

Leaves Of Hope #12

Family Devotion written by C.M. Gullerud

The man is ever blest
Who shuns the sinners' ways,
Among their counsels never stands,
Nor takes the scorners' place. L.H. 414:1

Ecclesiastes 6: 11-12

The more the words, the less the meaning, and how does that profit anyone? For who knows what is good for a man in life, during the few and meaningless days he passes through like a shadow? Who can tell him what will happen under the sun after he is gone?

What is life? What is there in it?" With questions such as these the philosophers have occupied their time and come up with a variety of answers. The writer of Ecclesiastes tells us that he had considered the possibilities of how one might live life to the fullest. (Ecclesiastes Chapter 2) He thought that laughter, pleasure and good times might be the highest good and the most desirable of all things. And so he gave himself to wine to increase the sensation of joy and to dull the feeling of sorrow. He came to the conclusion that much laughter is madness. Of mirth he said: "What does it accomplish?" He took another tack. He

spent his time in making plans, building houses, planting vineyards, gardens, orchards, trees. He gathered servants, organized orchestras and singing societies. He bought a ranch, heaped up gold and silver, made collections of works of art so that he was great in the eyes of the world and became the envy of the people. But what was the good of it all? He came to the conclusion that all was vanity, a vexation of the spirit, with no real profit under the sun.

Also today we find that young people are looking around for something in life whereby they can express themselves. Someone put it this way: *“All the Rolling Stones away around me – long hair, tight denims, all those hot lights . . . And you are singing with the microphone between your lips, suddenly you are happy because you are a rolling stone, and every one has finally gotten off of your cloud.”* A College student said: *“Pot takes the pressures off in the very real way . . . There’s a sense of total, timeless ease.”* But in the end all is vanity, frustration and vexation of spirit. We know that the enemy, who is throwing up a smoke screen to hide the sad ending, is the old evil foe - the same enemy who deceived Eve with the enticing sight of the good looking fruit which brought death.

What is life? We know that it is a gift from God who has brought us into this world. We live and breathe by his almighty power. Our bodies and souls are his creation. God has given us life and speaks to us through his Son in order that we might know the true meaning of life. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made it clear that we should not labor for the meat that perishes but for the meat that endures to everlasting life which the Son of God will give us. The bread which Jesus gives is his flesh and has given it for the life of the world. Those who believe in him and through faith receive this bread of life will have life here and forever. The believers dwell in Jesus and Jesus dwells in them. This is joy and lasting hope. By Jesus we come to the Father and he comes to us. Now life takes on meaning. Now we spend our time glorifying his name and in bearing witness so that others may see this light and be delivered from the darkness of sin and guilt. Rejoice in the Lord.

He like a tree shall thrive,
With waters near the root;
Fresh as the leaf his name shall live,
His works are heavenly fruit.

L.H. 414:3