

ISSUE

21.9

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

March 3,
2019

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Ryan Matney
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Justin Smiley
Kevin Wise
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



“While I Am in This Tent”

By Kyle Pope

My wife Toni and I enjoy tent camping. Ever since we first got married we have found pitching a tent at a campsite an inexpensive and convenient way to get away from it all for awhile. We still have the first tent we bought as a young married couple. It was a nice little dome tent that could be set up and taken down in no time at all. It was fully prepared for all weather with waterproof material and a rain cover to shield it from the elements. While we enjoyed the use of that tent in our early years, when children came along we found it too small. I have used it for hunting a time or two, and the kids have used it, but it doesn't really fit our needs anymore.



What if Toni and I decided that we liked that little tent so much that we decided to buy some land and set it up permanently? What if we put a little garden around it with a little white picket fence and a paved driveway up to it? What if we went even further and put down carpet on the inside, with furniture, potted plants, and paintings on the inside walls? Although there might be some novelty to this, most people would find it quite unusual. Why? Because we understand that a tent, no matter how enjoyable and functional is really a very temporary thing. In no time weather

and wear and tear would have that little tent ragged, tattered, and torn.

In Scripture, it is this fleeting impermanence of a tent that both the apostle Peter and the apostle Paul use to describe our physical bodies. In 2 Peter 1:13 we read, **“I think it is right as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent”** (NKJV). Peter describes life as a brief time he *camped out* (so to speak) in a tent. He anticipates the time of death, when he will **“put off”** the tent of his flesh. Paul uses the same imagery in 2 Corinthians 5:1, declaring—**“we know that if our earthly house, this tent is destroyed we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”** Paul takes comfort in the fact that if his flesh, which he calls **“this tent,”** is *destroyed* whether by death, persecution, illness, or hardship something awaits him that is **“eternal in the heavens.”**

Both of these men, through the direction of the Holy Spirit speak of their mortal bodies, not as something lasting and immovable, but as temporary dwellings during their time on earth. This view of life is not peculiar to these passages alone. Paul would often speak of his interaction with other people, not in terms of human bodies interacting with each other, but as interaction between *spirits*. For example, in 1 Corinthians 16:18 he speaks of the coming of Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Archaicus as something that **“refreshed my spirit.”** In 2 Corinthians 7:13 speaking of Titus’ coming to the Corinthians, he tells them **“his spirit has been refreshed by you all.”** Finally, in his closing words to Philemon he says, **“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen”** (Philemon 25).

These early Christians clearly viewed those around them, not merely as physical beings, but as



eternal spirits living within temporary fleshly *tents*. How does this compare with the condition of our world today? Do people in our day see one another as *spirits* or simply as bodies? Most of what our world focuses its time and energy upon relates to the physical body alone. We work for food for the flesh, we play to amuse the flesh, and we indulge various desires in efforts to gratify the flesh. This is not to say that we should not eat, relax, or indulge in lawful desires of the flesh. The writer of Ecclesiastes tells us—**“It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage”** (Eccl. 5:18). The problem comes when people devote all of their time to the body and none to the spirit. This approach feeds the body, but starves the spirit. I often laugh when I hear it suggested that man is involved in an ongoing “upward evolution.” If that was true then it should be that those (so-called) “primitive” elements of human nature such as greed, lust, hatred, and jealousy should long ago have been left behind. The truth is that these marks of a starved spirit are just as present today as they have always been—**“for he who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption”** (Gal. 6:8).

What is the alternative to this worldly view of life? How can we come to view our bodies as temporary *tents* and one another as *spirits*?

First, we must make every effort to separate ourselves from the *meat market* that this world has become. Think about it—the world determines the value of people by how they look, how much they expose of their bodies, or how stimulating they are to one another. This treats human beings as if they are nothing more than cuts of raw

meat that we might compare, cut, purchase at the butcher’s counter, and then serve for our own consumption. Human beings are souls made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27; James 3:9). We are more valuable than that! As Christians, we must focus on what is truly enduring—the soul.

Second, we must realize that there are many things about our flesh that don’t really matter in the long run. Beauty will pass with time. Health will inevitably fail. Attraction based on the flesh alone is fleeting, but there is an inner beauty that is not dependent upon any of these things. Peter calls this beauty **“the hidden person of the heart,”** which he tells us is **“precious in the sight of God”** (1 Pet. 3:4).

Finally, we must work to see others as *spirits* especially at those times when they offend us, hurt us, or they are unattractive to us personally or emotionally. Why does someone wrong another per-



son? Why does another person act in ways that are hurtful? Either that person acted unintentionally, or he or she acted (knowingly or unknowingly) to violate the will of God. It is spiritual starvation that leads souls to be uncaring about others, or uncaring about their responsibility to God. Any pain or discomfort we feel is only secondary to the fact that the person who would act this way is a soul in sin! Are we concerned

about the consequence this will have on that person's soul, or more concerned about the temporary aggravation we have experienced? We must see things as God sees them. Remember Samuel's words?—**“the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart”** (1 Sam. 16:7).

Whether we are talking about the way we view others, or the way we view our own lives, far too often we are treating these flimsy little *tents* that God has given us for the few days of our lifetime as if they are mansions that will endure. If we see things the way souls like Peter and Paul did, our view of the world will start to change. We will see *spirits* all around us in need of salvation. If we work to see things as God sees them, the world around us will suddenly reveal itself in a much different light—we will realize, as Paul declared—**“the things which are seen are temporary, but the things that are unseen are eternal”** (2 Cor. 4:18).



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4700 Andrews Ave.
Amarillo TX 79106
806-352-2809
www.olsenpark.com

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