

11-29-2010

Advent Devotional "Change"

S. Ray Granade

Ouachita Baptist University, granade@obu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/creative_work

Recommended Citation

Granade, S. Ray, "Advent Devotional "Change"" (2010). *Creative Works*. 48.
https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/creative_work/48

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Publications at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Creative Works by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

Advent Devotional
November 29, 2010
Change
Isaiah 9:3-5

As we walked out of the Honeycomb after lunch recently, I exclaimed “pig food!” and stopped. Ronnie knew that I wasn’t referring to the meal we’d just eaten, but that I’d spotted a coin on the ground. So she changed her gait and waited for me to pick it up. How did we come to call loose change “pig food”? On a bookshelf in our house, we have four ceramic pigs, each bearing the name of one of our grandchildren. As we get change, we put it into those piggy banks, making sure that each one gets exactly the same coins. We simply fell into the habit of “feeding the pigs” with “pig food.”

Coins are little bits of money, but their fractional value leads many folks to think of them as almost worthless. Have you ever had someone say of a coin on the ground “It’s not worth stopping to pick up”? I have, particularly when the coin in question is a penny. One can’t get bubble gum or park for a penny anymore; of what value is it? The U.S. government has even contemplated doing away with pennies on several occasions, for they cost more to make than their face value.

If you’re like me, it’s tempting to think that little pieces of time, like little pieces of change, can be ignored or wasted. What are a few minutes here and a few minutes there? They’re as valueless as pennies, good for nothing, useless. If we really want to do something worthwhile, then we need big chunks of time,

just like we need lots of coins if we really want something worthwhile.

Perhaps we need to revise our thinking. I first realized how small change can add up when I started dating Ronnie. Her father had a habit of daily dumping all the change from his pants pocket into an old churn that stood by the back door of their house in Evergreen. He knew that he'd never miss that little bit of change daily, but that over time it would mount up. Over the years, he bought the works for two grandfather clocks and made the cases for them out of lumber from a walnut tree that once stood in the pastorium yard. When I pass by one of them in our house, I remember its origins. When we face a large task, or a large price tag, we don't know quite where to start, where to take hold. It all seems so overwhelming. So we start looking for little pieces with which to work.

Little pieces of money, little pieces of time, little pieces of life; humans deal with little pieces of things even when attempting great change. But that's not God's way, and certainly not the way of the Messiah of whom Isaiah speaks. Isaiah speaks God's words, promising that the Messiah will change everything. It sounds like a revolution! All that binds us will be removed, and our wearisomeness and worry will give way to gladness, to joy, to the expansiveness that comes with release! Doesn't that sound grand?

It may sound grand at first hearing, but our human preoccupation with little pieces of things soon asserts itself. We realize how hard change is, how we often don't like the results, and how often we immediately revert to old ways. As a philosopher observed, God's

judgment on us is to grant our wishes rather than simply sending what He knows we need.

This Advent season, we face questions as we prepare for God's incarnation. Do I really want to change? Am I ready to become what God wants to make me? Am I ready to change my whole life at once? Am I ready to surrender my preoccupation with little pieces of things and see things instead as God sees them?

Ray Granada