

**FRIDAY, September 18, 2009:**

During the height of the Vietnam War, there was a record that was number one on all the charts for some 12 weeks. Entitled "An Open Letter to My Teenage Son," this record sold millions of copies.

With patriotic music and the roll of snare drums in the background, a father reads a letter he has written to his son.

In the letter he tells his son how lovingly he remembers the years when he was growing up, and how much he loves him now.

Just before the father reads the final line of this moving, stirring, and loving letter, the music suddenly stops and into the silence that follows the father says these horrifying words, "But, son, if you burn your draft card, then burn your birth certificate at the same time for from that moment on, I have no son."

Sanskrit-based languages have ninety-six words for love; Persian has eighty; Greek has three; English has only one.

With this one option for telling someone we love them we can't afford to blow it! The moment we start putting conditions on our love we start watering down our love. People will disappoint us, fail us, and even hurt us, but love finds a way to hold on – believing in the good, hoping for the best and daring to believe that with God's help – love never gives up and love never fails.

Those of us limited by English with only have one word for love – please, my dear friend, handle it with care!

**SCRIPTURE:** I John 4:7-21

**SATURDAY, September 19, 2009:**

Following is one of my all-time favorite writings about the most important person in all of the world for all times...

"One Solitary Life"

*"He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He worked in a carpentry shop until he was thirty, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. When the tide of popular opinion turned against him, his friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies. He was tried and convicted. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave.*

*He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never went to college. He never traveled more than two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompanies greatness.*

*Yet all the armies that ever marched, and all the governments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, have not affected life upon this earth as powerfully as has that One Solitary Life."*

Ah, let us remember him today as we prepare ourselves to worship Him at his sanctuary tomorrow.

**SCRIPTURE:** Philippians 2:5-11



**Pastor Kemp's Weekly Devotional**

*For the week of September 13, 2009*

Daily Reflection Questions:

- Reflection: Of what eternal benefit was my day?
- Reflection: What eternal truth(s) did I observe today?
- Reflection: Did my behavior match my values?
- Reflection: What am I thankful for today?

**Personal Notes:**

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**MONDAY, September 14, 2009:**

...*that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.* (I Thessalonians 4:13)

This may be a little bit of a downer for a Monday morning, but one thing I've learned as the years have accumulated in my life – sorrow also accumulates.

I was reminded of this last Monday as Sonja and I drove to Six Mile to say what will possibly be our last good byes to her grandmother who is dying of cancer.

I remember as a young man driving to Six Mile and Walhalla with excitement and optimism. These places represented home, family, home-cooked meals, fun evenings sitting around the table playing games and so much more. Life was good and it would never change...but it did.

Now, with the accumulation of years have come funerals, divorces, sicknesses and the many other sorrows and sadness that come with any family over several decades.

Going home is still a privilege, but now it is a much more sobering event. Really all of life is that way. The older you get the more good *and* bad you have to carry. The optimism of youth matures into the realities of middle age and then begins to fade into the dusk of eventide.

What is a man or a woman to do? The answer is, "Never lose hope." In Christ we have the blessed hope that all things will work together for our good and the promise that better days are ahead; that there will be a grand reunion day when the redeemed will stand upon the shores of a better land where there will be no more good bye.

The key is... "In Christ" we have this hope. In other words, to compensate for the accumulation of sorrow there must be a corresponding accumulation of hope and that comes with growing in Christ. So as you start another week, stay close to Christ my dear friend...stay close to Christ.

**SCRIPTURE: I Corinthians 15:19-20**

**TUESDAY, September 15, 2009:**

When Hapsburg emperor Franz Joseph died, the funeral procession arrived at the closed doors of the monastery where he was to be buried and a herald knocked at the gate. Then one could hear the voice of the abbot: "Who are you?" "I am Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary," the herald replied. "I don't know you. Who are you?" "I am Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, Bohemia, Galicia, Lodomeria, and Dalmatia, Grand Duke of Transylvania, Margrave of Moravia, Duke of Styria and Carinthia..." "We don't know you. Who are you?" the sepulchral voice reiterated.

Thereupon the messenger knelt down and said: "I am Franz Joseph, a poor sinner humbly begging for God's mercy." "Thou mayest enter, then," the abbot said, and the gates were flung open.

With all the titles and responsibilities today, don't forget that they will all pass away...but one day you too will knock at heaven's door and only one answer will open it for you...the humble cry for the mercy of Jesus Christ.  
**SCRIPTURE: Acts 4:12**

**WEDNESDAY, September 16, 2009:**

A week ago today, Sonja, and I celebrated our 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary. One of the secrets to our many years together is that I understood that: "*When mama's happy everybody is happy.*"

We all chuckle when we use that phrase as if we've said something clever, and there is some truth in that. But let me let you in on another secret...

Over our 31 years, my dearly beloved wife made it a point to practice making "daddy happy" as well.

If any relationship is to last and be fulfilling it will require that both people work hard at bringing joy and fulfillment to *the other person*. The moment the relationship becomes about your happiness is the moment that your relationship begins to suffer and slide downward. And if someone in that relationship is not willing to stop keeping score and say, I shall serve...the relationship is doomed.

So, over these last 31 years, I've tried to keep "mama happy." But I'm so thankful that I've had a soul-partner that did the same for me.

**SCRIPTURE: I John 4:7**

**THURSDAY: September 17, 2009:**

*Does Jesus do nails?*

On the same trip to Six Mile that I wrote about Monday, Sonja and I also visited her father. When we stepped in the Alzheimer's ward, one of the patients greeted us with such a warm smile and then he looked up at Sonja and asked her if she would do his nails. Sonja nicely wiggled out of that one and we made our way to where her father was.

Later, Sonja was beating herself up a bit saying: "*I should have done that man's nails...Jesus would.*"

But would he? I do read once that he washed the feet of his disciples. He often stopped to minister to the hurting, hungry and hesitate. But did he stop to take care of every little need or wish that people had? The answer is no, he didn't. Jesus would have trimmed the man's nails or anything else that was required. He modeled a servant's heart like no one before or since. But more importantly he modeled obedience. What motivated him to do the things that he did was not guilt or a desire to have people like him, but a desire to please his Father. Jesus was on a mission and he never wavered from that mission.

There is a lesson for us here. We must never get to good to serve; but we must also remember that everyday God has a mission for us that only we can do. When we do that, we have served all.

**SCRIPTURE: John 17:4**