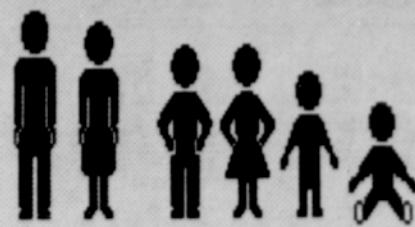




RELIGION

Strengthen Your Faith Through Prayer And Regular Church Worship

Scripture of the Week:
St. John: Chapter 3



Insight from The Word

by Michael Lindsey, Dean of North Portland Bible College

The Power of a Grain of Wheat

The Sunday School lesson for February 4 in the uniform series will be John 12:20-36a.

The international lesson series passes over more than two chapters of very significant teaching from the Lord Jesus between last week's lesson and this; you might particularly be blessed to study the allegories of the "good shepherd," which contrasted his loving concern for his people with the ruthless exploitation of the religious leaders of that day (10:1-18). We ought not be surprised to see religious leaders today who exploit their followers for money and honor.

As we read this week's text, we see that the Lord's mind is filled with thoughts about his impending death on the cross. When Mary anointed Jesus' feet with "pure nard," a most costly perfume (12:1-8), Jesus did not think of the celebration and festivity such an ointment usually implied. Instead, he thought of the spices used to anoint the dead—and foresaw his own burial.

Now certain Greeks came to Jerusalem, and wanted to see his preacher and healer Jesus. They may well have been proselytes, converts to the Jewish religion, or they may have been travelers who joined in the worship without any real commitment to the God of Israel. At any rate, they tried to get a private meeting with Jesus through his disciples (12:21-22). Strangely enough, we never find out whether Jesus consented to see them, nor what happened to the Greeks later. They disappear as quickly as they appeared in the story.

But their appearance and transmitted request clearly triggered a response in the mind of the Lord. He replied, "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (12:23, NIV). At the beginning of his ministry, at the wedding in Cana, Jesus had told his mother "my hour is not yet come" (2:4), and John the writer repeats this several times, to explain why the Jews were unable to arrest him (7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). But after this he repeatedly said "my hour has come" (12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1; the KJV retains the literal "hour" while NIV and some others explain the meaning as "the time has come").

It is exciting to me that Jesus was able to face the prospects of betrayal, beatings, humiliation and an agonizing, slow death on the cross, and view them as "glory"! The death of Jesus Christ was not an unfortunate martyrdom, nor a political execution (though it had those overtones for the chief priests, see 11:48-50). This was the very "hour" for which Jesus' whole life was prepared. Though he did many good things with his life, and taught many wonderful precepts, his greatest reason for coming to earth was to die for the sins of humanity (Mark 10:45).

The Lord's wonderful capacity to prepare for his "glorification" was rooted in a principle of life which has great value for us in our own lives: "Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" (John 12:24, NIV). When we plant a seed in the ground, it loses its identity. It falls apart, as the germ of life within begins to grow and develop. The stalk of wheat bears little resemblance to the original seed—until the stalk bears fruit. Then it becomes clear that the seed, by dying to self, has multiplied itself multi-fold.

Sometimes I think Christians have made the necessity of Jesus' death a detached theological issue, almost like a real estate purchase. Since there was only one way to redeem lost humanity from the guilt of sin, Jesus just "toughed it out" and paid the price. But Christ did so much more! When he died on the cross, he was investing his life for the life of his church, because he

Governor, State Employees Kick-Off Annual State

Governor Neil Goldschmidt and Oregon state employees will kick off the Governor's Eighth Annual State Employees Food Drive on Thursday, February 1.

To help kick-off the state's largest food drive—a month-long effort across Oregon in February—the Governor will join Adult and Family Services Division employees for their Chili Cook-Off at the Public Service Building cafeteria in Salem. The Govern-

ment loves us so much (cp. Ephesians 5:25-27). Because he gave his life for our salvation, he was able to make us people who could multiply his works around the world (John 14:12).

And it is painful to die. Christians love to claim the promises of joy and peace an eternal life, but do we also embrace the dying to self which Jesus indicated was the way to true joy and life? Christ today is looking for men and women who will die to self-exaltation, to self-centeredness, to selfish comfort and ease. He wants his people to invest their lives in service to others, in witnessing to the unconverted, even in risking their lives for those who have never heard the gospel of Christ. The testimony of saints through the centuries confirms the power and joy and satisfaction which comes from surrendering one's life to the will of God.

As Jesus summed it up, "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (12:25, NIV). I see so many people "loving their lives" in this world, by amassing material possessions (or wishing they could), or building a big name for themselves (or wishing they could), or filling up the holes in their lives with short-term fixes of pleasure (or wishing they could!). Inevitably their lives become hollow and frustrated.

But the life that is lived for Jesus, and filled with his Holy Spirit, will enjoy a peace that passes all understanding, in spite of the trials and self-denials which are pressed upon it. Isn't that the life you should choose?

Employees Kick-Off Annual State Food Drive

nor will be a celebrity judge for the event.

Oregon's State Employee Food Drive is one of the most successful food drives in the nation. For eight years now, our state employees, through their commitment, creativity and generosity, have shown that they truly care about their fellow citizens," said Governor Neil Goldschmidt.

Packwood: Oregon Senior Citizens Wanted!!!

Oregon Senator Bob Packwood announced today that he will participate in the 1990 U.S. Congressional Senior Intern Program. Senator Packwood will select two Oregon seniors to participate in this year's program, which will be held from May 13-19, and will be coordinated by the Close-Up Foundation. Close-Up is a non-profit, non-partisan civic education organization and has conducted programs for older Americans for the last six years.

The Senior Intern Program is one of the best programs around," commented Senator Packwood. "I have selected interns since 1978, and find that, through them, all Oregonians benefit. The exchange of ideas helps Oregon's seniors, and it helps me."

Topics for discussion this year will include an overview of the issues facing the 2nd session of the 101st Congress: paying the bills for health care and long term care; the debate over the Social Security Trust Fund; senior housing, and being an effective senior advocate. Those Oregonians selected for the program will also meet with Senator Packwood and his staff. Seminars, workshops and tours of points of interest round out the week.

Individuals interested in participating should send their name, address, phone number, background information, letters of support and a brief statement of why he or she would like to participate to:

Senator Bob Packwood
101 SW Main Street, #240
Portland, Oregon 97204

Nominations are welcome from individuals or their senior organizations, and should be sent to Senator Packwood by March 1. The interns will be announced by March 15, 1990. The intern must cover his or her own travel costs, although each person will receive per diem expenses while in Washington, D.C.

Following their week in Washington, the interns will serve as ongoing members of Senator Packwood's Senior Advisory Council.

Today's Plowshares

by M. Isaacs of 'The Voice' staff

Dwight D. Eisenhower stated "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who would hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the seat of its laborers the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children... This is not a way of life for all, in any true sense. Under a cloud of war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron."

The General Board of the American Baptist Churches adopted a Resolution on Military Spending which reads in part: "Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ, came into the World to break down the dividing walls of hostility [Eph. 2:11-19] between people. We are called to continue that work. Our Biblical faith leads us to work for peace & justice among nations. (Matt. 5:9, Ps. 34:14) We believe that continual build-up of war making capabilities is not the way for nations to create a world of peace and justice. (Is. 2:1-5, Micah 4:1-4) We worship the Lord of Love and life, not of destruction and death. We are to work for peace, health, wholeness and security."

The price nations pay for their military needs must be seen not only in terms of the dollar allocated, but also in terms of the social and consumer goods given-up so that weapons can be produced. What the mod-

ern plowshares, goods and services might be—would probably result from a decrease in the military expenditures. But, this is a matter of speculation. There's no way of saying what shifts would occur. The following alternatives might be accomplished given the political will and economic shift.

- For \$200 billion dollars:
- 1) New or improved housing could be provided for 25 million Americans or;
 - 2) Every United States public school teacher's salary could be increased by \$3,000 and day care for two million preschool children could be provided or;
 - 3) Light-rail urban mass transit systems could be constructed in 40 metropolitan areas and 40,000 miles of freight tracks could be upgraded or;
 - 4) Research on solar energy could be quadrupled and every home could be weatherized, decreasing our bill for foreign oil by 25% or;
 - 5) Nonmilitary industrial or medical research and development could be doubled.
- Proposed arsenal outlays of U.S. Military spending have already exceeded \$200 billion, while the homeless increase, the elderly starve and all citizens with income below \$10,000 yearly, lack proper medical attention, insurance, and jobs. Are Christians willing to continue to pay the severe price... Or, are we ready for weapons to be turned into Plowshares?

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Jesus is standing today;
At your heart's door
He knocks as before.
Oh, turn Him no longer away!

Gracious, compassionate mercy
Bro't Him from mansions above;
Caused Him to wait
Just outside your gate.
Oh, yield to His wonderful love!

Can you not now hear Him calling?
Do not ill-treat such a Friend.
Give up your sin.
Oh, let Him come in!
Lo! He will be true to the end.

Now is the time to receive Him;
Grant Him admission today.
Grieve Him no more,
But open your door,
And turn Him no longer away.

Don't turn Him away.
He has come back to your heart again,
Al-though you've gone astray.
Oh, how you'll need Him to plead your cause
On that eternal day!
Don't turn the Savior away from your heart;
Don't turn Him away.

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6:30 P.M. - WORSHIP SERVICE

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10:30 A.M. - 12 NOON - WEDNESDAY
6:30 A.M. - 8:00 P.M. - WEDNESDAY

Radio Ministry Each Sunday, 8:00 A.M. - KBMS

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Maranatha School of Ministry

6:30 P.M.

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