

April 2001

The Meyer Minute for April 2, 2001

Keyword: Obey

"Play ball!" Do you know why a ball field has coach's boxes, those chalked areas near first and third base where the coaches are supposed to stand?

The reason is a 19th century ball player named Arlie Latham, called "The Freshest Man on Earth" by his contemporaries. When Latham coached, he ran wildly up and down the base path. Latham was so disruptive that rule makers invented the coach's box and told him to stay in it.

The Bible teaches that we're saved by grace through faith, not by works. That's fine but it doesn't mean you can do whatever you want. The Ten Commandments and all the other injunctions of the Bible guide us for living. Like the coach's box, they tell us where God wants us to be and how He wants His saved people to act. Don't be a Latham! Believe...and obey!

God, inspire me to keep Your commandments. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for April 4, 2001

Keyword: Courage

On this anniversary of his death, a story from Martin Luther King, Jr. "Listen," threatened the late night caller, "before the next week you'll be sorry you ever came to Montgomery."

That brought weeks of threats to a climax. Distraught, King bowed his head over the kitchen table and prayed, "I am afraid. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I've come to the point where I can't face it alone."

"At that moment it seemed as though I could hear the quiet assurance of an inner voice, saying, 'Stand up for righteousness, stand up for truth. God will be at your side forever.' Almost at once my fears began to pass from me. The outer situation remained the same, but God had given me inner calm."

"The Lord is the stronghold of my life-of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1)

Lord, You know my fears. Give me courage. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for April 9, 2001

Keyword: Change in Key

The worship preference of many Christians leans almost exclusively to upbeat, uplifting worship experiences. People want to walk out of church with big smiles on their faces.

However, mature spirituality recognizes that there are times to wipe the smile off your face. "Hosanna" was the upbeat praise on Palm Sunday as Jesus entered Jerusalem but on this Monday of Holy Week a hungry Jesus cursed a fig tree that had no fruit and He threw merchants out of the Temple. No "Hosannas" this Monday. Jesus is not only the object of praise; He should also command reverent awe.

So mature spirituality alternates between the major key of praise and the minor key of solemn reflection upon our sin. Here's a promise: If you make your Holy Week solemn reflection, you'll love the change come Sunday!

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111:10).

Jesus, fill my soul with awe. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for April 18, 2001

Keyword: Bifocals

"Trust not in princes; they are but mortal," goes an old hymn. I think of that on the anniversary of the Oklahoma bombing. When Timothy McVeigh pays for his damnable crime, earthly justice will be done. Still, McVeigh's death will be paltry restitution for the evil done.

Righting wrongs is like bifocals. Focusing closely, we see earthly justice, imperfect at best. Looking ahead, however, Christian faith foresees a time of perfect justice and perfect restitution for the wrongs suffered here. Our great future depends on the cross. There God exacted from His Son complete justice for all the sins of the world. Easter is God's promise to the faithful that restitution is coming.

This bifocal look at justice isn't only about Oklahoma City. It's about any less-than-perfect situations you'll meet today. "Trust not in princes; Trust in Christ, our God and Lord."

Lord, when I'm wronged, point me to Your cross and resurrection. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for April 20, 2001

Keyword: Media

What do your computer monitor, TV, radio, and other media have in common? They are like electronic pulpits or classrooms, which are suggesting to impressionable minds what they should believe.

Another sad anniversary today. Yesterday was the sixth anniversary of Oklahoma City and today's the second of Columbine. Evil is very present in the world and will always rear its ugly head. The devil and his legions will keep trying to work their influence until they're bound forever at the end of time. Until then, let's pray for every effort against evil.

I've been asked to offer today an encouraging word on air for a sharathon on radio station KFUD in St. Louis. That I'm glad to do! Christians in media, in those

electronic pulpits and classrooms, are in great positions to urge the good and holy upon impressionable minds.

Spirit of Jesus; bless all Christians involved in media to Your glory and our good. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for April 23, 2001

Keyword: Fresh Air

Sandra Aldrich writes in "Will I Ever Be Whole Again?" about her children's first experience with a visitation at the funeral home. Young Jay and Holly's grandma had died.

"Is she breathing?" Holly whispered.

"Well, Holly..." I stalled, searching for something both simple and theologically sound.

"Jay then turned from his study of the casket handles to face his little sister. 'No, Holly, she's not breathing. Remember? The breathin' part's in heaven.'" (Howard Publishing, 1999; p. 92).

Your soul, your "breathin' part," isn't in heaven yet. It's here and now, Monday morning, facing the grind of a new week. So here and now breathe deeply the fresh air of Easter. Because the tomb is empty, the Spirit of life can inspire you with the faith, hope and love that are in Christ Jesus. You and I need that for the days ahead!@

Jesus, inspire my "breathin' part" with the fresh air of Easter morning. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for April 25, 2001

Keyword: Literacy

In yesterday's "Wall Street Journal" William Bennett, former Secretary of Education, wrote, "Parents must introduce their children to great stories, inculcating a love for books. Children who read for fun every day score 10% higher on the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) tests than students who hardly ever read. Parents need to turn off the television, computer and video games." (April 24, 2001, A24)

Functional illiteracy is a grave danger to the Christian faith because God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ is revealed in a book, a book of words and sentences, of grammar and syntax. To understand deeply and to appreciate faith fully requires the people of God to give the highest importance to intelligent reading. I've never come across a Christian video that is a substitute for reading the Bible!

Jesus, You say, "My words are spirit and life" (John 6:63). Help each of us set an example of biblical literacy. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for April 27, 2001

Keyword: Promises

A growing child learns, or should learn, how to defer gratification. That's also true for a maturing Christian. While much popular Christianity aims at solving our present personal and family problems, what about those situations where there will be no satisfaction, forget gratification, on this side of heaven?

Today is the funeral for missionary wife Veronica Bowers and her daughter Charity, godly people shot down over Peru. Over 2500 years ago, Habakkuk complained to God about injustice. God's answer? "The just shall live by faith" (Habakkuk 2:24). God did nothing, no instant satisfaction. Instead Habakkuk was asked to trust God to make it right in due time. The Bowers' tragic deaths are another sad reminder that Christianity is not fundamentally about here and now satisfaction. It's about living on the promises...and that's maturation!

Father, when life is unjust, remind me that all Your promises are Yea and Amen in Jesus Christ! Amen. (2 Corinthians 1:20)

The Meyer Minute for April 30, 2001

Keyword: "Ask for the Old Paths"

Bernie and Betty Evers invited Diane and me to join them yesterday for their 50th anniversary celebration. Fifty years! It can be done.

The State of Illinois is considering a law to require 4 hours of counseling before granting a marriage license. Such pre-marital counseling is fine but every couple faces the toughest tests after the wedding, not before. Yesterday Bernie and Betty reminded us that Christian faith made the difference for them. "A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

Are you learning from older couples? "Thus says the Lord: Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it. Then you will find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16).

We thank You, Lord, for the encouragement that comes to younger couples from those who have been married for many years. Marriage, it can be done! Amen.