

FOURTH QUARTER STRATEGIES - Saturday, June 20, 2015

Summer Solstice has been celebrated by man since the early days of their existence. This phenomenon which takes place every June when the sun is the furthest from the earth's equator provides us with the most daylight and least darkness each year. Subsequently, Winter Solstice presents the least daylight and the most darkness each year. Santa Barbara will be celebrating its 41st consecutive Summer Solstice this weekend. This event has grown from a small art festival into 48 hours of cultural chicanery with well over 100,000 attending the Saturday parade each year. Our local city government even partners in the planning and support of the event! It may not be noticeable to most participants, but there truly are definite spiritualist overtones. Although most who attend the event simply see it as a "good time for all" the underpinnings are certainly tied to the occult. In my minimal research into the parties that created this event one can easily see an agenda has developed over the past 30 years at least to bring honor and normalcy to the spiritual arts. A significant spiritualist movement started just south of Santa Barbara in Summerland in 1885, which gravitated into the city in the 1950s. There's a dark side to this celebration and it takes on a form of worship that leaves a very bad taste in my mouth. Let's talk about the people who get caught up in this annual event.

Summer Solstice celebrants come from all walks of life. As I mentioned, even our City Council gets involved in this socially acceptable event and I personally know engineers, marketing executives, attorneys, accountants, real estate professionals and people from diverse cultures who are caught up in the weekend of revelry. Certainly some even worship the season and its pagan roots. They are about as far away from God as they can possibly be. Yet, I have a real concern for these folks since I know they are searching for the peace that can only be found in a personal relationship with the God of the universe. They are worshipping the long days of light yet they are experiencing spiritual darkness. Most will not call themselves Pagans, but that is their lifestyle. They live for self even though they may be benevolent in external ways. Internally they are consumed with a life of idolatry. They cannot easily be reached, but we can all pray for these lost souls and demonstrate how to live a fruitful life for Christ.

As we look back in history, we find God's chosen people being set apart from the other tribes, yet they continually fell away and let the idols of other tribes infiltrate their lives. There was a great penalty for their disobedience and I contend for those of us grafted into the family of God there remains a similar danger in allowing such disobedience to permeate our lives today as well. We truly are a minority and we need to be set apart from the world's way. At the same time, we are commissioned to take the message of salvation to this lost and dying world. So you may be asking, "What does that look like?" Well, I believe God wants us to show compassion to the "unconvinced" of this world. We need to have a dialogue with them and find our common interests and then work on developing relationships that will bring about trust that will allow us to show them just how we all should live out the rest of our lives. We need to remain strong in our faith and realize that these lost souls are not the enemy. They need what we have and we need to share our faith and pray for their deliverance.

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Romans 1:20-32; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2 Corinthians 10:1-3; Ephesians 6:12

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Romans 1:20-32 New International Version (NIV)

²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

²⁸ Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2 Corinthians 1:12 (NIV)

¹² Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace.

2 Corinthians 10:1-3 (NIV)

¹⁰ By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" toward you when away! ² I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. ³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.

Ephesians 6:12 (NIV)

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.