

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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When a man thinks he has all he needs...and he rarely, if ever, thinks about God...he is like a starving man who has stopped being hungry. That is the progression of life for those starving to death, our best thinkers tell us. People who are starving will reach a point where they don't even care about eating again. As most can see when they're around me that is not my issue! When I say out loud that I'm starving, I'm not really starving. Never have been. At least not for food.

I've been noticing something lately in the midst of our lockdown. Like children we've been told what we cannot and should not do. The stay-at-home orders or shelter-in-place edicts only serve to provoke some of us. As for me, I'm more aware of not being able to participate in some of the things I should have been more attentive toward. Sadly, some of these areas of life have been seriously taken for granted. I don't think I'm alone in this. Let's examine some of these realities.

My work, especially as a bivocational or tentmaking pastor, has changed dramatically. Although I still have a calling to fulfill, both in the church realm and the construction zone. Making my tent as a construction estimator, I used to jokingly tell people when church work became too hard because people's problems were the problem, I could safely retreat to a construction project that was pressing in on my time. And when a contract obligation got a little demanding, I could always go to church for a meeting. That always left me with the feeling that whenever I was in one place, it seemed that I needed to be in the other. And now I'm in the *other place*...one that I am not familiar with...one that seems to be controlled by things out of my control. Are you one of those who have complained about the demands at work...and now your work is not so much in demand and it's out of your control? Let's see the workplace as the Lord sees it. Work is the place that God places us to bring His Kingdom principles into view amidst people who don't know our King. But we will often hide our heritage as God's children and go along to get along in some career path, conforming to the world and its systems. Can I get a witness?

Family is another system that we often don't think much about. God's people can be serious about serving the Lord and seriously neglect their family. Pastors and ministry leaders are especially vulnerable in this regard. Years ago the Lord got my attention when I was being inattentive in that area of my life. I was soberly reminded me that my supreme calling was to Him...secondly to my family. Everything else came after that. Religious people that have lost that focus can quickly sacrifice the most important relationships in life. Lately I have been reminded of how precious family connections are and how precarious they can be to maintain. Being together is no guarantee that we are connected in what really matters. Family really matters to God. That's what restoration is all about. Being restored to His family isn't meant to be taken for granted.

The reality we're all living in causes many a faint-hearted soul to fret and worry over situations we cannot control. The following passage speaks to me today. Have someone read it to you out loud. And to get the deeper context I need to ask the following question: **In the midst of an anxiety pressured society, what is it we are wanting that we are not getting?**

And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Luke 12:22-34)

Now for the deeper context. Jesus taught His disciples this lesson in answer to someone's question about their inheritance. Someone wanting more and more of what they had enough of already is the definition of a covetous-hearted person. Simply speaking, the covetous heart is speaking to God. And God's answer is pay attention to the little things that we take for granted...we don't miss them till they are going away. We can't add a single hour to our life...but we can add life to the hours. The hours we stay at home sheltering in place...how much of that time are we spending thanking the Lord God Almighty for the little things that He has granted that we normally take for granted...are we being faithful in the little things that are passing us by? It's time we got really quiet...quiet enough to hear God's heart. Only then can we hear what He is saying to His people. Then we can truly hear the language our heart is really speaking.

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam