



Monday Matters

May 11, 2015

The Beetles Are Coming

Last Monday was an eventful day. We had been in California for a couple of days and this Monday we were traveling up to the Sequoia National Forest to spend the night and view the giant redwood trees.

We were driving on Route 245 which was an extremely winding road. Our speed varied between 15 to 25 miles per hour most of the 80 mile trip. There were those in the van that started to feel queasy and as a result we made two stops along the road.

After traveling about 60 miles on this road we came upon yet another sharp turn and came to a complete stop. There was a pickup truck in front of us and a pine tree across the road in front of them. Not just any tree. This was a lodgepole pine tree that measured roughly 24 inches in diameter and at least 120 feet tall.

The tree had just fallen and the cause was the mountain pine beetle that had laid eggs under the bark. The beetles then introduce blue stain fungus into the sapwood that prevents the tree from repelling and killing the attacking beetles with tree pitch flow. The fungus also blocks water and nutrient transport within the tree. The tree might initially look fine but is being destroyed from the inside out. Thousands of these trees have been destroyed by the beetle. There had been no storms this day the wind was relatively calm. So, when the tree became so weak, it simply came crashing down.



It would be dark in a couple of hours and here we were stuck, waiting for rangers to come, cut through the tree trunk and remove it from the road. We were told by authorities it would be at least three hours to accomplish this task. Fortunately someone told us about some one lane back roads we could take to weave our way around this blockage without traveling back the full

60 miles. We had no map of these roads but we ventured back and eventually found our way to the lodge just before dark and before they closed down the diner hour.

There are so many lessons that can come out of this experience. First and foremost, we are thankful that we had to stop because someone had a queasy stomach. Failing those stops the tree could very easily have fallen when we were under it. Again, it had just happened. The good Lord protected us.

As I listened to a person describe how these beetles destroy trees by basically eating them from the inside out, I thought about our own lives. So many times we allow things to eat at our inside that can destroy us. It might be the food we eat or it can be from alcohol or drugs. It could be the things we read or see. Quite possibly it could be our thoughts. Are we always thinking negative thoughts and causing ourselves to be unhappy creatures?

The Bible also addresses this in Proverbs 23 where it says, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." James Allen, author of the literary essay *As A Man Thinketh*, says: "A man is literally what he thinks, his character being the complete sum of all his thoughts."

So I would encourage each of us this week to not let beetles destroy our lives from the inside out. Don't let the beetles of our lives stop the water flow and nutrients that come to us from God's Word, prayer and attending church. While the beetles can't be stopped from destroying trees, we can stop our lives from being destroyed by our thoughts with God's help.



RN



Ron Nelson, CCA - Email - MondayMatters.us@gmail.com

Linda J. Nelson - Email - ArtByLJNelson@bellsouth.net

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