

The Old Paths

Volume 14, Issue 49

February 3, 2008

“The Tiger Picture”

Jarrold Jacobs

A few years ago, I saw a picture that I have not forgotten. It was a picture of several friends who were posed around a dead tiger. It was obvious from the picture that the men had gone on a hunt, and this tiger was killed on their hunt. The men were all smiles as they posed in the picture. They had obviously had a wonderful day and were happy. It was a neat picture. By the way, did I mention this picture was in a nursing home, and one of the men in the picture was an Alzheimer’s patient? The first time I saw that picture, I was impressed with what I saw. After this, I had several other occasions to see the picture and reflect on it. This caused me to draw some conclusions, and think seriously about my life. The tiger picture reveals several Bible principles

The Brevity Of Life

This picture showed men in the “prime” of their lives, physically. In a few short years, though, those men in the picture had changed, just as we all change! Moses said, *“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom”* (Ps. 90:10-12). The Holy Spirit inspired James to write, *“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For*

what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jas. 4:14). The men in the picture aged as we all do. Life passed by quickly for them just as Moses and James said it would.

Since we know we are here on earth for only a limited time, are we using our time wisely, or are we wasting it? The Ephesians were told they needed to “redeem the time” because *“the days are evil”* (Eph. 5:16)! Think about it — while we may live 70-80 years in this world, the “days of our years” to do the Lord’s work are not 70-80 years! When we subtract the years of infancy, the years we were living in sin, etc., most people are looking at a window of perhaps 20-40 years to do the Lord’s will. Therefore, how are we spending the brief time we have on earth? Life passes quickly for us, and we must prepare ourselves for eternity!

Circumstances Change In Our Lives

I don’t know how many of the men in that picture have died since that picture was taken, nor all their life-experiences, but I know there was one man who was not going hunting again! How ironic that at least one of those men who posed in the picture could not even enjoy the memories of his hunt! As time passes, circumstances change in all of our lives. Solomon spoke of this in Ecclesiastes 12 as he wrote about the aging process and how things change physically in the body. He said, *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil*

days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Ecc. 12:1-7). Circumstances change in our lives, but we have an eternal soul that must prepare for the life to come!

The tiger picture captured a moment of the past. It said nothing about the present, or future! Just as all pictures do, the tiger picture recorded a moment in time that had come and gone. The picture stood as a testimony of what once was! At one time, these men were strong, healthy, and able to do what they pleased. Those days are over. Time passes us by, and life changes.

Knowing this is true, are we holding to God’s “unchanging hand”? Do we have *“hope ... as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast”* (Heb. 6:19)? Christ is *“the same yesterday, today, and forever”* (Heb. 13:8). Have we been baptized into Christ, and do we belong to His church (Acts 2:38-47)? Our lives change often, but Christ, salvation and

the promise of a home in Heaven stand unchanging for those who are ready to live by faith!

As Pleasant As The Picture Was, It Revealed Nothing About The Condition Of Their Souls.

I guess this fact struck me hardest as I looked at the picture over several months. The picture might bring back pleasant memories to those involved, but it says nothing about the condition of the souls of those in the picture. I might add that similarly, one's bank account does not reveal the condition of one's soul. One's friends, family, name, occupation, house, or any other physical indicator men use to define "success" cannot reveal the condition of one's soul as God sees it! In fact, when we read passages such as Hebrews 11:38; I Corinthians 1:18-31; and parallel passages, we learn that God's standard for "success", who and what God considers "wise," and a host of other things stand diametrically opposed to man's standards. Therefore, who will we please while we live on earth? Will we please God or men? (Gal. 1:6-12)

Conclusion

Let us remember that we are "strangers and pilgrims" right now (I Pet. 2:11). Let us remember who we are and to whom we will one day give account (Rom. 14:12). Solomon spoke to future generations of people, reminding those that are young to, "Rejoice, ... in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes" and to know "that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Ecc. 11:9). Are we remembering who we are and our responsibilities to God? Don't waste any more time! Obey God!

Kids' Kolumn

Jarrod Jacobs

Do you know how many books are in the Bible? Do you know the names of some of those who wrote the books of the Bible? What is the Bible really about? It would be good for you to learn the answers to these and other questions about the Bible. Even while we are young, we need to be learning the Bible, so that we can know what we must do to please God. Has mom or dad helped you learn the Bible? I hope so.

The answers to the above questions:

1) There are 66 books in the Bible, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

2) Some who wrote books in the Bible include: Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, David, Solomon, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude.

3) The Bible teaches us God's plan for saving man from sin. God's plan for man's salvation begins to be revealed in Genesis 3:15. From this point, God's plan for saving man continues to be revealed. Christ came to this world to save sinners (I Tim. 1:15), and we can be saved when we obey Him (Heb. 5:9)!

God's way is the best way. Remember this as you obey God and your parents this week. (Eph. 6:1-3)

Parents' Paragraphs

Jarrod Jacobs

Ephesians 6:4 has something to say about fathers and their responsibilities to their children. It reads, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Continuing our study from last week, we see the apostle not only telling fathers what "not" to do ("provoke not your children to wrath"), but also telling fathers what to do: "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Put simply, this means fathers are responsible for the education or instruction of the children, morally, spiritually, and physically. He must not be negligent, but active in this work, "bringing them up" in the right way! In this work, we see both instructive and corrective discipline in the family, and fathers must be there to do it!

Fathers have a unique opportunity. Children do not know right from wrong when born, and fathers must be active in the proper instruction or teaching while he has his children at home. God expects this. Such passages do not exempt "Mom" from her role, but I am mindful of the fact that "fathers" are specifically named here. Think about it!

Parents, let us learn from the example of Abraham (Gen. 18:19).

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