

June 17, 1990

## SECURITY ONLY IN GOD.

A couple of years ago there was a song that was popular among the youth that had a title and message of "Don't Worry, Be Happy". Is that good advice or not? Psychologist and many preachers are delivering a message to anyone who will listen of "It is important that you have a good opinion of yourself, a good self esteem is very important." Is that good advice or not? Psychiatrist give advice to their patients telling them that they must not carry around guilt feelings, that they should deny their guilt and refuse to think about such things. Is that good advice or not?

Getting advice is sort of like buying clothes. Very seldom do you find clothes where "one size fits all" and very seldom do you get advice that is universally applicable to everyone. Advice such as "Don't worry, be happy" may be wisdom for some and foolishness for others. The same thing applies to self esteem and guilt. Low self-esteem and feelings of guilt are likely to be symptoms of some other basic problem in a person's life and to ignore the problem is foolish.

The Bible contains many types of literature. Some of it is called Wisdom Literature and it gives advice to the reader.

<sup>1</sup>For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. Hear this, all peoples; Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,  
<sup>2</sup>Both low and high, Rich and poor together. <sup>3</sup>My mouth will speak wisdom, And the meditation of my heart *will be* understanding. <sup>4</sup>I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will express my riddle on the harp. Psalm 49:1-4 (NASB95)

This Psalm is an excellent example of parallel construction that is used quite often in Hebrew literature. In each verse the same thought is expressed in two different ways. For example {hear = give ear} and {people = inhabitants of the world}; {low and high = rich and poor}; mouth/wisdom = heart/understanding}; and {parable = dark sayings}. Usually Old Testament writers were addressing their messages to the people of Israel; however, here we see a message from which all people can profit and it is addressed to everyone. To this writer, it made no difference if the person to whom he was writing was of high or low status, or whether he were rich or poor. The Psalmist is going to propose a perplexing question or a riddle (dark saying) that is going to teach the hearers wisdom and understanding.

<sup>5</sup>Why should I fear in days of adversity, When the iniquity of my foes surrounds me, Psalm 49:5 (NASB95)

This is the riddle or question that is being posed. "What is the use of being afraid when times are bad and wicked people seem to have the upper hand?" Most people are natural worriers. We tend to be afraid of any change that comes along. The implication from the writer of this Psalm is that we don't have to be afraid if we know the destiny of those that cause the fear and if we know the ultimate end of the righteous. (The real answer to the riddle as to why we do not have to fear is in the 15th verse.) "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me." The verses in between the 5th and 15th tell us why wealth, riches, education, political power, or culture will make no difference in the final outcome of what happens to our soul.

<sup>6</sup>Even those who trust in their wealth And boast in the abundance of their riches? <sup>7</sup>No man can by any means redeem *his* brother Or give to God a ransom for him— <sup>8</sup>For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease *trying* forever— <sup>9</sup>That he should live on eternally, That he should not undergo decay. <sup>10</sup>For he sees *that even* wise men die; The stupid and the senseless alike perish And leave their wealth to others. Psalm 49:6-10 (NASB95)

If you ever need a text to make the point that you can't buy your way or any one else's way into heaven, then these few verses state it very clearly. We can't redeem someone else from the power of the grave. No amount of money will do that. The redemption of a soul is too costly for any earthly wealth to pay the price. Also, it is not a matter of intelligence or wisdom that will allow a person to escape death. If they have wealth, then it is left to someone else. In spite of what the Pharaohs thought, you can't take it with you. There the old joke that asks the question about someone that dies, "How much did he leave behind?" The answer is "All of it." They don't have trailer hitches on hearses. Jesus taught the truth of this in the Sermon on the Mount when He

said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

<sup>11</sup>Their inner thought is *that* their houses are forever *And* their dwelling places to all generations; They have called their lands after their own names. <sup>12</sup>But man in *his* pomp will not endure; He is like the beasts that perish. <sup>13</sup>This is the way of those who are foolish, And of those after them who approve their words. Selah. <sup>14</sup>As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; And the upright shall rule over them in the morning, And their form shall be for Sheol to consume So that they have no habitation. Psalm 49:11-14 (NASB95)

Some people realize that they personally cannot avoid death and yet they try to achieve some degree of immortality by the empires they build. It may be a fine estate that they imagine will last forever with their family members carrying on the tradition of the ancestors that were successful. The Psalmist suggest that they name their estates after themselves. However, it makes no difference how much honor we heap upon ourselves or others heap upon us, we will die just as any other member of the animal kingdom. People see this happening and yet they continue to perpetrate the idea that all the degrees, awards, wealth, and monuments really mean something.

The stark truth of the matter is that death will take its toll and the grave will be their abiding place. But there is hope! One day there will be a "brand new morning" and those that are righteous will be revealed and will have a position of being in charge. Even though in this present world we see that many times the wicked are in control, all is going to be changed. The "morning" about which the Psalmist writes is when the "Light of Life" is revealed. When Jesus returns and the "dead in Christ shall rise" then there will be vindication of God's people. The 15th verse says it quite well:

<sup>15</sup>But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me. Selah. Psalm 49:15 (NASB95)

Our ultimate security is in God alone. No one or nothing else can save. Since death is a reality regardless of our status, wealth, fame or education, then we must look to God, Who in Christ, has conquered death and given to all who believe the hope of the resurrection.