

THE FOREST HILL NEWS

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FOREST HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST

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VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A..M.
Morning Worship.. ...10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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In Search of the Lord's Way

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WICKEDNESS ABOUNDS!

Barry M. Grider

“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence” (Gen. 6:11). This verse came to my mind as I contemplated the headlines of this past week. First, the controversial halftime show at the Super Bowl in Houston created much outrage across the country. This obscene spectacle should not have surprised anyone, especially CBS, since they chose the debauched network MTV to produce the program. What seems to elude the Hollywood crowd is why mainstream America would not find appealing and exciting Justin Timberlake groping Janet Jackson and eventually ripping off her clothing and exposing her breast. Jackson’s apology, “If I have offended anyone, I’m sorry,” further exasperates the problem. Sure she offended people of decency. However, wickedness is so engrained in the hearts of many celebrities, they simply do not understand why others would not get a kick and a thrill out of their sordid behavior.

Further illustrating how wickedness abounds, on Tuesday, February 3, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court concluded that denying gays the right to marry was unconstitutional. It appears that no movement is better organized or more militant than homosexuals, who are busy advancing their abominable agenda. Clearly, they also have the ear of many politicians. At the same time, we rejoice that Ohio Governor Bob Taft, protecting the sanctity of marriage, quickly signed legislation banning same-sex weddings in his state. We pray other states will follow suit. However, the greatest threat to God ordained marriage, seems to be the activist judges in our courts. That is why it is essential for the President of the United States to push for a constitutional amendment that will protect the marriage relationship between a man and a woman. Make no mistake about it, homosexual activists are not interested in a marriage commitment (most have between 500-2500 partners during a lifetime, which is usually cut short because of illness), but, rather, they are seeking to destroy traditional marriage as upheld by the Bible. Of course, God’s word will always be the final authority and God is opposed and will always be opposed to homosexuality (Rom. 1:26,27).

Later in the week, the horrific news came concerning Carlie Brucia, an innocent 11 year old girl, who walking to her home after visiting with friends, was abducted and later found slain next to the parking lot of the Central church of Christ building in Sarasota, Florida. How wicked and warped must one become to kill a little girl just for the “thrill” of killing (Prov. 6:16,17).

Lest we become like Elijah who had to be reminded that he was not alone in the fight for the right (1 Kings 19:18), there are many who are opposed to the gross wickedness outlined above. In fact, a number of us realize that only through the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ can the spread of wickedness be stymied. This past Lord’s Day, I preached two messages entitled, “In Times Like These We Need The Basics.” The fundamentals of New Testament Christianity must be preached and practiced. Faithful brethren should support each other in calling men out of darkness into the glorious light of Christ. Sadly, I read a short tract a few

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE BOTTOM OF A BOTTLE

Proverbs 23:29-35

Brandon Britton

Solomon is described as being the wisest man to ever live. God granted him wisdom and understanding that was unlike any other. However, not all of Solomon's wisdom came as a gift from God. Much of his wisdom came about from life experiences or more accurately terrible mistakes. Is it not the case that often good judgment comes from experience and experience comes from poor judgment? Solomon had made his share of mistakes and foolish decisions and attempted to protect his children, and anyone who would listen, from making the same mistakes.

He made mistakes pertaining to women, wealth and wine. It is no wonder that so much of the book of *Proverbs* is devoted to warning about these three things. Things have not changed much in the three thousand years since Solomon lived. Our greatest troubles continue to be immorality/infidelity, greed/covetousness and alcohol.

Solomon warned, "*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise*" (Prov. 20:1). This is a far cry from the picture that Satan, through the alcohol companies advertising campaigns, seeks to paint of alcohol. Since the Garden of Eden the devil has been "talking out of both sides of his mouth." This should come as no surprise because he is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). He will say whatever he needs to say, to whomever he needs to say it, in order to accomplish his will.

The alcohol commercials and advertisements are famous for showing how much fun people have when they drink their product. So many are lured into this supposed world of pleasure and fun, but fail to grasp the brief little message at the end. "Drink responsibly!" "Don't drink and drive." "Surgeon general's warning: This product may cause liver damage." Why do you think these warnings are given? Because these products cause these things!

So many millions are lured in by the lies of Satan who speaks out of both sides of his mouth. These commercials are not a lot unlike the old southern politician who was asked where he stood on whisky? To which he replied, "*If you mean the Devil's brew, the poison scourge, the bloody monster that defiles innocence, dethrones reason and*

topples men and women from the pinnacles of righteous, gracious living into the bottomless pit of degradation and despair, then certainly I am against it. But, if you mean the drink that enables a man to magnify his joy and happiness and to forget life's heartbreaks and sorrows; if you mean the drink that pours into our treasuries untold millions of dollars, which are used to care for our little crippled children, our aged and infirm, to build highways and schools, then certainly I am in favor of it."

In *Proverbs 23:29-35* Solomon puts us in the body of a drunk on the morning after a night of drinking. He asks, "*Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds with out cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine* (Prov. 23:29-30).

Sadness, quarreling, slurred and babbling speech, bloodshot eyes and unexplained injuries. Does not this sound like a great night of fun? Solomon tries to warn, but will you listen? "*Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder*" (Prov. 23:31-32).

How many homes could have avoided being broken and reputations and lives prevented being destroyed by listening to the warning of Solomon? "*Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things* (Prov. 23:33). His point is simple: when you drink you say and do things you would not if you were in your right mind. You will say or do things that will shame you, haunt you and affect you when you sober up. The emotional consequences join hands with the physical to make you feel even worse. *Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again*" (Prov. 23:34-35). Solomon says you will wake up feeling like you spent the night aboard a ship on the rolling sea. The nausea is only made worse by feeling as though you had been beaten, but you cannot remember if or when you were struck.

Recently I saw a commercial depicting a

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days ago entitled “**Shrines to Apostasy.**” The author of this booklet wrote the following, “When the business of religion becomes impressive buildings, especially ones devoted to man and not God, the structures are monuments to apostasy and departure from God.” A few pages later a picture of our new library, named in honor of a spiritual giant, N.B. Hardeman, was shown as an example of a shrine to apostasy. Such sentiments either express deep resentment and envy or the height of ignorance. Good Christian character demands that we commend the good work of others (Rom. 16:1). In fact, it is a sin not to do so (2 Cor. 12:11). Furthermore, we are commanded to give “honor to whom honor” (Rom. 13:7). Jesus did this when he paid tribute to the widow who gave two mites. He said, “this that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her (Mark 14:9). Who better to honor than those who through great sacrifices have given so much to see the cause of Christ go forward? The buildings on the grounds of the Forest Hill church are all used for God glorifying purposes. The N.B. Hardeman library is a place for student preachers to study and learn how to effectively engage in the most marvelous work on earth. In times like these, sound brethren need to hold up each other’s hands and not seek to destroy or undermine the good works of another. Yes, wickedness abounds, however, the gospel of Christ saves. Let us do all we can to promote and not hinder His Cause.

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woman feeling great, but the man was “*hung over.*” He could not understand how she could feel so good when she drank as much as he did.

She informed him that she had taken a pill called *Chaser* before drinking and it guaranteed you would not have a hang over. I found myself thinking sarcastically, “*I am so glad that biochemists and medical experts are spending valuable lab time curing the hang over instead of worrying about thinks like curing cancer, AIDS, or MS.*” This is just one of many examples of how the devil manipulates sin to make it appear fun, good and consequence free.

Perhaps the saddest part of Solomon’s warning about alcohol is the closing of verse 35. The man speaking in the story says when I awake I will seek it yet again. It hurts me. It destroys my life. It brings misery upon me, but I cannot wait to drink it again. Someone once said, *There’s a whole lot of truth in a full bottle of whiskey, but a head full of lies in an empty one.*”

(Brandon is the associate preacher of the East Hill church of Christ, Pulaski, Tennessee).

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