

December 22, 2013

TIME OF REFLECTION

“Late modern society is principally concerned with purchasing things, in ever greater abundance and variety, and so has to strive to fabricate an ever greater number of desires to gratify, and to abolish as many limits and prohibitions upon desire as it can. Such a society is already implicitly atheist and so must slowly but relentlessly apply itself to the dissolution of transcendent values.... Our sacred writ is advertising, our piety is shopping, our highest devotion is private choice.... In a sense, the triviality of the movement is its chief virtue. It is a diverting alternative to thinking deeply. It is a narcotic. In our time...irreligion is the opiate of the bourgeoisie, the sigh of the oppressed ego, the heart of a world filled with tantalizing toys.”

~David Bentley Hart (1965 - present), cultural commentator

“... God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, ‘Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”

~St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:27-31 (NASB)

“So where does that leave our proud...insider claims and counterclaims? Canceled? Yes, canceled. What we’ve learned is this: God does not respond to what *we* do; we respond to what *God* does.”

~Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of Romans 3:27 in *The Message*

“As long as the example of Jesus Christ stands before us, let everyone be ashamed of even a moment of self-complacency.”

~Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980), philosopher and critic of mass media

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “The Christmas Vision” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Isaiah 9:1-7 (ESV)*

¹ But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

³ You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

⁴ For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.