



“A poor widow came and put in two very small coins” (Mark 12:42)

“Here’s a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish” (John 6:6)

“And even the hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matthew 10:31)

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Colossians 3:23)

When the poor widow went to church that day, did she know that it would lead to people learning from her 2000 years later?

When the unnamed boy packed a picnic to listen to the visiting preacher, did he know he would feature in the world’s best-selling book?

Whatever you do, work at it for the Lord. It is so often tempting to think that our efforts don’t count but, as Christians, we have to believe that they do, not just here and now on earth, but for all eternity. That is actually quite a responsibility for us but it is an honour and an encouragement. When we are enticed to take short cuts or ‘not be bothered’ (see the article entitled The Carpenter, which I am only now realising relates to what I am writing here) let us think again remind ourselves that everything does count, even when we may not realise it or see how it does.

Romans 8 tells us how he can work everything for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose. We often tend to think of that meaning that we can learn from our mistakes as God redeems what we have done wrong. I don't deny that that can be true but let's look at it also as meaning that God can reward us for whatever little thing we do right and also can use those little things for the benefit of others. As Paul also says in Galatians, let us never tire of doing good.

God loves and values us as individuals. And everything we do matters. We can be a positive influence, even when we doubt ourselves. God doesn't doubt us, so let us not doubt God as we go about our daily lives.

The Gift of Your Attention

“Do not be interested only in your own life but be interested in the lives of others” (Philippians 2:4 NCV).

When you walk into a meeting, how many people are sitting there looking at their phone and texting? Our heads seem to be always down, engrossed in a video or game, and our earbuds keep us from hearing the people near us. It's so easy to sit in a restaurant with friends yet be more concerned about our “friends” on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram.

We live in a world where our tools and technology have left us perpetually distracted, and we no longer pay attention to the people around us.

If you want happier relationships, you need to learn the lost art of paying attention.

The Bible says in Philippians 2:4, *“Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others”* (NCV).

This doesn't come naturally, does it? Based on my nature, I may not care what you're interested in. Based on my nature, I may want the attention on me, not you.

But the greatest gift you can give somebody is your attention because *your attention is your time* and your time is your life. You're

never going to get it back, and that's why it is so precious when you give it.

This is a simple but powerful tool in growing strong relationships. Are you interested in what your kids are interested in? Do you listen to what your spouse has to say? Do you give your coworkers your attention when they speak to you? Do you notice your neighbors as you walk by their home in the morning?

Learning the lost art of paying attention is an act of love. It will transform your relationships and help you live a happy life.

Rick Warren www.purposedriven.com

The Carpenter

[Not specifically Christian, but food for thought all the same!]

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house-building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife, enjoying his extended family. He would miss the pay cheque, but he needed to retire. They could get by.

The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favour. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished his work the employer came to inspect the house. He handed the front-door key to the carpenter, he said, "my gift to you". The carpenter was shocked! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. Then with a shock we realise we have to live in the house we have built. If we could do it over we'd do it much differently. But we cannot turn back the hands of time. You are

the carpenter. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall.

"Life is a do-it-yourself project," someone has said : Your attitudes and the choices you make today, build the "house" you live in tomorrow.

A Blessing

I chose this blessing to instil:

- * the concept of the Trinity;
- * the balance of God's goodness / holiness with His love;
- * the expectation that God is alive and active;
- * that He is to be experienced in the here and now.

May the goodness of God, the love of God, and the power of God— Father, Son and Holy Spirit— be known among us today. Amen

Sue Taylor
Eight O'clock News, Christchurch, Kenilworth

The Christian's Duty to Government and Duty to God

[Always a controversial topic and I have no idea where it originally came from. Whatever the case, I hope it helps and makes you think!]

Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (Mark 12:17).

1. God has put every Government in place to serve him, rewarding people who do right and punishing evil-doers. Christians recognize their duty to submit to the Government *to the extent that the Government is fulfilling the role that God has given it:*

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, *who*

are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right (1 Peter 2: 13 – 14).

2. When a Government does the very opposite of that, and reverses the duty that God has given it, by rewarding evil-doers and punishing those who do good, the Church honours both God and the Government by recalling the Government to its duty, and by warning it that it faces the terrible prospect of God's judgement if it fails to do so.

Isaiah gave a strong warning to rulers who reverse good and evil, who refuse to acknowledge God, who enrich themselves for their own pleasure at the expense of the people, and who pervert justice:

Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
who put darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter.

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes
and clever in their own sight.

Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine
and champions at mixing drinks,

who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
but deny justice to the innocent (Isaiah 5: 20 – 23).

3. God has not given to any Government the right to interfere with the Church's duty to God.

When Daniel heard of the law passed by King Darius that forbade him to pray to God, he ignored the law, and obeyed God instead:

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before (Daniel 6:10).

4. When any authority, including the Government, demands from the Church an obedience that conflicts with its obedience to God, the Church will always obey God rather than the Government. *When Caesar (Government) claims what is God's, God's claims always have priority:*

But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4: 19 – 20).

5. Christians live their lives by two great truths: God's promise of forgiveness and mercy to all who turn from their wickedness to him, and God's warning of judgement to all who stubbornly refuse to acknowledge him as their supreme Lord and King.

Jesus said, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

6. Jesus Christ himself, when on trial before the representative of an unjust Government, accepted the authority of that Government, but he also gave a warning that it held its authority from God himself. One day every Government will have to give account of itself before the God from whom it has received its authority:

Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" (John 19: 11).

Conclusion

As the Church we are committed to praying for those in authority and to being good citizens within society and nation. The Church is answerable to God himself for its ministry of preaching the Gospel, prayer, declaring God's standards of truth and justice, and relieving the needs of the poor. It cannot accept the right of the Government to interfere with the duty that God himself has given it. For that reason we cannot agree to submit to the Government's demand that the Church register with the Government to carry out its God-given responsibilities.

Knee Polishing

Sunday : pray for the government and those in authority

Monday : pray that we may do everything “as for the Lord”

Tuesday : pray that we will give other people our undivided attention

Wednesday : pray for The Saltshaker. 250 editions and counting!

Thursday : pray for good health. And for any who may need healing

Friday : pray for good use of our money

Saturday ; pray for those in full time Christian ministry

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal its throat was very small. The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible. The little girl said: "When I get to heaven, I will ask Jonah". The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?" The little girl replied: "Then you ask him."

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