

He who is wise, wins souls

Tom Tillman

This morning I'm going to use one of my songs as our outline for what we learn today. Whenever I've written a song, its purpose, in my mind, is that of a teaching tool: first, to me, and then, hopefully to others.

As I sing them, over and over, while I'm writing and learning them, the words become embedded in my mind and heart; therefore, I've always tried to be very careful with the words because I, as a teacher, along with those hearing the song will either be absorbing the truth of God's Word or, as a false teacher, I will be leading others, and myself, astray from the truth of God's Word. Therefore, I try to always remember James' words: 'My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.' Jms 3:1
First, the title and the chorus of the song:

He who is wise wins souls; this comes from proverbs 11:30: 'The fruit of the righteous *is a tree of life*,
And he who wins souls *is wise*.'

Who are the 'righteous?' We are; all of the true children of God, the true Church today, are the Righteous. 'Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' 2 Cor 5:20.

We represent God to the World. He isn't saying, 'Do what you should do so that you will be righteous,' He is saying, 'You are righteous so act like it; do what comports with the righteousness with which I've clothed you. You are My ambassadors so represent Me accurately and faithfully at all times. As such, you will bear My fruit which is life and forgiveness to those to whom I've sent you.

Jesus said, 'I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.' John 15:1

'Then,' He says, 'I will use you to present the Gospel and win souls. I will be the One drawing them to Myself and saving them, but I will add that 'win' to your future rewards list. And even if they do not respond to the Gospel, I have only told you to preach the Gospel; their salvation is my work and my responsibility.'

He doesn't say, 'he who wins souls is wise;' He says, 'he who is wise wins souls.' Do you see the distinction? The one, who is wise, recognizes the importance of obeying God in taking every opportunity to present the Gospel to every person with whom we come in contact. Why does the wise person see it as wisdom? First, of course, because it's the loving thing to do... we only love others if we are willing and ready to tell them the only way to Eternal Life. We don't love them when we decide that the best way to witness is just to be a good person... 'lifestyle evangelism.' Lifestyle evangelism is, at its heart simply cowardly. No one has ever become a believer by watching their 'good' neighbor and rarely has anyone ever asked, 'Why are you so good... please tell me how to be good, like you; I so want to be good like you!' Do you know what keeps many people from telling the Gospel? They're ashamed of their own lifestyle and feel unworthy. 'I can't tell about Jesus... they heard me swear or they saw me get angry or they saw me drinking a beer... I don't want to bring disrepute to Jesus so I will just be quiet.' Nowhere in Scripture are we told to first '*earn the right to be heard*;' that is simply a lie from the enemy to keep us from telling the Gospel until we decide we've been a good enough neighbor to then tell them the only way to escape eternity in Hell... what if they die, the day before we've decided that we've been that very good neighbor... we weren't that very good neighbor... we were the worst kind of neighbor; we kept that eternally crucial information to ourselves... we buried that treasure in our back yard and we will stand before the master of the household to tell Him why we buried it instead of multiplying it.

How could 'lifestyle evangelism ever apply to the person we sit next to on the bus or the plane or the train or the one we pass by as they're asking for our spare change?

The wise person recognizes the absolute necessity of always being ready and willing to 'tell' the Gospel because that is the only way anyone has ever been born again.

The first step in winning souls is to ask for God's Wisdom, always. 'If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.' Jms 1:5

The second line of the song comes from Dan 12:2: 'And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. ³ Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.'

God was referring, both, to the time at the end of the Millennium but also the Rapture: '*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.*' 1 Thes 4:16

The dead in Christ will be raised to everlasting life and so shall we who remain alive. Look what Daniel wrote regarding those who are wise... and remember, those who are wise win souls: 'Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament.' The firmament is the 'Heavens,' the brightness of stars and especially of God, Himself: 'And God called the firmament Heaven... Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens.' Gen 1

'Those who are wise, those who win souls, shall shine like the brightness of the firmament.'

When we receive our glorified, eternal bodies, at the Rapture, bodies which will be like Jesus' own, glorified Body, we will be perfect, complete and we will shine; we will radiate the Glory of God; finally, we will reflect the Lord Jesus Christ perfectly, in every way; we will be the glorified sons and daughters of God Almighty.

'Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, ***we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.***' 1 John 3:2 This is speaking of what He will look like on the outside... His glorious, shining majesty which we will share, forever as we rule and reign with Him. And, we will also be like Him on the inside: perfect, complete, without any sin or sin nature.

This is God speaking... I'm not making anything up... He has told us and He is faithful and able to do all He has said. Think again: when we rule and reign with Him for 1000 years and then forever... we will appear to mortal men, during the Millennium, as angel-like or god-like persons. That isn't said with undue pride or arrogance but with the absolute humility that God, in His Love for us, would do such a thing... it is what He has promised to those who love Him: ' "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." ' 1Cor 2:9

Then, back to finish Dan 12:3... So that we don't misunderstand, God repeats it another way 'And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.'

They will shine like the stars forever and ever. Those who turn many to righteousness can mean those who win souls but also those who faithfully teach God's Word and those who faithfully come alongside those who need encouragement or any other way we love one another as He loves us. As mothers and fathers, grandparents... as we turn our children to righteousness, as we lead them to Christ... as neighbors.

We will be perfect in every way and we will shine with the Glory of God... just imagine!!

He who is Wise Wins Soul; He'll Shine like the brightness in the Heavens; those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars, forever and ever.

The next line reads: '***Nothing of Earth can hold my attention, all of it fades away...***

Solomon wrote: 'Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; Vanity of vanities, ***all is vanity.***' Ecc. 1

He had everything this World could offer and he finally realized that it was all worthless and empty vanity.

This entire planet and all it offers or contains will be destroyed; anyone who puts their faith or desire in this world will suffer great loss. All of it fades to nothing in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ and all that He offers: *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.'* 1 Pet 1:3

Paul wrote: 'But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and **count them as rubbish (dung, worthless and detestable).**' Phpp 3:7

Nothing in the World is worth the loss of even the smallest reward when He comes for us. Everything that Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk own, together, (500 Billion) is not worth the smallest reward God will give.

The next line: ***Knowing You, my intention, deeper every day.***

After Paul said he counted it all as rubbish, he wrote, 'that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,'

To know God... He, Whose ways and thinking are so much higher than our own that He says: 'Seek the Lord he LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. ⁸ "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD. ⁹ "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, ¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.'

To paraphrase that section: 'Seek Me, seek to know Me... come unto Me; leave your sin; I will forgive and pardon you completely; call on Me; You cannot imagine such a thing but that is how I think; I am Love and I will love you. Seek Me in My Word... every word of Scripture is true and will be fulfilled.

The thrust of that passage is, simply: 'I will love you and pardon you completely; you don't think or act like that; you are petty and vengeful; I am loving and forgiving.'

Our primary way to know Him is through His Word: 'The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever.' Isa 40:8

'For I *am* God, and *there is* no other; I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' Isa 46:10

We can know God; the Creator of all that is. We can know Him intimately, being loved by Him, being wanted by Him, having been chosen by Him before the foundation of the World. We can know Him and be known by Him. In fact, we, mere humans, can be One with Him, with Him living within us as we live within Him.

Knowing You, my intention, deeper every day.

The next line: '***Pleasure, Power, Beauty Adorning, Fame, Riches Untold...***'

My flesh is always at war with my spirit; my flesh pulls me and tries to convince me of the great worth of things that are found in the physical realm, things that he repeats, over and over, will satisfy the supposed needs and desires of my physical body and my soul. My soul knows and understands that my flesh is often seeking to draw me into sin. There are, of course, some needs of my flesh that are perfectly legitimate: he needs food and water; he needs certain vitamins and minerals and, to be honest, my flesh, as a married person has a certain need for sexual intimacy with my wife. However, that area is more than just a fulfilled gratification of my flesh; my soul and my spirit are both also involved in that time... all three of me in union with all three of Debbie.' That is why sexual sin is so serious with God; outside of Biblical marriage, a person is infecting their entire self.

Our souls and spirits need nothing but God. Yes, it is good to have a mate, to have other Christians with whom to fellowship; it is good to have work that is satisfying but in reality, our souls and spirits need nothing but God. Imagine being shipwrecked on an island with only a Bible. If the weather was mild enough and the island contained sufficient food and water... a person would need nothing else until God came for him either in death or in the Rapture.

When we understand that our truest need is to know God and Him, intimately, then our lives can have real meaning and satisfaction; then we can correctly relate to a spouse, our work, other people and life in general. But the World tells us, constantly, that we need so many other things and that without them, our lives lack meaning and purpose. The World and our flesh tell us we need many different pleasures and, diversions and distractions; we need to try to make ourselves beautiful by the World's standards; we need to hold power over others; we need to be famous with thousands of people following our twitter feed and facebook page; we need to be known and envied but above all, we need money: lots and lots of money before we can be really happy and content. The problem is that none of those things will ever truly satisfy. That's why so many rich, famous and successful people commit suicide... everything is vanity and emptiness without an intimate relationship with the God Who created us for Himself.

The next line says: (all of those things) ***'Melt to nothing like mist in the morning weak, ugly and old'***

'For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.' Jms 4:14

Those who are strong and have power over others... eventually every one of them die as weak, old men and women. Every beautiful and famous, celebrated movie star has eventually become old, wrinkled and ugly, that is, if they have lived long enough to be old and haven't died from drugs, alcohol and sexual perversion.

I think, specifically of Goldie Hawn, Melanie Griffith and Meg Ryan: three actresses who were very pretty young women who eventually turned extremely ugly and old. Actors believe they must keep the beauty of their young faces so they invariably turn to plastic surgery and end up looking like a terrible caricature of their former selves. Very few have ever had the wisdom to remain who they are in growing old gracefully, understanding that their best avenue is to seek roles that match their true age instead of trying to remain a 'young' leading lady or man.

Then, when they do grow older and the roles dry up, so many turn to drugs and alcohol. Everything in this World grows old and deteriorates. In fact, Peter tells us that everything of this World will, finally, burn and melt to nothing: 'But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.' 2 Pet 3:10

(to be continued)

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Like the Stars, Forever and Ever

Every Choice, so Important

Selling our Lives each day

Good or Bad, our Endorsement

We Decide our Pay

His Reward Lasts Forever

Glory Never Fades

Eternal, Precious Treasure...

Grace, Love Displayed

Shining forever like Stars in the Heavens

Glory that comes from God

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Those who Turn many to Righteousness... Like the Stars, Forever and Ever

Like the stars, forever and ever.... Like the stars, forever and ever