

Spiritual Erosion 2/24/2019 Sunday AM

Introduction

- Last week we discussed **Prioritizing = Success**.
- Successful people learn how to put first things first. Successful Christians learn how to put God first.
- God promises us that if we put him first, everything else will fall into place. It's that simple.
- This morning we are going to discuss **Spiritual Erosion**.
- **Definition:** Erosion - The process by which something is diminished or destroyed by degrees. To eat into, or to eat away by slow destruction of substance, to deteriorate.
- We all know about how erosion is causing many issues in beachfront property along California's coast.
- We are well aware of the issues erosion can cause in our physical lives, but what about **Spiritual Erosion**?
- Spiritual erosion is slow, silent, and subtle. Like physical erosion, it starts gradually, and the daily familiarity of routine keeps us from seeing it in ourselves or even those close to us.
- A person will usually keep doing the same things they've always done, even attending church long after their faith is gone, because we are creatures of habit.
- What do we do about this?

John 6:46-49

⁴⁶"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. ⁴⁸He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

- We know as Christians that our lives should be build on the solid rock foundation of Jesus Christ.
- If you hear Jesus' words and you apply them to your life, you will as **v.48** says, "...like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built."
- Being both a "hearer or the word" and a "doer of the word" ensures a firm foundation.
- If you choose the other path and you do not build on a firm foundation, when the flood comes your house will fall.

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

¹²So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

- Paul is exhorting the Corinthians people to watch out! Sometimes we think we are standing firm, but we aren't.
- We must watch out for spiritual erosion.
- The early symptoms of spiritual erosion can take different forms for different people, including:
 - Compromise, becoming more entangled with the world.
 - Diminished zeal (there will always be ebbs and flows, but an overall state of receding).
 - A lack of interest in studying or reading the Bible.
 - **Rationalizing sin.**
 - An unhealthy attachment to material things, substituting the authentic with the synthetic.
 - Not consulting God on major decisions.
 - Accepting the influence of others who couldn't care less about God.
 - Perfectionism according to OUR standards, not God's—a.k.a. self-righteousness.
 - Our prayer life and meditation falls off—we're not staying in close contact with God
- When Spiritual Erosion takes place, it's not God or His power that has eroded. That simply isn't possible. Rather, it's Him as our foundation—because we allow it and we don't maintain it.

- There are many people who may appear to be weathering the storm, but underneath their foundation is being eaten away.
- Here is a quote from an article I read once: "It doesn't take a bombshell to destroy faith if faith is left unattended and unguarded. Faith is not an absolute in our life that once attained will never change or diminish. It must constantly be attended, nourished, strengthened and added to."
- Too often as we mature in our faith, we begin to take our relationship and standing with Christ for granted.
- If you are a born-again Christian, then Jesus is the foundation on which you stand.
- However, if you are not careful, you can make choices throughout your life where you begin to slide your house off of the foundation.
- Spiritual Erosion is absolutely something that we control as Christians because it falls under our freewill.
- **This is really not a conversation about salvation, but about effectiveness for God and being obedient to Him**

Romans 13:8-14

⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
¹⁰Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.
¹¹And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

- Do not become complacent in your spiritual life.
- Just like in your marriage relationship you should continue to "date" your spouse, so we should continue to work on our relationship with Christ every day.
- When we are watchful and diligent about our spiritual lives, we will find that erosion is not a problem.
- It is only when we stop being watchful and diligent, and we do not "wake up from [our] slumber" that we find erosion to be wreaking havoc.
- Be humble and honest enough with yourself to recognize this issue in your spiritual life and to make a course correction.
- It all ties back to what was said last week, successful people know to put first things first. For your spiritual life, that is God.
- Be watchful that you are keeping him in the #1 spot.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Romans 9:1-13