

There used to be a great commercial about littering; we called it the Tennessee Trash Commercial. The take-away line was "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

As many of our natural resources begin to dwindle, such as coal, oil, and wood, we become more and more concerned with how we use these materials. In order to prolong their life and our own standard of living, we are forced to watch ourselves so that we do not waste what we do have left. Now, to me, this word waste is a key word. Just as in ecology, waste erodes the earth, waste is also something which can erode our spiritual life. (Jesus' parable of the soils).

We could probably spend some time thinking in particular about wasting our time, or wasting our money, but I would rather we just think about wasting ourselves in general. To illustrate this point, let us consider a study in waste; that of the life of Judas. Just think about the tremendous opportunity that this man had! To live, and walk, and talk with Jesus, and to learn the greatest truths in the world! Like a man working in a soap factory who is never clean! (Peanuts character). He lived in, possibly, the greatest moment in all of history! But he sold his opportunity for a few pieces of silver. He had a price, as many of us do, and he sold out. What is our price? What will buy us off from studying his word? TV? A football game?

Judas wasted himself. And he sold himself short. He found out later that the price that he had been paid has totally unacceptable. The Happiness that he had hoped to find in money was denied him, and he was left so thoroughly devastated and tortured that he took his own life. His whole life was wasted. It would have been better for him if he had never been born.

We are really not much different from Judas. We did not live in that magic moment with Jesus, but we have a copy of his word, and we have a tremendous opportunity to let that word live in us. We all have tremendous raw material in ourselves. God don't make junk. We can either waste it or use it.

The solution to the problem of waste and erosion deals with the words conscience and consciousness. We must be conscious of what we are and what we are doing. We need to watch ourselves continually. One of the great ideas of ancient philosophers was that man should "know himself." Without this, we are in effect, blind. James tells us in his book, chapter one, vs 23, 24, "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass (mirror): For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was." In other words, spot checks are not enough, we examine ourselves periodically, but we either can't see clearly or we forget too soon (a blessing sometimes). We have to keep a constant watch on our heart and mind.

Our conscience, then, provides us with a way to compare our actions to the truth at all times. It is something like a mirror in which we can examine ourselves, but we must know the truth for it to work right.

There are three points to be emphasized. First, don't sell yourself short. You have great opportunities ahead of you and you have everything it takes to make good use of them. Second, don't waste yourself on what is popular, or what is "in", if it is not right. If you do, you will find that the price that you pay will be too high. And third, be conscious at all times of what you are doing. God knows every move you make, and believe me, you will account for it personally, some day, to him. (Pay me know, or pay me later).

Search yourself, if you are a Christian, you will not be afraid to look. Remember that God dwells in us (1 John 4:12).