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Daily Devotional - Monday, September 24, 2018 - The Tragedy of a Wasted Life

SEPTEMBER 24TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, September 24, 2018 - The Tragedy of a Wasted Life

Luke 12:15-21

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Death is inevitable, but at times it surprises us. Perhaps you can relate because you know someone who died unexpectedly.

Today's parable describes one such situation. It tells of a man who acquired comfort and wealth but thought only of his time on earth. Death came without warning, and he could take nothing with him. God called him a fool for living focused only on himself.

Though rich in the world's eyes, the man had no relationship with God and hadn't invested anything in Christ's kingdom. All the treasures he stored here were worthless once he died. What's even worse is that without Jesus, he'd be separated from God forever. Think about the tragic waste of such a life.

As I consider the choices this man made, two questions come to mind that are important for us all to contemplate. First, if you were to die today, would you go to heaven? Salvation is a free gift for those who trust in Jesus as the acceptable sacrifice for sin. He is the only way—no excuses or even sincere beliefs in other ways will work. And Scripture teaches that when believers die, they immediately find themselves in the Lord's presence (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Second, what is your life accomplishing? Are you driven by selfish purposes, storing security and wealth for yourself? Or is your motivation to further God's kingdom?

Like the man in this parable, we don't know when we will die. We do know, however, that death is inescapable. Dying is an unpleasant topic, but eternity is a long time and worthy of our attention. It's definitely a wise investment to make sure of your salvation and to invest in God's kingdom.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, September 21, 2018 - The Witness of God

SEPTEMBER 21ST 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Romans 1:16-23

FRIDAY

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No one is born an atheist or agnostic, “because that which is known about God is evident within them” (Rom. 1:19). The Father has given every person an inborn witness of His existence, but this isn’t the only evidence given to mankind. Creation itself testifies of God’s invisible attributes, eternal power, and divine nature (Rom. 1:20). However, it’s possible to ignore or reject both the internal and external witnesses of God. When that happens, the mind becomes progressively darker until it can no longer see the light of truth.

On hearing this, many believers react with concern for the multitudes who have never heard the gospel. They wonder, *How can people be saved if the only evidence they experience of the one true God is the natural world and an inborn sense of His reality, which their culture may try to deny or manipulate?* Yet our text today says there is no excuse for anyone who rejects both these witnesses (Rom. 1:20).

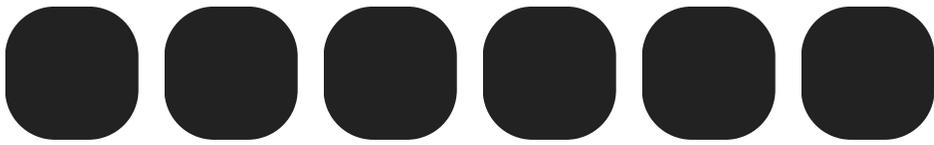
One thing we must remember is that God will be just, and we cannot claim to be more righteous, compassionate, and merciful than He. We can trust that He will judge every person rightly (Deut. 32:3-4). All people will be evaluated according to the truth they received, the opportunities they had, and what they did with both: Did they believe or reject what God revealed?

One thing we can know for certain is our part in the divine plan for unbelievers—Scripture is clear that we’re to be witnesses to as many as possible. You have the opportunity to share the gospel with people in your sphere of influence. That is God’s plan for the unreached.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, September 20, 2018 - The Best Friend You'll Ever Have

SEPTEMBER 20TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, September 20, 2018 - The Best Friend You'll Ever Have

John 15:12-17

Good friends are hard to find, and our busy schedules don't help. Many people don't make time to cultivate meaningful friendships—are you possibly among their number? If so, notice how Jesus prioritized time with His friends. He lived closely with His disciples for three years and proved to be not only their Lord and Savior but also the best friend they'd ever had.

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Unlike the disciples, we've never physically walked with Jesus, but this doesn't exclude us from His friendship. First 1 Peter 1:8 says, "And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory."

Every person who trusts in Christ becomes His friend, and the ultimate proof of His unwavering love is that He laid down His life for whoever would believe. Without the Savior's amazing act of self-sacrifice, His disciples—along with every one of His followers since then—would have been eternally lost and separated from the Lord forever.

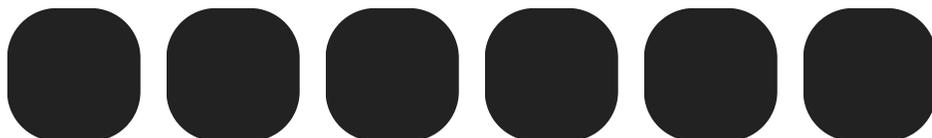
Although Jesus is a unique friend unlike any other, we can learn much about friendship from His example. He tells us to love one another as He has loved us, and His is a self-sacrificing love that does what's best for the other person. Jesus was open and honest with His friends, making known to them all that the Father had told Him.

What a comfort to know that though others may disappoint and abandon us, Christ always remains a faithful, patient, and loving friend. And as we seek to emulate and obey Him, we will become that same kind of friend to others.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, September 19, 2018 - The Blessings of Brokennes

SEPTEMBER 19TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Deuteronomy 8:1-14

WEDNESDAY

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God's discipline isn't easy, but we cannot ignore its wonderful benefits to spiritual growth. It gives us an entirely new perspective on the Lord's plan for our life. If we enjoyed a steady, uninterrupted stream of blessings, we might think our Father exists solely for our happiness, and we wouldn't know the truth about who He is.

Think about what we generally request of the Lord. We ask Him for healing, success, or financial security and seek His blessing on our family and relationships. Philippians 4:6 tells us to pray about everything, so there is nothing wrong with coming to God with all our concerns. But we must be careful that we don't inadvertently begin to think of Him as our personal assistant or some sort of catalog, where we place our order and He delivers.

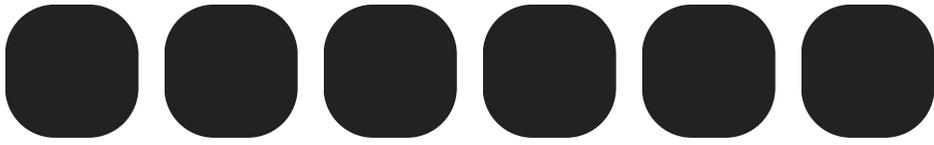
If that is the case, who is actually at the center of our prayers? It certainly isn't almighty God, who as our Creator and Savior is worthy of our adoration and worship. When we find ourselves at the center of our prayers, the end result is the subtle deception that the Lord exists for our benefit. This distortion breaks the Lord's heart and leads us far away from truly knowing His character and majesty.

The antidote for this self-centered idolatry is brokenness. When God says "no"—taking away instead of adding more and then divinely managing what we have, how much we have, and how long we have it—He is helping us keep our eyes on Him. Do not despise such moments. Instead, recognize them as the voice of your Father calling you back into His loving arms.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, September 18, 2018 - The Path of Brokenness

SEPTEMBER 18TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, September 18, 2018 - The Path of Brokenness

John 12:23-28

TUESDAY

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A seed that is not planted will never produce a crop. So Jesus used a seed to illustrate why He had to die in order to bring many people to glory. He was teaching a principle that's also true in our lives: If our ambition is to remain isolated, protected, and comfortable, we'll never bear the fruit God desires. It's in dying to self and being broken of pride and self-sufficiency that we become fruitful and useful to the Lord.

Brokenness is one of the means God uses to mature His children. In that process, we may find ourselves challenged in:

Circumstances that cripple our self-sufficiency.

Areas in which we are not submissive to Him.

The timing of His plans.

If we refuse to be re-formed and instead cling to whatever God wants us to release, then how can He use us for His kingdom? Just like the single, unbroken grain of wheat, we will remain

unproductive.

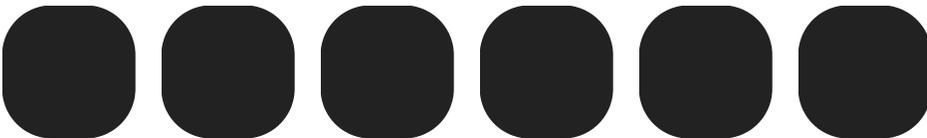
With so much at stake, why do we still resist His process of breaking us down? The problem is usually our shortsighted desires. It's difficult to let go of things or relationships or hobbies we enjoy even when we know they are stunting our spiritual growth. We prefer to take the path of least resistance and hope God will bless us anyway.

Don't be distracted by short-term happiness—that isn't the road to maturity that God has prepared for you. An abundance of fruitfulness awaits you if you'll release your grip and let Him do whatever it takes to get you there.

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