

### **The Joys of Our Ordinary Days**

In my youth we studied the play by Thornton Wilder, Our Town. The town was Grover's Corner's, New Hampshire at the eclipsing of the nineteenth and into the new twentieth century. The story is timeless and it emphasizes the importance of every day and everyone with whom we live in those day-by-day experiences. We are taught to take no one and nothing for granted and to appreciate the life God has granted us. Although a work of fiction, it has held my attention since we first read it aloud in Junior High. To this day the haunting melody of a song we sang in church was played throughout the story, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds." The outstanding moment of the play came when Emily, who died in childbirth, was allowed to go back in time to the morning of her twelfth birthday. At the encouragement of others, she chose to see this ordinary day in her life. Watching her family unconsciously hurrying and scurrying through their morning, she cries out: "Oh, Mama, look at me one minute as though you really saw me. Mama, fourteen years have gone by. I'm dead. You're a grandmother, Mama! Wally's dead, too. His appendix burst on a camping trip to North Conway. We felt just terrible about it – don't you remember? But, just for a moment now we're all together. Mama, just for a moment we're happy. Let's really look at one another! Emily continues, "...I can't. I can't go on. It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. I didn't realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed. Take me back—up the hill— to my grave. But first: Wait! One more look. Good-bye, Good-bye world. Good-bye, Grover's Corners....Mama and Papa. Good-bye to clocks ticking....and Mama's sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new ironed dresses and hot baths....and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you are too wonderful for anybody to realize you. Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it—every, every minute?"

When Emily returns from the land of the living, Simon Stimson, also deceased, cynically comments, "That's what it was like to be alive. To move about in a cloud of ignorance; to go up and down trampling on the feelings of those...of those about you. To spend and waste time as though you had a million years. To be always at the mercy of one self-centered passion, or another. Now you know—that's the happy existence you wanted to go back to. Ignorance and blindness." In our story line, Simon would have much to regret and he may have been one of those ones who spent much of his days in ignorance and trampling on the feelings of those about him.

Classics are classics for a reason. They remind us of our common joys, sorrows and life experiences. What stands out about the story is the deep seated appreciation we should have for each and every day of our life and for those with whom we live it. I believe this to be a biblical admonition. The Lord Jesus taught us to pray, "*Give us day by day our daily bread*" (Luke 11:3). Think of it, if there is one activity we take for granted, it is eating, yet Jesus taught us to pray for our food every day. Even though our custom is eating three meals per day with a

snack between and/or at the ending of our day, our Lord is saying don't take it for granted. So in appreciation of our ordinary days allow me to elaborate.

### **1. God will give us what we need for each and every day.**

*“And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be”* (Deuteronomy 33: 24,25). The promise to Jacob's son, Asher was that he shall have children and children are a blessing! Then God said, he will get along with his kindred, his brothers. God also promised him to find favor in his business. Texans understand in their history from the striking of oil at Spindletop to modern day, oil is a lucrative business. Asher would dip his foot in oil. Although it was not a direct reference to a “gusher,” it bore the connotation of material blessing. Then the Lord gave this precious promise to Asher and to all who will hear: *“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.”* The reference to iron and brass speaks of the endurance that shall be given for the difficult times as well as the pleasant times. In one great climatic phrase, God promises, *“...and as thy days, so shall be thy strength.”* We shall have power for each day as it arrives, not before it gets here and never too late.

Jesus said, *“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?”* (Matthew 6:31). Christ is telling us don't worry, then He said, *“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”* (Matthew 6:34). God does not promise us knowledge of tomorrow. He does, however, promise that He'll be there with us, through every day and every moment. After Christ tells us to seek first His kingdom and righteousness (Matthew 6:31), He commanded us not to worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself. He is saying, trust me; don't worry! Enjoy every minute. Yesterday is past, tomorrow is an uncashed check, all we have is today. And as one wise man said, that is why “today” is called the “present.”

### **2. Love the people God has placed in your life.**

Please observe these verses: *“Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth”* (Ephesians 6:2,3). *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”* (Ephesians 5:25). *“The aged women likewise, ...That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children”* (Titus 2:3a, 4). Notice how important it is to get along with our family. Every one in the family has an obligation to work on their relationships. The Bible is all about relationships. There are fifty chapters in the book of beginnings, the book of Genesis. Only the first two deal exclusively with creation. The rest of the forty-eight chapters deal with people. It appears to the Bible student that God is much more interested in people than in all of creation.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention the most important relationship of all. Paul said, *“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the*

*fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death*" (Philippians 3:10). If we miss relationship with God, we miss everything. The Lord Jesus said that loving God and our neighbor is so important that, "*On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*" (Matthew 22:40).

### **3. We're getting better every day.**

The humanist, Henry David Thoreau said, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them." The life without Christ is a depressing one. The light at the end of their tunnel is not the break of day; it is the locomotive of a fate without God or as Thoreau said, "...quiet desperation."

As Christians, we have a different and much more positive worldview. As we grow older and we begin to notice the second law of thermodynamics (entropy, i.e., gradual decline into disorder) is taking place within our body, we are even more aware that within us is the life of God who has activated the inward life within us. For the Scripture says, "*For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day*" (II Corinthians 4:16). Therefore in fact, the antithesis of entropy is taking place day-by-day within us. The inward man is growing stronger! Life for us is truly getting better, until the fulfillment of Proverbs 4:18: "*But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*"

-Pastor Pope-