

## Trends

More than half of U.S. couples who married in the late 1970s never made it to their 25th wedding anniversary, revealed the latest survey by the Census Bureau. It's the first time (at least since World War II) that married people had a less than even chance of still being married 25 years later... While 74.4 percent of men who married since 1970 stayed married for 10 years, only 46.2 percent were still married after 30 years. Among women, 71.6 percent remained married after 10 years and only 42.1 percent were still together after 30 years.

- via *The Christian Post*

**Malachi 2:16:** "For I hate divorce," says the Lord, the God of Israel... "Therefore...take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

## Sentence Sermons

"Never put off till tomorrow what may be done day after tomorrow just as well."

—Mark Twain

**2 Corinthians 6:2:** "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

## News & Notes

Please pray for those mentioned in the announcements after services and others listed on the bulletin board in the foyer of the church building.

Pray for all the members at Westside! Susan Ferrell, a friend of the Thomas family from Michigan, is still dealing with chemotherapy treating a brain tumor. Please continue to pray for Susan, her husband Shawn and their three boys: Samuel, Micah, and Eli.

Jennifer Shorter (Garner) a member at Knightsville is suffering from a brain tumor and needs our prayers. She's rehabbing from brain surgery in Indy. Also, please pray for Elias Dispennett (age 8). He is the son of Rob Dispennett, Knightsville's preacher, and has been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.

Christian Shadburne, the young Christian brother in Bowling Green (KY), is still dealing with cancer and needs our prayers.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma in your prayers! She gives all of us so much encouragement! God bless her and Virginia! Remember both of them in your prayers.

There are many needy saints! Can you help?! Let me know.

If you know of any in need of our prayers please let us know!

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# Words of Life

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



**He Preaches Too Long!**

Larry Hafley

(NOTE: What follows is not a personal defense, nor a defense of bad judgment. Due to age and infirmities, some of our dear ones who love the Lord are not able to sit for long periods of time. Generally, the godly who suffer in the flesh are the last to murmur about "long preaching." It is those weak in the spirit, or one who has a hidden agenda, who hollers the loudest.)

Recently, a liberal brother visited our services and in a very gruff manner complained, "He preaches too long!" He let it be known that he was not a happy hearer! I reasoned with him, but he would not be calm, so I walked away and left him grumbling about the length of the sermon.

Perhaps some churches are used to 20 minute "sermonettes," sermons that have little Scripture, that do not rebuke sin, and that are decorated with cute, clever stories. They are accustomed to worship services that are convenient six packs of "Gospel Lite." That is, they have 60 minutes of time allotted for everything--announcements, singing, prayers, the Lord's supper, and a short "message" from the "pulpit minister." He entertains, creates smiles with his pleasing manner and subtle wit, and accepts smatterings of laughter and applause. He leaves his audience with a "good warm feeling." He never speaks of hell or acts like he ever met anyone that will go there. He rarely uses the Bible to sustain his points, and never is heard to say a thing is true "because that's what the word of God teaches." No, that would be too dogmatic, even "legalistic." Instead, he sprinkles his talk with quotes from popular, "trendy" sources, and charms his audience with his personal grace and aplomb. Visitors go away without learning the difference between New Testament faith and that of the Methodist Church they attend. In other words, "Gospel Lite."

To such people, our services likely will be regarded as being "too long." But what of those who are "hungering and thirsting after righteousness"? "All things are ready," Jesus says, "come to the feast." However, you only have 15

or 20 minutes in which to eat! (Isn't it strange that the same brethren who complain about a "long sermon," are the ones who can sit for an hour on a metal folding chair in the fellowship hall!) In effect, they say, "Do not 'force' me to feed for more than 20 minutes on Him who is 'the bread of life,' but I will sit all afternoon at a picnic table!" Brethren, where are our priorities?

Consider Ezra. He spoke *"from the morning until midday...and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law"* (Neh. 8:3). If some of our brethren had been there, perhaps they would have started a whispering campaign to have Ezra removed from the pulpit because "he preaches too long!"

Consider Paul. He was "guilty" of "long preaching" (Acts 20:9). We do not know how "long" it was, but we know that it was "long" enough for the Holy Spirit to call it "long preaching." On another occasion, Paul preached *"from morning till evening."* (At least Ezra had the "good sense" to quit at "midday," but Paul went on *"till evening."* For shame!) Again, do you reckon someone went around trying to get the brethren to "fire" Paul from his apostleship because "he preaches too long"?

Consider Jesus. Jesus *"continued all night in prayer to God"* (Lk. 6:12). It is doubtful that those who whine and complain about a "long sermon" have ever prayed *"all night to God."*

When Jesus was waiting to die, he asked Peter, James, and John to be with him during those awful hours of agony. The disciples fell asleep. Jesus exclaimed, *"What, could ye not watch with me for one hour"* (Matt. 26:40)? The next time you are tempted to moan and groan about a sermon that goes a little longer than you think it should, let the Lord's question ring and echo in your ears, *"Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?"*

### A Hairy Reminder

Roger Shouse

A person between the ages of 20—30 has about 615 hair follicles per square centimeter. A person 50 years of age has around 485 hair follicles per square centimeter. Typically, most people have somewhere between 100,000—150,000 hairs on their head. By the way, the average hair loss for an individual is 50—100 hairs per day. As a result, there is no way you can tell accurately how many hairs you have (in fact, unless you are going bald, most of us don't really care). But God knows.

Jesus said: *"Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows"* (Matt. 10:29-31). This passage reveals three interesting truths.

First, **God knows more about us than we know about us.** That is a humbling thought. When we sometimes feel like no one under-

stands us or grasps our situation, we forget that God does. God knows your personality. God knows your strengths. God knows what motivates you. God knows when you stumble. God knows what you like and don't like. God knows the real you. Therefore, when God declares something worthwhile, He knows what He is talking about. When God warns about danger, He knows what He is talking about. When God tells us that we should do something, we need to do it, because He knows us better than we know ourselves.

**God is a God of detail.** How insignificant are hairs and sparrows to us. Yet God is aware of them. He is a God of details. The motives, attitudes and heart behind our actions are as important to Him as the actions themselves. It does little good to give, if you have left out the detail of being a cheerful. Singing fails if we neglect thankfulness in our heart. Let us be a people of details, as God is.

**God cares about you.** This is why Jesus referred to sparrows and hair. We are of value to Him. Christ was not sent to save the whales, the environment, or the endangered species, but mankind. Man has value! Stress and worry often make us wonder if God cares. These two simple illustrations remind us that He does.

### Needs

There remain many brethren in need of your help. There are faithful gospel preachers in the U.S. and foreign lands in dire need of financial support.



Brethren in Zimbabwe are still suffering through another year of drought. There is also a severe drought in the Philippines. Brethren are suffering! They and their families faithfully labor in the gospel and suffer from material deprivations due to their stand for the truth, concern for the soul's of men and love for the Lord and His Christ. Other brethren are in acute need of the basics of life (food, clothing, shelter, medical attention). If you would like to help please send me an e-mail (craigthomas82000@gmail.com) and I'll put you in direct contact with a needy brother. Remember I John 3:17: *"But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"*