was about to enter the land of Canaan, a land that flowed with milk and honey (Exod. 3:8), God told them about the richness of the land that He was giving them. He then issued a solemn warning – “Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, and His

statutes which I command you today; lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the rock of flint; who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good in the end - - then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’ And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the Lord your God and follow after other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall perish. As the nations which the Lord destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to

The Southeast

Church of Christ meets at:

35 Walnut Court

Mogadore, OH 44260

Phone: 330.628.7432

SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Study: 10:00 am

Worship: 10:50 am

6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 pm

the voice of the Lord your God” (Duet. 8:11-20).

It is no secret that Israel failed to heed this warning and forgot their God. Consequently, as a nation, they perished! After the kingdom divided, the northern kingdom, Israel, fell in 721 B.C. to the Assyrians. In like manner, the southern kingdom, Judah, was conquered by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

In this great nation of ours I fear that the majority of the

people, because of the abundance of material blessings, are like Israel of old, they have forgotten God! I believe it to be an indisputable fact that one of the greatest dangers facing this nation, as well as the church of our Lord, is materialism. "Materialism" is defined by the New World Dictionary of the American Language as, "the tendency to be more concerned with the material than the spiritual goals." Webster's New World Dictionary defines the word as, "tendency to give undue importance to material things or interests." Materialism causes one to misplace his values. It causes one to spend his time, energy and talents on the physical body and ignore that which is of real importance, the soul! Things perish with the using (Col. 2:22), but the soul is eternal (Eccl. 12:7).

Many are the dangers of material possessions. For example, there is the danger of being high-minded, which is the danger of thinking of more ourselves than we should. Notice again verse seventeen of Deuteronomy chapter eight, "then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand gained me this wealth.'" Instead of giving God the credit for all His blessings, and showing gratitude for them by using them in a way pleasing to Him, the high-minded man is apt to boast of his accomplishments. He forgets about the Lord who gave him the power to gain all that he has. Also, there is the danger of trusting in material possessions. When this occurs we become too independent

and God is certainly forgotten. When God is "not needed" in a person's life, he or she inevitably will become indifferent to the needs of the soul. As songwriter, Johnson Oatman put it, "The heaping up of riches to many seem life's goal; But in the eager rush for wealth, forgotten is the soul."

Am I saying that it is wrong for one to prosper? I cannot give a sweeping "yes" to that question. God brought Israel into a good land where they greatly prospered. All He asked of them in return was that they would never forget the source of those wonderful blessings; and, that they would honor Him for such by showing their gratitude through obedience to Him. Similarly, I believe this is the same rule that God has ordained in the New Testament. In writing to Gaius, the apostle John said, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2). We can prosper materially as long as our soul prospers. In other words, we must always keep our priorities in order. The soul must be first, the body and material things second. Jesus said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33).

Have your possessions or the pursuit of material things caused you to forget the Lord your God? If so, what makes you think that you, like Israel of old, will not perish? Jesus said, "... a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses," and "For what

profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul" (Lk. 12:15; Matt. 16:26). "Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God!"

Rise Up and Build...With Love!

So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to this good work. Nehemiah 2:18b (NKJV). As the people did in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, so let us also rise up, build, and set our hands to the good work of loving better in 2012 by:

- Showing love to others, knowing that God first loved us (1 John 4:19).

- Living a life of love by appreciating our place as dearly loved children of God (Eph. 5:1-2).

- Lovingly forgiving others, considering that God, through Christ, has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32).

- Lovingly being patient with others, understanding that as the patience of God has led us to repentance, we may also lead others to repentance (Rom. 2:4, 2 Pet. 3:9).

- Lovingly putting others first, being ever mindful of the way Christ put us first (Phil. 2:3-6).

- Letting our love be a cloak of refuge to others from gossip and backbiting, knowing that if love says anything it speaks words of defense, kindness and protection (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

- Jeff Haught