

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

THE COMING TSUNAMI

By Pastor Brian De Jong

When an earthquake deep within the Indian Ocean caused a Tsunami to sweep unannounced through the region of Southeast Asia, hundreds of thousands were caught off guard and many of them died. In the aftermath, an early warning system was put into place. This system lets scientists, government officials and media outlets know of the approaching danger so that ordinary citizens can be warned.

There is a spiritual corollary to this early warning system in Ezekiel 3:17.

There God tells the prophet, *"Son of man, I have appointed you a*

watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me." If the watchman did his work and warned the people, he could save many from approaching danger. But if he was lax in his work and didn't warn the people, then their doom would be on his head.

Pastors have prophetic responsibilities, including being watchmen on the walls of Zion. It is the job of the pastor to blow the trumpet and warn the people. Consider this article to be a trumpet blast to announce impending danger.

The danger to which I refer is the militant homosexual agenda and its effect on the free speech of Christian people. As recent scandals have revealed, tyrannical officials will even go so far as to attempt to monitor the content of Christian prayers. The phrase "thought police" is no wild-eyed exaggeration by over-

caffeinated and sleep-deprived conspiratorialists.

The recent change on the issue of gay marriage has been staggering. Just one year ago Vice President Joe Biden let slip that President Obama was in favor of gay marriage. The administration braced for public fallout, but to their surprise and relief, there was little outrage and the "crisis" passed quickly. Since then it has become fashionable to support so-

called same-sex marriage. With official governmental support and waning public opposition, radical homosexual activists are gaining steam in their crusade to force Ameri-

cans to not merely tolerate homosexual behavior, but to celebrate it as the new virtue. And we who believe the Bible are expected to bow down and worship the statue whenever we hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, harp, bagpipe, and every other kind of musical instrument (see Daniel 3:4-6).

Though I am an optimistic postmillennialist, hear me when I say, "It will probably get worse before it gets better." Don't expect this will go away quietly or easily. They've gained too much ground to give up their jihad now.

So how should you, as Christian people, respond? Let me suggest some approaches to the issue:

(1) Remember what God says clearly and repeated in His word of truth. Homosexuality is sin and God does not approve of such conduct. Homosexual behavior...

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June 2013

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Mnemonics...

- *Missions Sunday, 9th*
- *Sunday School Camp-out at Church, 28th*

A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts

Chapter 6, Sections 7-8

by Richard Steele

SECT. VII. WANT OF WATCHFULNESS

The seventh cause of wandering of the thoughts in the worship of God, is, want of watchfulness. "Watch and pray" are most necessary companions, else "shall we fall into temptation." Matt. 26:41. In those sad times of plague, the faithful guard stands at the city gates, and the dangerous passenger for all his importunity is stopped and turned again. Why? Perhaps the plague comes with him, and therefore the sword is placed to his breast, he comes not there; the neglect of this care would soon lay waste the land. So if any straggling thought, perhaps with the plague in it, shall enter at pleasure into the soul, especially while the Lord's service is in hand, no wonder that soul lays waste; Lord have mercy may be written on that door.

1. The neglect of watchfulness before holy duties causes distractions; and that is, by not heeding to order your affairs with discretion for God's service. ¹ When you involve yourselves in too much business, too much for your head, too much for your time, or too much for your strength, then worldly thoughts will get place; you cannot help it. Or, when men are unadvised in their business, in not choosing a fit time for duties, and thereby your business and God's, shoulder one another, and neither is done well. And therefore we are commanded "to watch unto prayer." 1 Pet. 4:7. As Satan watches to cross and indispose us, by throwing some diverting and cooling occasions, so is it our wisdom to counter-watch him. Endeavour to time your affairs, and especially your duties. It is the character of a good man, that ¹ "he orders his affairs with discretion," Psalm 62:6, and renders every thing beautiful in its time. For it is a true observation, that an indiscreet ordering of Saturday's business, hath great influence upon the unprofitableness of the Sabbath's ordinances.

Neglect of watchfulness in holy duties. Our hearts, so far as unregenerate, are forced into holy duties, as a pressed soldier into the field: he is brought

in against his will, and has no principle of courage, or love to his country: he had rather be digging or idling at home. Now what trust can you repose in such a soldier, if he be not watched? he steals away, at every lane's end, and in the midst of the battle you shall be sure to miss him; a constant eye must keep him, or you lose him. It is just so with our naughty hearts, if there be not a predominant principle of grace; it is not choice but use that brings them in: they would rather be carking or trifling about any thing than busy in prayer; and therefore if you neglect to watch them at every turn, no sentence ends, but they will steal away. For prayer without watching is but a mere compliment. Where the tongue goes one way, and the heart another, that is a compliment; and such is a watchless duty. It is said, the nightingale in her sweetest notes is apt to fall asleep; to prevent which she settles herself on a bough, with a thorn at her breast, that when she begins to nod that sharp monitor may awake her. The holiest saint is apt to nod, and steal away in the midst of his most solemn duties, if God's spirit do not quicken his watch. Christ's own disciples, even just after a sacrament, were overtaken for want of this "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" Matt. 26:40. And if they fell asleep at prayer, for want of watching, how can you keep close to God without it, that have neither so good a monitor without, nor so good a heart within

3. Neglect of watchfulness after duties causes distractions in the next that follow; people generally let loose their hearts, when the duty ends, and unlace themselves for ease; and then their thoughts take liberty. Our deceitful hearts foreseeing this, no chords will bind them to a good behavior in the very duties themselves; whereas, were there a constant watch kept up after our duties were done, and conscience made of our thoughts all the day long, we should retain our hearts in better order, while God's worship lasts. The foresight, and especially foretastes of liberty approaching, sets the soul eager thereupon, and we cannot keep it in.

Wandering Continued...

Besides, religion is concatenated, hath a dependence one thing upon another, and it is unsufferable to take and leave where we will. If vain thoughts lodge with you at other times, they will visit you at your business, and if they be entertained when you are disposed to entertain them, they will press in when you have no such mind.

The remedy against this neglect is, to be thoroughly convinced of the absolute necessity of constant watchfulness. "Keep thy heart with all diligence," Prov. 4:23, as a castle is kept from scaling, a house from robbing, or a jewel from defacing, so the critics; and all these are kept constantly; one hour's negligence would hazard any of them.² And then, "with all diligence," or as the Hebrew, "with all keeping," or as some, "above all keeping." The eye we watch from harm all the day, the vitals we defend and guard with constant care; we know that a touch there is mortal; but above all keeping, keep the soul: be persuaded that watchfulness is as necessary as prayer; you think, without prayer you shall go to hell, and I aver, that without watchfulness you cannot go to heaven. Man's life in this sense is a continued ordinance. "Wait on thy God continually;" Hos. 12:6; not only at thy prayers, but at thy plough. While on your knees you are waiting on God, and when you rise from your knees, you are going to wait on him in your calling, and an unbecoming thought is displeasing to him everywhere; he is sensible of an affront in the kitchen as well as in the parlour, and hates vanity all the day long. "Be sober, and watch unto prayer." 1 Peter 4:7. Sober and watch; as if they that do not watch are mad. To watch unto prayer is a duty, as well as to watch in it. He that watcheth not to duties, doth not do his duty: a wise Christian should have always something in store for God; work and look at God, eat, and drink, and talk, and still look at God, and at the soul.³ This is to walk with God all the day long. As the careful bee must needs leave her hive, and fly abroad, but she dwells nowhere else; she lights on this flower, and then on that; exhausts their

sweetness, deflowers them, and gets away; she never rests till she returns to her hive; there she rests and enjoys herself. So a holy heart must needs out into the world, and business must be done but he rests at nothing till he return to the enjoyment of God again; no flower gives him content, no business, no company, satisfies, but he retires to God, looks at him, and is lightened, and steps out again. This, sirs, this is the religion of religion. 4 I know it is hard, but it is possible; the ice is broken for you, and the way is trodden. "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence." Acts 24:16. It

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is my daily trade and business to keep my soul, that I neither offend God nor man. If you will make a trade of it, you may do it. God never calls for duty, but helps in it. "I can do all things through Christ." Phil. 4:13. God and his servant can do any thing.

¹ Through desire a man having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom. — Prov. 18:1.

² Let us imagine a city not only begirt with a strait siege of blood-thirsty enemies, but also within infested with lurking commotioners, how much would it behoove that city to stand upon its guard. — Bolton.

³ You see the angels sent about God's messages to this earth, yet never out of their heaven, never without the vision of their

Maker; and so should you strive when you are up and down in your business, yet be within sight of God. — Bishop Hall.

4 It is a thousand times easier to keep the flood-gates shut, than to drain the lower grounds when they are over-flown. — Bishop Halt

SECT. VIII. A BELOVED SIN

The eighth cause of distractions in holy duties is ¹ a beloved sin. When the soul hath espoused some bosom lust, the thoughts, be you never so busy, will be warping towards it, though God himself look on. "O Jerusalem, wash thy heart

Wandering Continued...

from wickedness: — how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?" Jer. 4:14. When wickedness is in the heart, vain thoughts will be in thy duties; they will enter, yea, they will lodge within thee. A beloved sin is like a bias on the bowl, though you throw it out never so straight, yet the bias will draw it off that way do what you can: so is a beloved sin unto the soul; aim you with utmost skill, yet there is a secret load-stone in it, which attracts the heart, and makes that prayer to end in hell, which began in heaven. Either sin and you must be at a distance, or God and you will. The soul that is in league with sin, dare not come to God, dare not look at him, dare not think on him; and what must that man think of in a duty, that dare not think seriously on God? As that penitent Father speaks in his confessions. An unmortified soul, like the husband of a scolding wife, had rather be any where than at home, and makes many a sad bargain abroad, because he hath no comfort at home with his wife; so such a heart chooses to be thinking of any thing rather than God; alas! matters are not straight between them; the poison of sin is in him, and he embraces that abominable thing which God hates. The thief had rather go forty miles another way, than come near the judge; God is an offended judge to a willful sinner, and he cares not ever to come near him. Hence "let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." Heb. 12:22. He that comes to God with a true upright honest heart, being sprinkled from an evil conscience, may draw near to God in full assurance of faith: whereas guilt clouds, clogs, and distracts the soul. So that you see, both the guilt and power of a bosom sin furnish us with too much cause of distractions. Sin, that would have all the heart; and God, he will have all or nothing. It is such an offering, that is a whole burnt-offering, that the Lord delights in. As no subject is capable of two contrary qualities, in the intense degrees, as heat and cold may be both in the same hand, but not in their

intense degrees, so the heart of man cannot entertain Christ and corruption, light and darkness, except the one be loved and served superlatively above the other. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psalm 116:18. God first stops his ear above, and then the sinner's mouth below, that regards iniquity, that likes, loves, approves, or gives it rest and quiet in the soul. Indeed, God neither regards him, nor doth such a soul regard God. He must love God that is lively in his service. "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?" Job 27:10. Will he always? he may now and then send a thought that way in his special need, but not always: there is difference between converse and communion. One may have converse or traffic with a stranger upon occasion, but communion is with a friend. A hypocrite may have some converse, or trading with God for necessaries, but sweet communion, constant calling on God, and serious duties, he can never enjoy and follow, that loves any sin before the chief good.

The remedies against a beloved sin are briefly these two:

1. Consideration. Sit down and think what real good this sin hath ever done thee. Think what hurt it hath done thee and

others, and what fruit besides shame and death it brings to any. Thy dearest sin is but sin, which is the worst thing in the world, and, its masks and disguises being laid aside, more ugly than the devil, more horrid than hell itself. And think, the more thou lovest it, the more God hates it, and his rage and jealousy are increased with the increase of thy desires. Think how many prayers it hath lost thee, how many mercies it hath poisoned to thee, how many smiles it hath clouded, besides what unutterable sufferings it hath inflicted upon Christ, and is preparing for thee in hell. Consider, that thou mayest have as much joy, happiness, and true comfort without it; and all converted sinners confess, that Jesus Christ hath been better to them

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Wandering Concluded...

than all their sins; and if you may have as good enjoyments, or better, to have Christ with them, and heaven after them, will not make them worse.

2. Supplication. Kneel down and pray with faith in the uprightness of your hearts, for strength from above. All the strength of heaven is engaged by prayer. He that heartily sets himself against his sin by prayer, cannot but dislike it; and when it is truly disliked, its heart is broken.

Augustine complains, that when he, in his unconverted state, begged a divorce from his sin, his heart was afraid, lest God should hear his prayers. Beware lest your hearts secretly cry spare, when your tongues openly cry. Lord, kill and crucify my corruption: but do thou really pull on earth, and the Lord will pull from heaven, and rend thy sin and soul asunder. Otherwise, as the poets tell us of Hippomanias, that running with Atalanta for victory, he conquered by throwing golden apples down; which

Atalanta stooping to take up, lost the prize; so Satan seeing the soul running heavenward in God's service, will throw down the gilded temptations of a beloved sin, stop in its career, and hazard the prize of eternal glory.

¹ Observe, that some make a difference between a beloved sin, and a reigning sin; a beloved sin rules over our sins, not over our graces; a reigning sin rules over both.



Front Page Concluded

... is an abomination in God's sight and is contrary to both His created order and His revealed will. Don't fall for the line, "God loves homosexuals and you should too..."

(2) Recall that unrepentant homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 is very plain. Unless they repent of their sins and believe in Christ, they cannot and will not go to heaven. Could you imagine an unrepentant murderer in heaven? An unrepentant thief? An unrepentant adulterer? God is too pure to tolerate unrepentant sin of unredeemed sinners in His presence.

(3) Both church and state have a responsibility to respond to homosexual behavior in society. The job of the church is to preach a clear gospel with a direct demand for repentance toward God and faith in Jesus

Christ. Homosexual sinners need the gospel as surely as any other category of sinners. The good news is powerful to set any man free from any sin – even from a homosexual lifestyle.

(4) Converted homosexuals need much help and support from their Christian friends in order to put off their fruitless way of life, and to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Ministering to recovering homosexuals is time consuming and challenging, but very needful for their growth in grace.

When we speak out on this topic, we must be gracious, wise, winsome, firm and reasonable. Choose your words carefully and prayerfully. The Christian perspective needs to be heard, and we may be the ones God uses to do just that!

June Birthdays



Vacation Bible School

If you're thinking of inviting a neighbor or relative to this year's VBS why not start now?

Postcards with all the info for this year's Bible School are available in the narthex at the church. Remember to keep VBS in your prayers as well— for all that happens during the week, for the teachers, helpers & for the students too!





Grace OPC

June 2013

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	4	5	6	7	8
9 Missions Sunday	10 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	11 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	12	13 Mini Golf Outing	14	15
16	17 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	18	19	20	21	22
23	24 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	25	26	27	28 Sunday School Camp-out at Church	29
30 Lord's Supper, (p.m.)						

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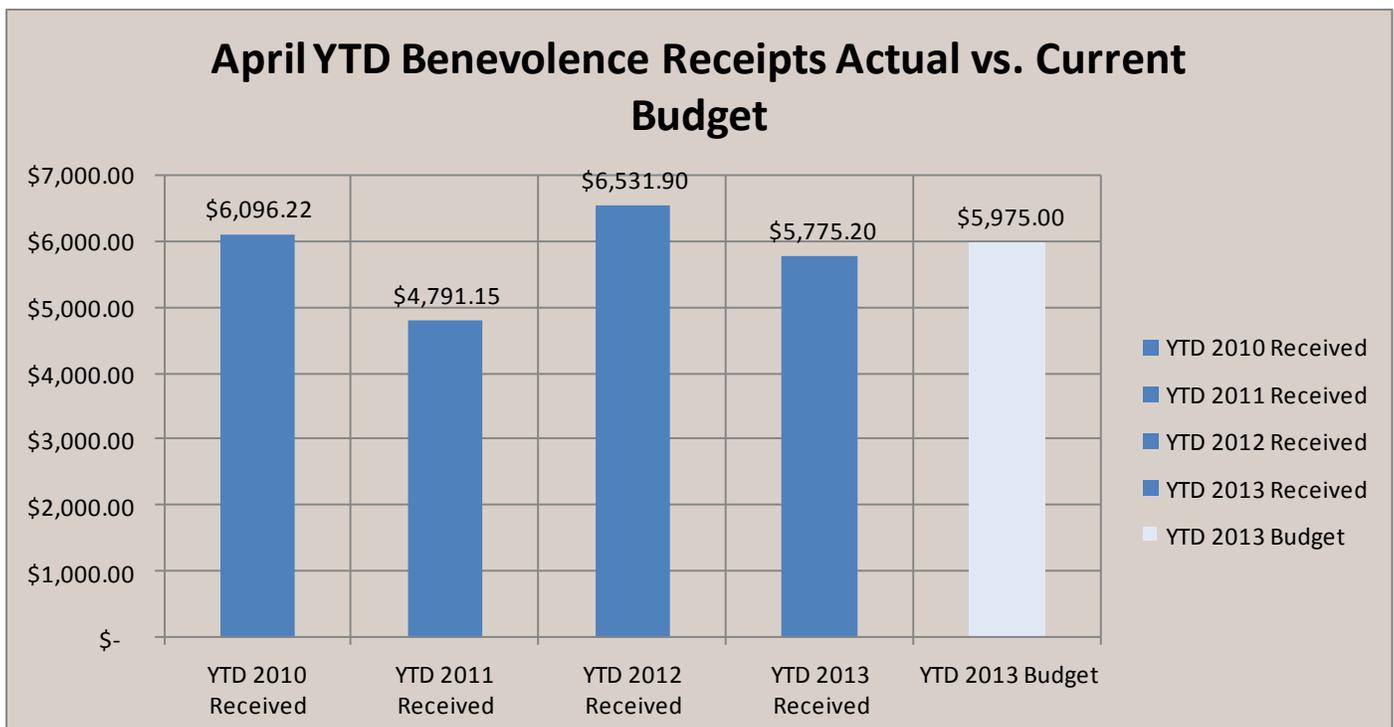
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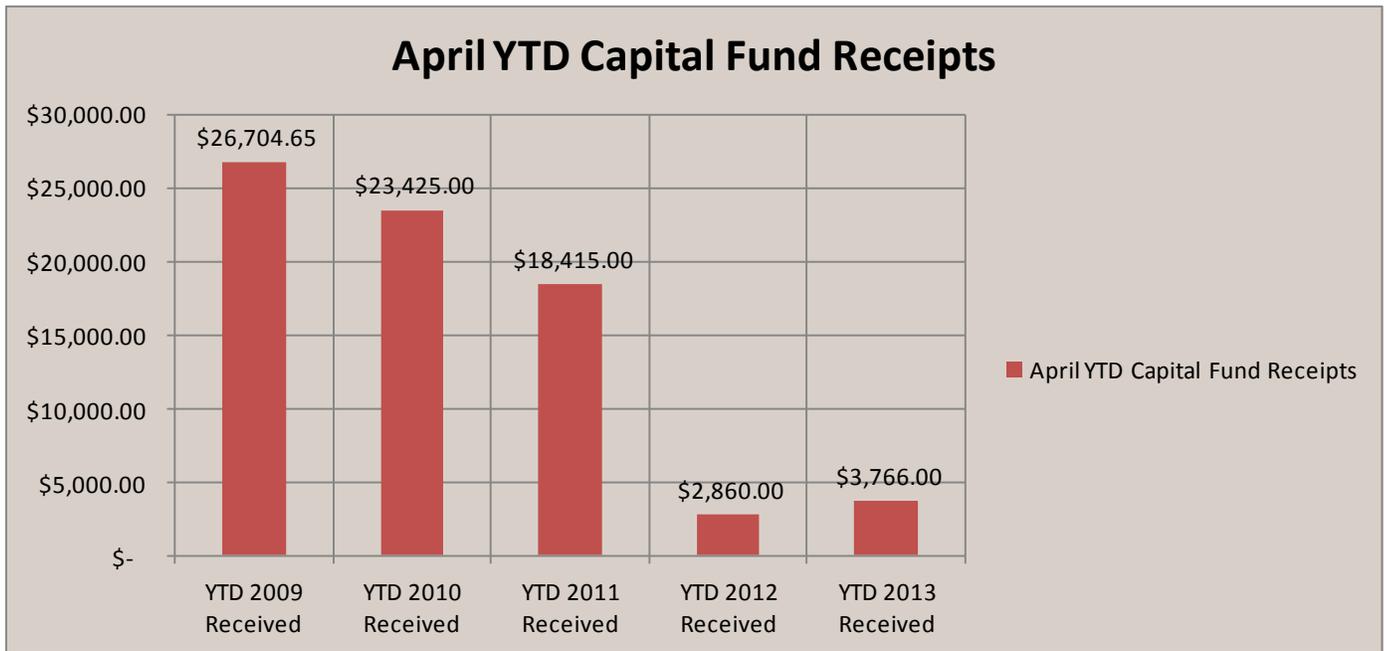
by Joel Moody

General Fund receipts for April totaled \$13,196.91 as compared to the budget of \$16,312.05, while General Fund disbursements for March totaled \$13,049.60. April year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$54,414.32 as compared to the budget of \$55,460.85 (a shortfall of \$1,046.53), while April year to date disbursements of \$51,110.00 were \$4,350.85 below budget. Through the end of April, the General Fund has increased by \$3,334.63. The increase in the General Fund was due to lower than budgeted disbursements. Year to date General Fund receipts for April were 1.7% below last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 5.2% above the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for April totaled \$2,082.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75 (an excess of \$588.25). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through April totaled \$5,775.20 and were below budget by \$199.80. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. During April...

April Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$3,766.00. Please refer to the Capital Fund Graph that shows the historical giving for the years indicated in the graph. You may contribute to the Capital Fund by marking your gift as "Capital Fund" and placing it in the offering plate. Please note that the Capital Fund is used to pay for current and future needs that may exist to purchase additional equipment (such as the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) or building-type items (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.).





Orange Carrots

- ★ 4 Tbsp. butter
- ★ 2 Tbsp. orange marmalade
- ★ 2 lb. baby carrots
- ★ 3/4 cup fresh orange juice
- ★ 3 Tbsp. packed light brown sugar
- ★ Kosher salt & freshly ground pepper
- ★ 1/3 cup chopped candied pecans

Melt 2 Tbsp. butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in the marmalade, then add the carrots, orange juice, brown sugar, 1/2 tsp. salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil, then cover & reduce the heat to medium low. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until the carrots are almost tender, 13-15 minutes.

Uncover and add the remaining 2 Tbsp. butter to the skillet. Increase the heat to medium high and cook, stirring, until the liquid is reduced, 8-10 minutes. Transfer to a platter and sprinkle with the candied pecans.

Grace De Jong



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
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thing.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

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Spurgeon Corner

*“The evening and the morning were the first day.”
(Genesis 1:5)*

Was it so even in the beginning? Did light and darkness divide the realm of time in the first day? Then little wonder is it if I have also changes in my circumstances from the sunshine of prosperity to the midnight of adversity. It will not always be the blaze of noon even in my soul concerns, I must expect at seasons to mourn the absence of my former joys, and seek my Beloved in the night. Nor am I alone in this, for all the Lord's beloved ones have had to sing the mingled song of judgment and of mercy, of trial and deliverance, of mourning and of delight. It is one of the arrangements of Divine providence that day and night shall not cease either in the spiritual or natural creation till we reach the land of which it is written, “there is no night there.” What our heavenly Father ordains is wise and good.

What, then, my soul, is it best for thee to do? Learn first *to be content* with this divine order, and be willing, with Job, to receive evil from the hand of the Lord as well as good. Study next, to *make the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice*. Praise the Lord for the sun of joy when it rises, and for the gloom of evening as it falls. There is beauty both in sunrise and sunset; sing of it, and glorify the Lord. Like the nightingale, pour forth thy notes at all hours. *Believe that the night is as useful as the day*. The dews of grace fall heavily in the night of sorrow. The stars of promise shine forth gloriously amid the darkness of grief. *Continue thy service* under all changes. If in the day thy watchword be *labour*, at night exchange it for *watch*. Every hour has its duty, do thou continue in thy calling as the Lord's servant until he shall suddenly appear in his glory. My soul, thine evening of old age and death is drawing near; dread it not, for it is part of the day; and the Lord has said, “I will cover him all the day long.”

Morning, June 1, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon



Camp Westminster

Camp Westminster 2013 will be held August 5th-9th at Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, WI. This year's speaker will be Rev. Jonathan Falk. His topic is “Our Missionary God: the Big Picture of God's Mission.” For more information or

registration, watch for brochures or contact Joe & Judy Lewandowski ...

