

Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

What is it, in your life, that is truly important to you? As I think back over my lifetime, there were many things that consumed my time and attention when I was younger. Most of those things that were SO important to me then, just don't matter anymore. The older I get, and the more I study God's Word and seek to follow Him, the more wisdom I have gained. As Paul said to the Corinthians, "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. But when I became a man, I put away the things of childhood.

Please don't think me arrogant or boastful, because even after all these years of following the Lord, I am still no more than a student. But the more I learn of our God and His Kingdom, the more I want to learn more, drawing ever closer to Him, as the Holy Spirit fills me with a hunger and thirst I never knew I was missing when I was young. I DO hope this message will help open some eyes and hearts – of both the young and the old. Because today as I look around, I see so many people who are SO lost, seeking the pleasures of this world that exist for but a fleeting moment, and ultimately never truly satisfy the soul. My heart aches for the sad, lost and lonely, and knowing what I know today, I understand there is only ONE thing – one PURPOSE – in this world that will ever be worthwhile.

Our American culture has really gone downhill, just in the past few decades. When I was a teenager, the subject of homosexuality was only spoken of in hushed tones. It was rightfully categorized as a mental illness, and certainly not at all commonplace. Today it is glorified and pridefully celebrated everywhere you look, and even the majority of regular church-goers now believe it is just another acceptable "alternative lifestyle." Many today are even on the verge of accepting the next step down the road to depravity:

“transgenderism.”

When I was young, my parents and grandparents did just fine without fifteen different prescription drugs every day, which now are considered “essential” to living. In the 1980s, the government waged a “war on drugs,” telling people to “Just Say No.” It was about that time that the pharmaceutical industry exploded and began pushing prescription drugs on the populace with wild abandon. Today, with every election cycle, we hear the cry of the lying politicians: “The helpless elderly are so poor, they must choose between buying food and their medications!”

When I was young, yes, we had rock and roll music. But in those days, the songs were, for the most part, all about love. I’m not saying they were WHOLESOME, God-honoring songs, but they were nothing in comparison to what passes for popular music today. We have gone from words like “I Want To Hold Your Hand,” to things I could not – and WOULD NOT – dare to even speak, because they’re so filthy and blasphemous. That’s our “music” today. In the 1980s, “Rap” music began to become popular, which was followed by the more extreme “hip hop,” with their vulgar and violent lyrics, and today we have what is known as “Death Metal,” and even worse: “CHRISTIAN Death Metal,” as if there could ever even BE such a thing.

When I was young, a FEW people had tattoos. Only women had their ears pierced. Today, people young and old are tattooing every blank spot on their bodies, and piercing everything from their ears to their noses to their private parts, and proudly displaying all of it in public and on social media.

And yes, when I was young, people drank alcohol and used illicit drugs. But it was a shameful thing to be drunk or to be labeled a “druggie.” You certainly could not buy booze at your local gas station. Today, people self-medicate with such things, and when they get to the point where they can no longer function in society, society rewards them with the

label of “victim,” and provides “disability” benefits, so they no longer NEED to hold a job or support their families, because truly, so many today are no longer capable of doing so... all because of their horrible addictions.

The other day I was in a convenience store and saw a man, probably in his mid-forties, though he looked much older. He was obviously drunk, and as he wandered in a daze through the store, he had two young toddlers in tow, cursing at them with the foulest of language because he couldn't stand to be bothered with their needs – and he was buying a case of beer, at 9:30 in the morning. I asked if he was alright or needed any help, only to be cursed at too, and told to mind my own business.

When I was young, there was no such thing as “smart phones” or even the most basic of cell phones. But today, we seem to be addicted to them, a world of information, communication, gossip and pornography at our fingertips.

In the world of news media, government and politics, we once wondered if those in charge were telling us the truth about the most important of matters. Today, there is no doubt: they ALL lie, and we would expect nothing else. Once upon a time, we went to church to seriously and reverently study God's Word, and we attended church for a good dose of reality, as our pastors called us back to repentance and fealty to Christ week after week, reminding us that while we are saved by the grace of God alone, we, too, had a duty to take up our cross daily and follow Him. Today, if we attend a church at all, (and most no longer do), it's only for what WE can get out of it; it all depends on whether or not WE feel comfortable and affirmed in our personal sins of choice. The idea of Repentance has been removed from the modern “gospel,” and the pastor is rare who will speak of – or explain – that there is such a thing as sin, which separates us from God.

Truly, our parents and grandparents would not recognize

America today, nor would they even want to live in a world like this. What have we done? And what do we truly value? It is said that people make time for the things they truly value... and so we fill our days, nights and weekends with sports – from football to car racing. Then, there's music, television, movies, the internet, and other forms of entertainment that we dearly hold on to as our national pasttimes. We honor Hollywood celebrities and idolize the popular music, movie and sports stars. And through it all, we have forgotten those things that truly are most important. Most of us know nothing about history or the great men and women of God who came before us, nor do we care to; certainly it's no longer taught in our public schools, having been replaced by "more important" things like "sex education" and "gender studies." And we have replaced God with a twisted, secular humanist view of life based on fake science, wholly invented by those with a nefarious agenda to remake our country into a socialist "utopia." Our nation spirals into insanity and our children are growing up embracing the lies of the enemy of our souls. And we're too busy with nonsense to even take notice.

People often tell me I'm too harsh, too political, too critical, too negative. I live a very lonely life, sometimes, feeling like the weeping prophet, Jeremiah – shouting from the hilltops a clarion call to return to those things that are of utmost importance, yet no one wants to hear. "Why don't you lay off all that 'pro-life' talk?" they ask. "MY God LOVES people, just the way they are," they say. "I choose to love people rather than condemn them," I'm told. And I'm told many other things too, much worse. Suffice to say, I am certainly not very popular in this world, and especially among modern day church-goers.

But I don't follow any particular "religion" or "denomination." I follow God's Word, the Bible, and that's enough for me. I'm not a theologian and I have not been to

Seminary. I have no letters or degrees after my name. But I have God's Word, which I learned as a child, and which I continue to learn every day. Though I did not always follow the Lord perfectly, even as I was in the midst of some of the poorest decisions I ever made as a young person, the Holy Spirit was there, guiding me, speaking to my heart, asking me VERY CLEARLY, "Rob, what are you DOING here? This is not for you. You know better." And so I did. And so I left that life, and as I said, the more I seek the Lord, the more I hunger and thirst for His wisdom and fellowship.

Today I am at the point where I cannot get enough, and I am also at the point where I can not stop this ministry He has entrusted to me, even if I had a mind to. I have an URGING from the Holy Spirit to do more and more and more... I feel the time is VERY urgent... as if each day could well be my last chance. I see lost souls everywhere I turn, but so FEW even care. We are SO lost as a people and a nation. And I grieve.

A member of my extended family is about my age and has never married. He has a good job and has his mortgage paid off. No wife or family, he has chosen to spend his money on THINGS. A couple years ago he spent \$80,000 on a fancy new truck – the best there is, with every possible option. This past summer, he bought a very expensive imported sports car. To the best of my knowledge, he gives nothing to the work of God's kingdom, has no involvement in any church and no interest in the things of God. His life consists of work, his expensive "toys," drinking and sports. He knows better, but like most Americans, he doesn't care. This really, is where we are at today. The spirit of Apathy is THICK. Don't get me wrong; he's a very nice guy and we love him, but that's not going to "cut it" when he stands before the King of Kings to give an account of his life. And I have to wonder: is he truly satisfied with life, having based it on mere possessions and frivolous entertainment? Does he not LONG for something more SUBSTANTIAL in his life?

If America is going to survive as a nation and if we are going to survive as a people, then there is only ONE answer: we must REPENT, in humility and in sorrow, and turn our hearts back to our Creator, God Almighty, the One Who has given us so much grace, so much love and patience, even as we have shaken our fists at Him and spit in His face. What other hope could we possibly have? Have we not YET had enough of the vanity of entertainment and riches and useless THINGS? Do we not LONG, desperatley, for a life of substance and fulfillment, with the knowledge that we are investing our time, talents and God-given resources for the Kingdom of God, rather than squandering them all on our own carnal pleasures? Isn't' ENOUGH ENOUGH already?

Peter thought just that, as he warned in his first letter to the saints. In chapter 4, he wrote, "For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do – living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and destestable idolatry." John gave a similar admonition in 1st John 2: "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life – comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and it's desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever."

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight." But he also warned them, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." And to the Romans, he wrote, "You know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the day time, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in

sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify it's desires."

Friends, when I began this ministry work, I had no idea what was in store for me. It has been a life of trouble, difficulty, great challenges and much persecution – from the world AND from the church. I was a young man then. Now, after nearly 20 years of full time ministry, I am much older, and I hope, much wiser. Somewhere along the line, as I sought to do the LORD's will over my own, He has trained me up to be a servant to HIM, and to others. I serve with pleasure and with great zeal. I think back on those things that were once so important to me in my younger days and as I said, they just don't matter anymore.

I have learned to constantly turn my eyes upon Jesus, and look full in His wonderful face. And as I have been persistent in doing so, the things of earth have grown strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace. We have only ONE life on this earth to serve the King of Kings. He is our Creator, our Father, our Provider, our Sustainer and our Savior. Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." That is WHO I work for, according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I do it for HIS glory, but I ALSO do it for those I dearly love. My wife, my children and my grandchildren.

I wonder why so many professing Christians, and so many regular church-goers just don't seem to care much about God, but they SURE care a whole lot about the Green Bay Packers. And I wonder: what sort of world are we leaving to our grandchildren? What will be our legacy when we are gone from this world? Will we have made any difference at all? Will all the days we've spent on this earth have any significance in eternity? I pray you will ponder these things along with me. Lord, I pray, help us to turn our eyes upon Jesus, and come to LOVE those things that truly matter.

Audio CDs and transcripts of this message are available when you call me at Wisconsin Christian News, (715) 486-8066. Or email Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com and ask for message number 209.

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