

The Lakeside



Message in a bottle

Verse of the day for Monday October 16, 2023 - Psalm 8: 3-4

3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

4 What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

Read Psalm 8: 3-4 for meditation and inspiration.



SERVING OTHERS WITH A GENEROUS HEART

Dear Lakesiders and friends,

I was engaged with a young man who was questioning the whole idea of Christianity. He felt that he was spiritual but wanted to remain “unaffiliated” with any particular faith group. His idea was that there are good ideas in each religious expression, and he liked the idea of picking and choosing the ideas that most conveniently fit his lifestyle. He liked many of the Buddhist points and added that Islam and Judaism also had many good philosophical positions.

Finally, he said, “Christianity, what’s in it for me?”

I tried to share with him that Christianity is not nor ever will be “all about him” but instead Christianity is all about JESUS! Now of course centering on Jesus does bring many spiritual blessings but that is not the reason for finding faith in Christ or believing in the Jesus of the New Testament.

For us Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! There is no other path to the fullness of God’s grace other than Jesus. I think that this young man is truly in step with today’s philosophy found in a former best-selling book, "Looking Out for

Number One,"-1 was first published in 1977, and since, has been released in dozens of editions and formats. The author's additional book titles include "Winning through Intimidation," "Million Dollar Habits," and "Getting What you Want," among others. Get a religion that works for you, feeds your self-interests, connects you with others who are looking for greater earthly success now there is a religion that is popular and it is called "The Prosperity Gospel" and it will lead you far from God's Kingdom.

In "Looking Out for Number One," the author argues strongly against generosity. For example, he says that if you "make the other person's happiness your first responsibility, you pervert the laws of nature"...and, "Unless someone is poor because you robbed him, no downtrodden individual is your responsibility." As Christians, we know the New Testament authors are telling us, of course, that if you follow such advice, you are perverting the law of God. Perhaps unsurprising to many, "Looking Out for Number One" persists as a major bestseller to this day. And we don't need to look very far to see jarring examples of the looking-out-for-number-one attitude in our present, national discourse.

Why does such a book sell so well in our time? Does the title attract us because it states our secret longings? Do our hearts echo "Yes!" to the notion that living well means abandoning our religious tradition of heroism or sainthood? Have we slipped so far down the ladder of morality that we're ready and willing to embrace the looking-out-for-number-one notion that other people are mere instruments of our pleasure and gratification and self-aggrandizement? Are we ready and willing to join those who pay lip-service to our Christian Faith while behaving in direct contradiction to our Christian morality and values? Are we willing to join those who seem to be laughing at Jesus' teaching of loving your neighbor as yourself?

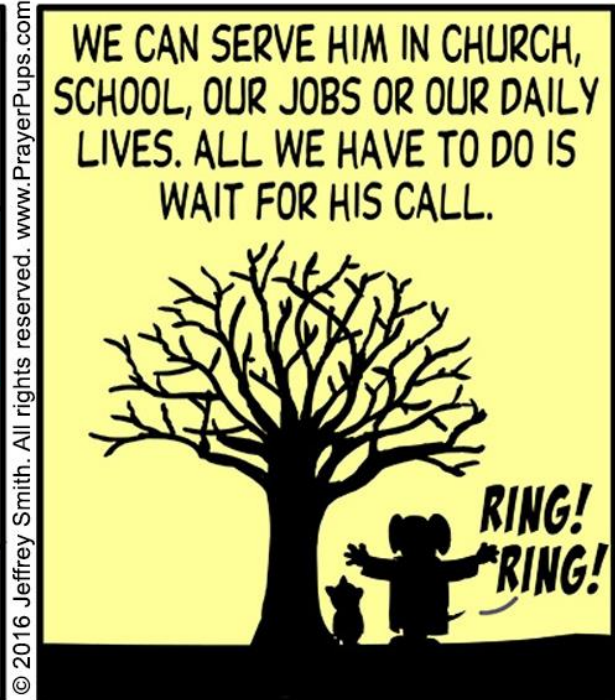
Dear, dear friends, generosity is its own reward. It helps others and develop within the giver a sacrificial heart and committed life, with rewards not here and now but waiting in heaven.

In God's love and leading,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Roger".

Roger

PRAYER PUPS BY JEFFREY SMITH



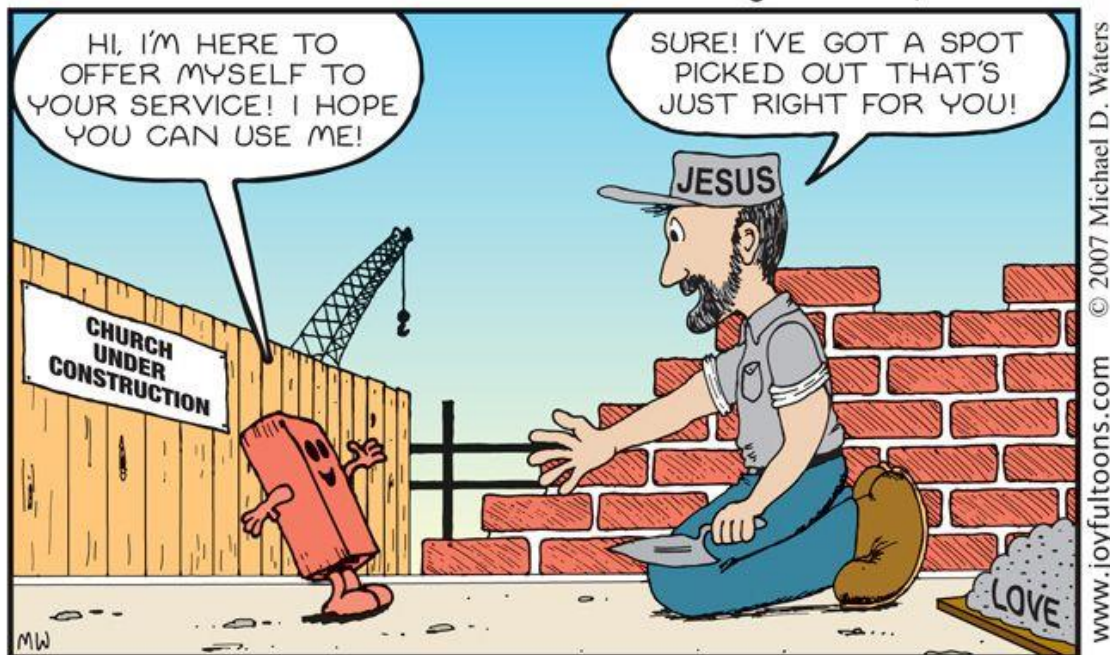
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CONSTRUCTION SITE

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

- 1 PETER 2:5 NIV