

Sunday Morning Starters:

Worship is God-centered,
not man-centered.

Edification is a one another,
not a oneself, procedure.

Service is need-based,
not wish-oriented.

Study is a life science,
not just scholarly enterprise.

Love is an act of the will,
not an emotion.

The point? Keep your focus.

A Plea For Sincerity

Religion without sincerity is religion without heart. It's a hollow religion, a performance, a sham. Religion in this form is recognizable in others and detestable to all. It's not so easily detected in ourselves and requires vigilance to prevent its appearance.

Beware of hypocrisy in your benevolent deeds. The priest and the Levite might have helped their injured countryman had he fallen prey to bandits in downtown Jerusalem. But it was the Samaritan who stopped when no one was looking. Do good not because of who sees, but because *He* sees and because *you've* seen the need.

Watch out for hypocrisy in your worship. It's easily done. Songs are not addressed to God when your mind has left the building. Prayers have not the benefit of your Amen when they've not had the benefit of your attention. Your neighbor is not helped when you apply the sermon to him; even worse – you're not helped. Worship is between you and God. Funny how often God gets left out of it.

Guard against hypocrisy in your sacrifices. If you must tell how strong you are, how much you've lost, how much you've given up, what glory does God get in that? Self-righteousness, intentional or unintentional, sours others on religion. Certainly they have no right to be sour, but you have no right to make them that way either. If you're doing this for the Lord, do it for the Lord, not for the applause of men.

- Jason Moore

The Mighty Tongue

The tongue is man’s smallest member, but the most powerful. With but a word, it can tear down or build up. It can give hope or breed despair. It can promote life and health or death and injury. Today’s proverb celebrates the constructive potential and destructive power of the mighty tongue.

The tongue can build or ruin your credibility. An untimely explosion of anger or wrath and you’ll have a reputation for volatility to live down. But hold your tongue and temper, speak kindly, speak wisely and you’ll earn a medal for diplomacy.

The tongue can make or break the reputations of others. If you have an appetite for tasty morsels of gossip, you’ll hurt somebody one day. Maybe not today, but someday. But no one is injured by a kind word, and a morsel of truth and charity is far more substantial than a mouthful of rumors and prattle.

The tongue is sharp. And like a sharp knife it can be wielded to help or to harm. You can use it to jab and but, to stab and wound your opponents. Or you can use it to cut through a foul mood or “cut through the fluff,” as we say, and “get to the point” of an important discussion.

While the mighty tongue is powerful both for good and for evil, the Lord has mandated that only the truthful tongue shall endure. “It shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is for a moment.” So be careful little tongue what you say today.

- Jason Moore

Manning The Storm

It happened on an ordinary day like most calamities do that try men's faith. They were just getting in a boat to cross the lake, a lake they had often crossed. In fact, it was the Lord's idea on this occasion reminding us that it sometimes rains even when we're doing the Lord's bidding.

And so they launched out on this ordinary day, on an ordinary lake, in an ordinary boat, and encountered an extraordinary storm. It came suddenly like most ordinary calamities which try men's faith. The Master slept. The fishermen toiled. The boat filled with water. The Master still slept. Recognize that the Master knows but He acts in His own time.

“Master, Master, we are perishing!” they cried as they awoke Him. Without a word, He rose not to take an oar, nor to man the tiller, nor to trim the sail, but to trim the wind and man the storm. With a word, He shut up the clouds, He silenced the storm, He shushed the raging sea. All was calm. Notice that the Lord's answer comes as suddenly as the winds which prompt men's prayers. Neither the answers nor the perils should catch us unexpectedly.

“Where is your faith?” He asks. Good question – for us. It's strong and resolute when we from the shore peer out at the disciples wrestling in the deep. But how about when *we* launch out? The winds and the waves still obey the Master's will.

Peace. Be Still.

- Jason Moore

How To Build Well

Building is hard work. It takes planning, determination, and sometimes courage. In the case of Nehemiah, his enemies had given him warning of their opposition to what he was building, yet he was not deterred in his mission, nor was his spirit daunted. He manifests the right attitude about building.

1. It sometimes takes courage. He told his followers, “don’t be discouraged by the counsel of the enemy, we build for God, He will sustain us.” That’s excellent advice for those of us who want to build a strong Christian character.

2. Building is never a private enterprise. Remember that you build for your brethren, for your sons and daughters, your friends and neighbors. If we remember that others are depending on us, we will do better work.

3. Organize the project. Nehemiah planned his work and worked his plan. What is your plan for building up your own character? Are you actively looking for ways to diminish your own weaknesses and magnify your strengths?

4. Build with what you have. It may be that you must do it with a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other, but build anyway! We can if we will; and we must.

Nehemiah and those of his company did what they decided to do. We can do the same if we will but rise up and build.

- Dee Bowman

Salvation For Chief Of Sinners

God’s means of saving men from their sins is an awesome and powerful demonstration of His grace. His eternal purpose is seen in it; His love’s expression is embedded in it; His merciful consideration of His creatures is unspeakably wonderful in it.

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is a good illustration of God’s love and mercy. How could one so caught up in opposing Christianity, so determined to stamp it out by whatever means it took, be the object of such love and affection? Only by the grace of God, such wonderful grace.

Paul would later refer to himself as chief of sinners (I Tim. 1:15), yet God made provisions for even him. If God can save one who was, by his own admission, at the top of the list of those who opposed Him, surely He can save me.

Sin is a heinous crime against God. Man can’t do anything about it, because, “the way of man is not in himself,” said the prophet of old (Jer. 10:23). The fact that sin is softened, even ignored, does not argue that it ceases to exist. It remains a horrible and offensive blast at God; yet man can do nothing about it by his own means or methods.

But God, who is rich in mercy and love, “when we were yet sinners” did something about it. What we could not do for ourselves, He did for us. What we could never have accomplished, He made possible through His Son, Jesus Christ.

How dare we refuse it? How dare we treat it with contempt? How dare we change it? Let us rejoice in our salvation and be glad for our forgiveness.

- Dee Bowman

Who Says There Is No God?

Without God man quickly turns to his own devices and in doing so, quickly degenerates to something less than God had in mind when He created him. It is the fool who says in his heart, “there is no God,” for both nature and inspiration attest irrefutably to not only His existence, but to His interest in mankind. To seek to live life without any relationship to God is to invite sure failure.

God looked down at man and found him degenerate, floundering in filth and ungodliness, doing abominable works. “There is none that doeth good, no not one,” we are told. How sad. How terrible man’s condition without God, how miserable and wretched he is!

There are several ways to say “there is not God.” You can ignore Him and say it; you can ignore what He says and say it; and you can deny the Christ whom He sent and say it. You say it every time you decide to do what He does not allow or don’t want to do what He commands. When you sin, you essentially say “there is no God.”

“Oh, that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!” Our needs are not many, but one. And that need is salvation. That deliverance came through Jesus Christ. The cross was the method for our deliverance, the blood the sacrifice for our sins. Our sins and iniquities are all sent away through this great sacrifice. Let us look up and see from whence we are come and rejoice today in our salvation.

- Dee Bowman

Sunday Morning Starters:

What will I give?

Who will I encourage?

Why am I going?

How will I apply it?

What do they need?

How will I help?

Where will I be?

The real questions.

Answer them, and your
“needs” will be cared for.

Blest Be The Tie

How sad it is when behavior that characterizes the world and the worldly-minded invades the family of God. It's true that the people of God are people. But people are made in God's image. And those people who are destined to populate heaven ought to have their affections set on still higher principles. We ought to behave differently.

Many of the people who returned to Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day came out of slavery. They came with nothing. They found nothing when they came. The difficulty of raising a city from the ashes reduced many of them to still deeper poverty. Some of the Jews who were in better straits than their contemporaries offered assistance but with interest. They did nothing uncommon by worldly standards, and thus the problem. The kinship of believers and their brethren *is* uncommon.

“Do good to all,” said Paul, “*especially* to those who are of the household of God” (Gal. 6:10). How do you treat your brethren in the Lord? Do you treat them differently? Do you show them more courtesy, more warmth, more genuine affection? Do you have more time for them, more patience with them, more sympathy for their circumstances?

“The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ But not so among you” (Luke 22:25-26). Let it not be so among us.

- Jason Moore

The Storms Of Life

Storms are part of life. Experience teaches that fact. The storm in this story becomes a teaching tool for the Savior, giving Him the opportunity to show His disciples how they need to trust Him who calms the stormy sea. The story tells us something about life's storms and how to deal with them.

First, it tells us there will be some storms. The wise man said, “in the day of adversity, consider” (Eccl. 7:14). Jesus said, “sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.” Both indicate that storms are part of life. They come to all of us, no one is exempt.

Second, it tells us where to put our faith. We sometimes lose heart because we try and handle our storms by ourselves. We need not fear the storms if we have our trust in Jesus and His power. “Be of good cheer,” He said as He came, “It is I.”

Third, it tells us to stay focused. We are not to lose heart, even though the winds be ever so fierce. We need not fear if we watch where we are going. Peter walked on the water, but only so long as he was focused on Jesus. When he began to consider the storm as it raged around him, he lost his way. He lost his focus, so he lost his way.

We know Him who calms the stormy sea. We need to trust Him to care for us, even in the storms of life.

- Dee Bowman

A Sermon For Today

Peter's sermon to Cornelius' house needs an audience today as much as when he first spoke it.

“God shows no partiality.” Let us not either. Let no prejudice cause you to refrain from doing good to another when it's in your power to do so.

“Whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.” A healthy dose of fear and a generous portion of righteousness will keep you in God's favor today. The former will keep you out of trouble. The latter will keep you on task.

“The word which God sent...that word you know.” God has spoken. We don't have to *guess* what He thinks, what He wants. We can *read*. We can *know*. Thank God for such a privilege today.

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.” Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Good news can. The good news of God tabernacling among men, suffering between thieves, sleeping beside the dead, bursting from the tomb, reigning above the heavens. That came from Nazareth and equips us for Eternity.

“He commanded us to preach to the people.” He still does. “And the things you have heard from me...commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). If you want to strengthen your commitment today commit someone else to following the Lord.

Shall we stand and sing?

- Jason Moore

Feeling With The Less Fortunate

Look around you today. Look at the people who are unfortunate – those who are crippled, or blind, or otherwise infirm. It's easy to dismiss their presence, to ignore their maladies, to push compassion aside and think about more positive things.

Jesus saw a man crazed by possession, not of one, but a host of demons. He ran around in the dark among the graves, and was so tormented that he cut himself with sharp stones. Can you imagine how bad that must have been?

Enter Jesus. The man was so strongly possessed that the demons spoke for him. They recognized Him immediately as the Son of God. I say "they" because the man was possessed, not of one, but of a legion of devils. Jesus said, in love and compassion, "come out of him!" and He sent them into a herd of swine.

Jesus performed this act of sincere compassion, casting out the demons into the herd of swine, and what was His reward? He was asked to leave the area. It's not easy to be compassionate. You run the risk of getting hurt. You run the risk of being refused. Sometimes folks won't like it.

The risk is worth the taking. There is great satisfaction in being a part of someone's misery, of being involved in someone's hurt, of being part of another's problems. To do so is to be like the Master.

Look around you today. Find someone to help. Get involved, even if it means you may have to hurt a little. After all, you're just being like the Savior.

- Dee Bowman

Pearls Of Wisdom For Living

The Proverbs are general truths that are stated in memorable ways. They form deep impressions on our minds, providing easy access to what we know to be right and compelling us to conform. Notice this simple little context.

The value of hearing. The hearing referred to here is more than just listening. It has to do with paying careful attention, giving heed to what one hears, and making applications of it to life. That person who learns from experience or “heareth the reproof of life” will not make the same mistakes over and over again.

The value of good impression. The person who refuses to be instructed ends up hurting himself. He falls victim to his own devices. On the other hand, the person who listens carefully and responds accordingly gets understanding, making him less likely to have troubles.

The best instruction of all. There is no knowledge as high, no information as valuable as that which comes from God. When we humbly allow His instruction, we become what He had in mind when He created us.

Let us strive diligently to hear Him and do what He says. Let us honor Him by living right. Let us accord to Him the kind of respect He so rightfully deserves by being as much like Him as we can.

- Dee Bowman

Confidence In The Lord

If you are living, you are laying up treasures somewhere. There is a strong tendency to put our confidence in things of little value, things that in the ultimate reality don't matter too much. Things like wealth, fame, and power have no value at all if you lose your soul. Every person will finally figure that out when he faces death. If you lay up treasures in heaven you are making an investment of the right things and in the right place. To lay up treasures here causes worry and anxiety.

It's hard not to worry. Life is filled with "reasons" for anxiety – family relationships, friends, work, school and your health. It's hard not to worry. But excessive concern for worldly things is sinful; it displays a lack of trust in God. He has promised to supply all our real needs, making sure we have what we really need; and when we have undue concerns about those things it hurts His feelings. It looks as if we don't really trust Him.

The real duty of us all is to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." When we do that, all the other things will be given in due time. To seek the kingdom first is to "set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

God will provide. He adorns the fields, He refreshes the earth with timely rain, He brings food for the birds. It is foolish to worry, to put our confidence in things that have only relative value. It is foolish *not* to put our confidence in Him who is able to meet our every need.

- Dee Bowman

Sunday Morning Starters:

An angel descended.

Armed guards became as dead men.

The tomb was found empty.

Three women reported a vision of angels.

Two men raced through a garden.

Two pilgrims met a stranger.

One woman interrogated the gardener.

Ten disciples hid in fear.

One man stood in their midst.

You don't know what a day will bring.

My Shepherd

The words of familiar passages are easily passed over if we're not mindful. The preventative for such neglect is to revisit them afresh.

The Lord is Shepherd. He is *my* Shepherd. I have no need that will be left unsupplied. Some wants certainly, some pleasures assuredly. But needs, never. *Trust Him today for all I need.*

The Shepherd knows when and where it is safe to rest and what waters are safe to drink or to cross. He knows how much I can take and just what is needed to revive my strength. He knows the way, the right way. *Follow His lead today.*

The Shepherd knows the dangers that lurk about. He knows that the Devil is alive and well. He knows how dumb we sheep can be and what trouble we get ourselves into. He knows better than me the shadow of death. *Stay close to Him today.* He's been here before and knows the way.

There will be wolves abroad today. Some behind the trees. Some in sheep's clothing. The Shepherd knows their disguises, their devices, their aims. He can take care of the enemy and the detractors better than me. He'll not abandon me to their aims. *Wait on Him today.*

Today will be hard. And so will tomorrow. And the day after that. *Concentrate on today!* Stay with the Shepherd. Follow His lead. For one of these days will wind up eternity. And won't that be just fine?

- Jason Moore

Lord, Strengthen My Hands

Nehemiah took upon himself to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. As we have previously seen, it was an awesome task, one which required intense planning and determined leadership. He supplied both; but not without opposition. He had enemies, dedicated enemies.

No matter the project, some will oppose it. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said, “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.” Those who serve well will find opposers. Like Sanballat and Tobiah, they may ridicule and make fun of your efforts. If that doesn’t work, they may use other means to put barriers in your way; but don’t despair. God sees; and He cares. Use Nehemiah’s example.

Determine to finish. If you always look toward the goal, you are more likely to make progress toward it. Don’t be deterred by those who oppose you. Keep on keeping on.

Underline the importance of your work. The work of God is the most important of all work. As such, it deserves a person’s most intense concentration. Keep on keeping on.

Ask God to help. In verse ten of this text “...they made us afraid...now therefore O God, strengthen my hands.” If you invite God’s help that means He will be a participant. Be sure you are right, then go to the work. Keep on keeping on. God will help.

- Dee Bowman

Send The Light

“The blessed gospel is for all, the gospel is for all...” We sing the song; but we need to believe it so strongly that we are constantly seeking ways to make it so.

Paul and his companions saw a vision. The man asked for the gospel: “Come over and help us,” he said. We can this vision *The Macedonian Call*.

There is a constant “Macedonian call.” It comes from people all over the world who are lost in sin, who need to hear the gospel – even people like your neighbors, your fellow workers, your kinspeople. Like Paul, we are charged with preaching the gospel whenever and wherever we can, not because we are all preachers, but because we are all Christians.

Christians in New Testament times considered the gospel the greatest priority in their lives. When they were persecuted for preaching it, the Scripture says, “they went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). Their interest in saving souls drove them to speak about Jesus and His salvation wherever they went, even if it meant incurring the wrath of some. Are we so evangelistically minded today?

The gospel message is especially powerful when it is presented by the common people. When each one teaches ones, the gospel spreads easily and without need for monies or organization. It moves on the power of the enthusiasm of its adherents.

Send the light today. Look for someone who is looking for Jesus.

- Dee Bowman

A Day In The Life Of The Master

Wouldn't it have been fine to have followed Jesus around for just one day to witness the lives and events He affected? There is so much to be learned from even one day in the life of Jesus.

Jesus had time. Jesus was constantly interrupted by people in distress like the synagogue official mourning his daughter or the lady afflicted with a hemorrhage for twelve years. Jesus made the most of such interruptions. You'll have interruptions today. Plan for them. Make the most of them. Have time for who matters – people.

Jesus knows. The woman with the flow of blood said, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well." She said this to *herself* but Jesus heard her thoughts. He turned answering her, "Your faith has made you well." Jesus knows *your* faith. We who have not spoken face-to-face with Him are assured by this account that He knows even when no one seems to know how hard we're trying.

Jesus will be vindicated. Jesus saw the mass of mourners. He said, "The girl is only sleeping." He knew what was coming next. The people mocked. They were forthrightly dismissed from the house. Shortly afterwards a healthy girl emerged. Folks will mock and ridicule your faith but one day the Lord will vindicate His cause and His people.

Follow Jesus today. He has given you this day. He'll help you make the most of it.

- Jason Moore

Don't Be A Fool

Being a fool has nothing to do with a man's I.Q. It has everything to do with a man's character. A man becomes a fool by being foolish. Solomon depicts him graphically.

The fool is undisciplined. You can correct the stubborn beast with a whip, but not the fool. He despises correction.

The fool is obnoxiously proud. React too quickly to his folly and you may repeat his error and give credence to his cause. Answer him not at all, and he'll conclude that he alone has the answer.

The fool is undependable. The man who sends a message by him handicaps his own effectiveness and brings hazard to his own head.

The fool is oblivious to truth. He misses the point of a proverb as the drunk does a thorn in his own flesh. Correction and advice from his mouth are as limp to his hearers as the legs of a cripple.

The fool in power is a menace to society. The man who gives honor to a fool, hands him a loaded gun. It's anybody's guess where he'll shoot.

The fool gets what no right thinking man wants – what he deserves. God promises the wages of his folly. For a proud man, there is hope that circumstances will teach him. But the fool is unteachable. Therein lies the rub. The fool repeats his folly. He never learns. Don't be a fool.

- Jason Moore

Cautious Judgments

“Judge not, that you be not judged” is often quoted but frequently misunderstood. Jesus did not forbid making moral assessments of character. He merely urged caution and forbade the following:

Hyper-critical judgments. These are overly harsh judgments, ones based on appearance and without all the facts. They are the product of pride, prejudice, jealousy, or competition where the aim is to drive the splinter, not remove it. Beware!

When you measure with a short stick you invite the Lord to use the same standard on you for “with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”

Hypo-critical judgments. If you correct another when you are guilty of the same, a similar, a greater, or a public fault, you condemn yourself. Further, your correction is not likely to be heard. The offender only sees your warts. He can’t hear your words. Get the beam out of your own eye first. Then you will see clearly to help your brother. And he will be more willing to let you assist him.

Excessively tolerant judgments. “Don’t cast your pearls before swine.” There are some folks with whom we should not waste our energy and resources. They have proven themselves unethical and uninterested in truth. Jesus said that it is our task to judge when it is time to let them be.

Make wise judgments today, for, in the manner you judge, you will be judged.

- Jason Moore

Sunday Morning Starters:

Watch your eyes, what you see.

Watch your ears, what you hear.

Watch your mouth, what you say.

Watch your hands, what you do.

Watch your feet, where you go.

Now, put it all together and watch
today, how you live.

Relief For A Hurting Self

The conscience is at once a horrible and wonderful thing. If you do what you understand to be right, the conscience is a wonderful thing, bringing peace and quiet. But there is nothing more horrible than a nagging conscience, one that pains you in a deep, piercing way.

David's psalm speaks of a hurting conscience. "Thine arrows stick fast in me," he says. He describes his burdens as "too heavy for me." He says, "I am troubled, bowed down; and I spend my day in mournful remorse." And if that weren't enough, he says, "my loins are filled with a loathsome disease." Talk about a conscience. David had one.

Have you ever experienced this kind of conscience attack? It's horrible, isn't it? And the saddest part of all is there's no place to turn for relief nor is there any means of restoring one's own peace. Or is there?

"For in Thee do I hope," David said. There is hope in God. He has made possible our salvation, the relief of our conscience. And what refreshment that is!

Forgiveness is the answer to a troubled mind. Without it, we would never find peace. With it, there is quietude and our soul can be at rest. Being right with God is the starting place for conscience relief (I Pt. 3:21). God is greater than our conscience and can forgive. Praise Him for His favor!

- Dee Bowman

The Great Reformation

Nehemiah 8 is a story of reform. Its message is powerful. It speaks to us today revealing the elements of all religious reform.

“The people gathered together as one man.” The aim of reform is reconciliation, first with God and consequently with men.

“They told Ezra to bring the Book of the Law.” The basis of reform is the word of God. Any change that proceeds without God’s direction is doomed.

“The ears of all the people were attentive to the Book.” Men must see past the messenger, past their fellow listeners, past themselves, past the occasion, and attend to the Book for reform to be a reality.

“And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people.” The rise of a clergy class is a curse to religion. For reform to take place, the people must be involved in biblical conversation. The people have a right to know from whence the message comes.

“And when he opened the Book, all the people stood up.” Truth without simple reverence and sincerity is no good. Reformation involves the search for true righteousness without becoming self-righteous in the process.

“They read distinctly from the Book and gave the sense.” Reformation involves persuasion. God wants man to see the sense of what He commands. That’s the only way to make committed followers.

Religious reformation does not occur in a day. It takes a lifetime. But it starts with today. Ready?

- Jason Moore

Conduct Worthy Of The Gospel

The story of Paul in the Philippian jail house is one of my favorites because of what it exposes in the heart of the Apostle Paul. It is the end of the story that impresses me.

Paul and Silas, their legs and back just starting to scab over and bruises appear, are told that they are free to depart in peace. Paul objects and reveals their Roman citizenship to the terror of the magistrates. It was a criminal offense to scourge a Roman citizen. They came begging Paul and Silas to leave the city. Paul's actions on this occasion were extraordinary in at least two ways.

First, the gospel was vindicated. The teaching of Paul had been misrepresented by the masters of the fortune-telling slave girl. The magistrates under the pressure of an angry mob did not inquire about Paul's citizenship nor allow him to make a defense. But by publicly escorting Paul and Silas from the prison the humiliated judiciaries testified to the innocence of these missionaries and their message.

Secondly, Paul did not exercise his full legal right. Had he desired, Paul might have had the heads of the city's magistrates. However his interest lay not with personal vengeance but with public vindication of the gospel. By not fully exercising his rights, he showed that his gospel was different.

"Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel" Paul later wrote to the Christians in Philippi. If you need help learning the sense of that command, look again at the conduct of Paul.

- Jason Moore

The Resurrection And The Life

How long has it been since you made even a short journey without passing a funeral procession? And where have you been lately that you didn't see the grave yard – the city of the dead?

We have a great fear of death. Even though Jesus came to "deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:15), we naturally fear it; it is the great enemy of mankind, and an awesome one at that.

The Lord Jesus Christ has power over death. He proved it when He raised the widow's son back to life. He proved it when he said to his friends Mary and Martha at the grave of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

Can you imagine the joy when the widow saw her son raised up from the dead? What power! What power is this that speaks and the dead rise?

The son of the widow at Nain was not the only one who will be raised. There will be a great resurrection, one where all the faithful will be resurrected to life eternal (John 5:29). The resurrection day will be the spectacle of the ages.

Those who live godly in Christ need have no fear of what death can do. Jesus is the resurrection and the life; those who follow Him here will follow Him there. He will "change our vile body that it may be fashioned unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3:10).

Remember the resurrection as you go about your activities today and live so that we need not fear what may happen.

- Dee Bowman

A Word Fitly Spoken

There are fewer more wonderful things than a word fitly spoken. There is great power in words. They may come from the small or the great, but they have an effect no matter who says them. A well-said word can change a person's day, put a new perspective in place, or rejuvenate a broken spirit.

The wise man speaks more about the tongue than any of the biblical writers. Listen to his admonitions in this little context:

A word fitly spoken leaves a good impression. Here he compares it to “apples of gold in a picture of silver.” A word fitly spoken is beautiful like a fine portrait.

A word fitly spoken is effective. When a person is disposed to hear constructive criticism or the gentle rebuke of a wise man, he makes himself wise. He adorns his life like an ornament of fine gold when he is disposed toward the advice of a wise friend.

A word fitly spoken is encouraging. Encouragement is the great privilege of the follower of Christ. Each disciple counts it a great honor to say the encouraging word so that some soul is built up, lifted out of despair or caused to rejoice. It is the mission – even the privilege – of the disciple to edify and encourage.

A word not fitly spoken has a hollow ring. A boaster, a braggart, or a pompous person leaves everyone around him with a kind of dented feeling. They are not encouraged by his words. They find no wisdom in them, nor do they get any real help from them.

Make your plans early, speak well today.

- Dee Bowman

Two Ways: The Choice Is Yours

The sermon on the mountain is full of contrasts, none more poignant than this. It speaks of laying up treasures in heaven or on earth, of serving God or mammon, of building on rock or on sand. But the contrast here is most significant. Look carefully at it.

The broad way is just that – broad. It’s well lighted, easily traveled, and filled with traffic. Most people have chosen to go that way. But the end of that way is disastrous. There are not many stop signs; it is a thoroughfare, a freeway. There are no restraints, but the end is destruction, eternal destruction. It offers ease; it delivers damnation.

The narrow way, on the other hand, is filled with warning signs. It’s hard to maneuver, difficult to follow, and sometimes may even be discouraging. You don’t see much traffic, since most folks are over on the freeway. But look at where it leads – to life eternal. That makes it worth whatever trouble you encounter as you travel this road. It promises difficulty; it delivers ease.

You can take the easy way now and be relatively comfortable in your journey; or you can take the hard road with its difficulties and hardships. The choice is yours. But please be advised, at the end of the road there will be a result, a judgment. Those who have taken the easy way here will have had all the enjoyment they will ever have; but for the ones who traversed the difficult course, there will be comfort forever.

The choice is yours. And you will go one way or the other today.

- Dee Bowman