

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, July 30, 2016

I've always been fascinated by the term "dead man walking" as it carries a resounding ring of truth in a short phrase. I'm certain I first heard the term not long after the book *DEAD MAN WALKING* was published in 1993. This non-fiction account by Sister Helen Prejean, based upon her work as a spiritual adviser to two convicted murderers on Death Row in Angola, Louisiana at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, was apparently motivated by her effort to abolish the death penalty. The book itself examines the moral issues related to the death penalty.

Frankly, my interest is not to take a position on the death penalty. I'd rather talk about the term and what it means to me at this point in my life. You see, I've come to realize that the condition of every man, woman, boy and girl is simply this - we are all born into this life as dead men walking. This is the dilemma of mankind and it all started in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were confronted by Satan to disobey God's edict to not eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2 & 3). Since that day, man and woman have carried the original sin from generation to generation.

This is a biblical truth that is found throughout God's Word from the Genesis account to the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It took me forty years on this earth to realize I was a "dead man walking" through life and placing all the emphasis on tangible things and meaningless experiences. Don't get me wrong. At the time, I felt quite happy with life and simply went on day to day without giving any thought to the things God had planned for me. Life was pretty much about me and everything pivoted around my existence. My goal was to make money, gain success and retire to a life of leisure.

These days I find myself observing those around me and wondering just how they might be viewing life. I'm not judging them nor should anyone else, but I do have concern for them since I now know we can easily miss the mark that God wants for all His creation. The Christian faith is based on God's love for His creation and His willingness to send His only begotten Son to die for our sins. We can only be saved by His grace, which simply requires our willingness to accept the free gift He presents to all. Unfortunately, many are so caught up in the temporal aspects of life that they hardly ever think about the consequences of living a self-centered life and exclude their Maker from the intricacies of their few years here on this earth.

It's so easy to get caught up in our business life. It's so natural to get immersed in our family matters. It's so simple to get caught up in the ways of this world. Satan wants to distract us. He wants to keep us from a personal relationship with our Father in Heaven. Can you picture a man or woman walking down Death Row while the inmates yell their well-known chant? Well, I suggest that Satan and his demons are also chanting as many walk away from Christ to face an eternal life of darkness. Please consider that we all started off in darkness, but Jesus is the Light Who can save us from the greatest tragedy in life. In John 14:6, upon being asked by Thomas how they could know the way, Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

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From this day forward, I trust you will put your faith in the Son of God and find life eternal!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Genesis 2:15-18; Genesis 3:17-19; Psalm 82:5-8; John 10:25-30

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Passages to Ponder: Genesis 2:15-18; Genesis 3:17-19; Psalm 82:5-8; John 10:25-30

Genesis 2:15-18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."
¹⁸The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Genesis 3:17-19 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁷To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'
"Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food from it
all the days of your life.
¹⁸It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.
¹⁹By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."

Psalm 82:5-8 New International Version (NIV)

⁵"The 'gods' know nothing, they understand nothing.
They walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
⁶"I said, 'You are "gods";
you are all sons of the Most High.'
⁷But you will die like mere mortals;
you will fall like every other ruler."
⁸Rise up, O God, judge the earth,
for all the nations are your inheritance.

John 10:25-30 New International Version (NIV)

²⁵Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, ²⁶but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one."