

Light and Life

Little Word – Big Difference

“And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight – **if** indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard” (Col. 1:21-23). ‘If’ is a little word that makes a big difference!

It’s amazing what some are willing to believe without reading it in the Bible. Many say salvation is unconditional. The scriptures teach quite the opposite! We can study about baptism (I Pe. 3:21), confession (Mt. 10:32-33), and repentance (Lk. 13:5), and a willingness to follow Christ (Mt. 16:24). But we can sum up Christian responsibility by saying we must “continue in the faith”.

The commitment of being a Christian isn’t like a to-do list! It is a pattern of life! Our allegiance is no longer to the world, but to our Savior (Rm. 6:16-18). This doesn’t only affect the ‘big decisions’ in our lives but it means we have died to our own desires and now serve Him (Rm. 6:1-6).

However, it is possible for us to resume our former wickedness. Jesus has reconciled us and made us holy, but we can return to being “enemies in our minds by wicked works.” The churches of Galatia were in danger of failing to meet the condition of “continuing in the faith” as they were turning to a “different gospel” (Gal. 1:8-9). Such would have caused them to “fall from grace” (Gal. 5:4)!

We have the hope of heaven as “an anchor of the soul” (Heb. 6:19). But this doesn’t take away the possibility that we could “drift away” by failing to continue in the faith (Heb. 2:1). Beware anyone who tries to tell you that salvation is unconditional! ‘If’ makes a big difference!

- Sam Bunyard

(cont. from page 1)

knowing smile he said, “Seth, you’re being totally selfish. So, I’m going to make this really simple: marriage isn’t for you. You don’t marry to make yourself happy; you marry to make someone else happy. More than that, your marriage isn’t for yourself. You’re marrying for a family – not just for the in-laws and all of that nonsense, but for your future children. Who do you want to help you raise them? Who do you want to influence them? Marriage isn’t for you. It’s not about you. Marriage is about the person you marry.” It was in that moment I knew Kim was the right person to marry. I realized that I wanted to make her happy – to see her smile every day, to make her laugh every day. I wanted to be a part of her family, and my family wanted her to be a part of ours. And thinking back on all the times I had seen her play with my nieces, I knew she was the one with whom I wanted to build our own family.

My father’s advice was both shocking and revelatory. It went against the grain of today’s philosophy: ‘If it doesn’t make you happy, you can take it back and get a new one.’

No, a true marriage (and true love) is never about you. It’s about the person you love – their wants, their needs, their hopes, and their dreams. Selfishness demands, “What’s in it for me?”, while Love asks, “What can I give?” (1 Co 13:4-7). Marriage is about family.

Some time ago, my wife showed me what it means to love selflessly. While Kim’s side of the marriage had been to love me, my side of the marriage had become all about me. I realized that I had forgotten my dad’s advice. This awful realization brought me to tears, and I promised my wife that I would try to be better. To all who are reading this article – married, almost married, single, or even the sworn bachelor or bachelorette – I want you to know that marriage isn’t for you. No true relationship of love is for you. Love is about the person you love. And, paradoxically, the more you truly love that person, the more love you receive. And not just from your significant other, but from their friends and their family and thousands of others you never would have met had your love remained self-centered.

(edited for space)

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Morning Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

DOWNTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

P.O. Box 447
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The time for 'choice' is
before a baby is conceived.

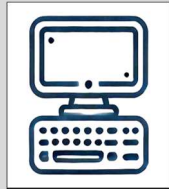
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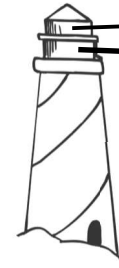
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DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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Marriage Isn't for You

by Seth Adam Smith

Having been married only a year and a half, I've recently come to the conclusion that marriage isn't for me. Now before you start making assumptions, keep reading. I met my wife in high school when we were 15 years old. We were friends for ten years until – until we decided we no longer wanted to be just friends. I strongly recommend that best friends fall in love. Good times will be had by all. Nevertheless, falling in love with my best friend did not prevent me from having certain fears and anxieties about getting married. The nearer Kim and I approached the decision to

marry, the more I was filled with a paralyzing fear. Was I ready? Was I making the right choice? Was Kim the right person to marry? Would she make me happy?

Then, one fateful night, I shared these thoughts and concerns with my dad. Perhaps each of us have moments in our lives when it feels like time slows down or the air becomes still and everything around us seems to draw in, marking that moment as one we will never forget. My dad's response to my concerns was such a moment for me. With a

(cont. on page 3)

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

Sick: KFletcher, Swims, JMarshall, RStarr, MiBader, JTerrell, ACorder

Shut-ins: BPennington, SCole, SWiese, VCarter, KHeiligenthal, AHopper

Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

SINGING! – What better way to begin the New Year than by uniting in singing praises to God? Be here tonight at 5 and join with us!

SENTENCE SERMON – “My body, my choice” denies DNA science – not her DNA, therefore, not her body.