



But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. – Matthew 15:9

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Ramblings

Tonight I have a couple things on my mind and they will be more or less rambling.

Yesterday I had a memory and wanted to share it with you. This didn't happen to me, but my son witnessed it and later reported it to me. At the time I didn't understand what the problem was but Samuel did seem to have trouble with it so I played along with him and agreed it wasn't a good thing.

Now that I'm older and have come to a different understanding of things I can look back on this and recognize that Samuel was correct. What he witnessed was wrong. His teacher gave false information which helped to lead the students to an incorrect picture of God.

I won't tell at what school this happened or what grade Samuel was in because the teacher should be protected. Even though I disagree with how she handled the situation and what she taught those kids, she shouldn't be intentionally embarrassed by revealing who she was.

It was at the end of the school day and the kids were ready for dismissal. The teacher asked if there were any volunteers to say the prayer before they left. A girl raised her hand and proceeded to ask Jesus to keep them safe on their way home and help them be good boys and girls.

After she finished praying the teacher didn't immediately dismiss the class. She corrected the girl by saying, "Jesus doesn't want you to be good, he wants you to act good."

When Samuel told me this I didn't understand why he was upset. Furthermore, I didn't know there was a difference between being good and acting good. Because of my ignorance I tried to agree with Samuel while also trying to not make a big deal about it.

Well, perhaps a big deal should be made about it. There is a difference between doing and being.

We can do good things without actually knowing Jesus. Even Atheists are capable of doing good things and have even been guilty of doing more good things than some who claim to be Christians.

The actual name of the law slips my mind but I think if I call it the law of modeling you might be able to understand what I'm talking about. The natural law, the design law, causes us to mimic the person we admire. The more we act to mimic that person the more like that person we become.

When we get to know the Jesus that the Bible presents rather than the Jesus that the church presents, we will start mimicking Someone who is so filled with love that love is all he does. It would be outside his character to act in any way that is less than loving. As we come to know his love then we begin to mimic his behavior and will gradually develop a character like his. When this happens we will not only be "good" boys and girls (men and women) we will ALSO act in ways that are loving towards others. And that is acting good.

But that form of acting good can only come by being good first. And to be good you need to get to know Jesus.

I admit I play Klondike on Facebook. No, it isn't a card game. It's an "adventure" but I do more farming than anything. I'm far enough advanced in the game that the only thing I have to do is farm which I must do in order to create energy. Energy is needed to be able to clear new lands when they give them to us which usually happens every week.

Last night we got a game update and it was something that requires little thinking about the game so I opened up a different tab and clicked on the link to Woodland Hills Church. I was in the mood for some noise but wanted noise that would be uplifting. I went to their archives and randomly selected a year then found a series that I have listened to several times. I enjoyed it so much that I began listening to it again.

This series is about the Love of God. They did 5 or 6 sermons in that series then

when they were finished they did another series on the Love of God because they felt there was still more to be said. They were right.

I've mentioned these 2 series before in my writings and have encouraged you to listen to them. And if you've already heard them they're worth hearing again.

Before I say any more about those sermons, let me mention something else. I saw that YouTube was suggesting I might like to listen to something by Pastor Lee Venden. The topic was what it would be like in heaven so I clicked and listened to an interesting but disturbing sermon.

Pastor Venden painted quite a picture of the wonders of heaven. In the past when I've heard this sermon (and I have heard it before) I would marvel along with him and his audience over the splendors that are awaiting us. But this time I was bothered. He was talking all about the "things" that would be waiting for us.

"Things" should not be our focus. "Things" won't change us. "Things" won't allow us to get to know Jesus. When it comes to eternity, "things" are utterly useless. Why should we care what "things" are waiting for us? They aren't important. Jesus knows what we need and he will provide for us.

Another thing that bothered me was that pastor Venden's description didn't come from the Bible. It came from an outside source the Adventist church tends to revere. Some people believe her writings are as sacred as the Bible. I'm not one of them. When I began this website I was a believer and loved what she wrote. But as I began to study the Bible in depth and read what she was actually writing I decided I was no longer so enamored with her. So when I heard a sermon presenting what heaven would be like and recognized that it was mostly taken from a source other than the Bible I wasn't pleased.

Now that I've said that, just remember that that is my own personal opinion. If you are a follower of the Adventist prophetess then listen to your own conscience about her. I am not the authority nor am I here to tell you what to believe. I am simply sharing what I am finding in my own studies.

Now I need to somehow tie together the sermon about heaven and the series about God's love. In one of the sermons I heard, and I can't remember which pastor used it (perhaps it was both), I heard the following text:

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. – 1 Corinthians 2:9 KJV

When listening to Greg Boyd talking about God's love, it occurred to me that we don't understand God's love. We don't have a clue what it's all about or the depth of his feelings for us. For me, this text has the dual meaning that on this earth we cannot see, hear, or begin to imagine the Love that God has for us. And for me, this Love far outweighs the material “things” that we are taught to focus on.

Ultimately we are sick with the disease of self. We need to wake up and recognize that the world doesn't revolve around us. Our focus needs to be on our Creator and the needs of others. Let's not worry about what “things” are waiting for us and long for the day that we can be so totally enveloped in a Love that we cannot now imagine.

Love to all,

Hannah

<https://whchurch.org/sermon/god-is-love/>

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