

Grand Masters Message

They are floundering, don't stand idly by!

My father spent 30 years in the United States Air Force and this afforded our family to travel and be educated in the public schools around the world. My mother's family is from Greer South Carolina and after 20 years of traveling she wanted to move a little closer home. My father only had one viable option, he volunteered for a year remote tour of duty so he could chose his next duty station, which would be closer to South Carolina. My father went on his remote tour. We were renting a home in California at the time. Our lease came up 3 months before Dad would return, since we had a motor home it was decided we would camp out since we would be out of school. It was decided we would go to Harden's Flat a campground just outside of Yosemite National Park. It was here that my near death experience would change my life.

I was swimming in one of the Park Rivers with several friends. There was a sand bar in the middle of the river and it was a day of play, nothing electronic required for the day of fun. After a particularly long day of playing on the sand bar (I was 14 at the time) I swam back to the river bank with my friends. When I got to the bank I put my feet down to climb out of the river. Then it happened, I had chosen a terrible place to climb onto the riverbank. I lost my footing and one foot slipped into a hole and it was trapped in tree roots. I was not more than 3 foot from the river bank and the water covered everything but my eyes.

I was unable to call for help, just wave frantically for help. My friends thought I was joking so they gathered their things and began to leave the river bank. I determined then that I needed to remain calm and go down and try to free myself. Through God's grace I was successful and made my way on the river bank. I lay alone what seemed like hours before I had the strength to return to our camp site. I have thought often about that situation. I believe that many people see their neighbors, like my friends beheld me floundering and never realize the severity of their troubles.

I began that day to live my faith rather than to practice it. It is not enough to believe that Christianity is true! Having a Christian faith, would mean following a Christian way of life. I determined then to stop looking at people and see the individual and meet their needs if only with a smile and a friendly hand shake. Have you seen someone floundering and you stood idly by like my friends did 33 years ago on that river bank?

Soren Kierkegaard was a Danish writer and a devote Christian who was unrelentingly critical of the church as an organization. He lashed out at the "crowd" for their forgetfulness of what it means to exist. One of my former Pastor's Henry Stanford shared what his mother once said "the church would be a lot better if we took all of the people out." Mrs. Stanford, like Kierkegaard was asserting that the church was more than people frozen to a pew. It is when we walk out of the doors of our churches, synagogues, and cathedrals that our work begins. We are responsible as individuals for the choices we make.

I challenge each of us to take a leap of faith and share the love of God with those floundering around us. Charity is not measured by the size of our gift; do you remember the widow's mite? God does not consider how finite an act of charity you extend; he looks at the spirit in which you gave it. You may never know the outcome of your choices but I assure you God knows and he will remember.

Yes, a life spent in fellowship with God believing in and acting upon the square in accordance with his Holy Word, serving others and sharing the love of God will enable us to see and truly live, thereby embracing life with no fear of death.

Your friend and brother from Inman

Jay Adam Pearson
Grand Master

October 2011

From the West

Masonic Education Corner

Circumambulation of the Entered Apprentice Degree

Psalm 133

In the circumambulation in the Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason degrees, passages of Scripture are quoted to impress upon the candidates certain lessons that should be applied to our daily lives and especially those who are members of the Fraternity. As we listen to these passages, do we listen to the oft repeated Scriptures that our familiarity with them causes us to miss the real meaning?

For instance, in the First Degree or the Entered Apprentice degree Psalm 133 is used to teach the lesson of unity. This is one of the 73 psalms written by David, "the Sweet Psalmist of Israel," out of the 150 songs found in this book of the Old Testament. Psalms was the Jewish hymnbook of Israel, used in the worship of Jehovah. It has been called a Psalm of the Brotherhood and fellowship.

This beautiful, but short psalm speaks of the unity among Christians and unity or harmony between Brothers in the Masonic Fraternity. It is essential for its success. These poems or songs touch every area of a person's spiritual life and every aspect of the believer's personal relationship with God.

When this psalm was written, Jews came with their families from all over the known world to worship in Jerusalem, the center of Jewish worship. They met their friends there and enjoyed wonderful fellowship together. They were enduring persecution from unbelievers and it was good to be with their own people worshiping God together.

Let's look at the first verse. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!" When we see the word Behold, it is to get our attention. It says, "Listen, this is important" or as Paul tells us in the 4th chapter of his letter to the Ephesian Christians that we are "to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments."

This verse refers to the time that Aaron, the brother of Moses, was anointed as the first high priest of Israel. The ointment used to consecrate or set him apart as high priest was precious, and fragrant to the delight of the bystanders. It was also holy and so must our brotherly love be, with a pure heart, devoted to God. Aaron was dedicated to serving the Lord and lead in the worship of the Israelites. This also gives us a picture of the Lord Jesus, who is our High Priest.

The psalmist concludes by saying that for brethren to dwell together in unity is... "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

Heavy dew came as the warm, moist Mediterranean breezes precipitated dew on the cooler mountain slopes and as the dew gives life to the mountain plants, so God's rich blessings provide those dwelling in unity the benefits of a rich and rewarding life. The blessing which God commands on those that dwell in love is life for evermore. For evermore means that God's blessings are given to each successive generation.

References used:

Thru the Bible Commentary by Dr. J. Vernon McGee
Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Old Testament

Word of the Month:

Impious—irreverent, profane, undutiful.

Question of the Month:

What are the Unwritten Landmarks? Search Ahiman Rezon (2010) for answer.

Answer for August and September issue:

Ahiman Rezon (2010), pages 112 and 113.

Fraternally,

William B. Rogers, Senior Grand Warden

Chairman Masonic Education Committee

October 2011