



October 16, 2024

MESSENGER

QUOTE FOR TODAY

"For the Lord's sake be subject to every human authority, whether to the emperor as supreme or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor."
1 Peter 2:13-17

INFO

Sermons are always available...catch up on the ones you haven't heard!
iTunes: bit.ly/AltadenaBaptistPodcast
On our website:
www.altadenabaptist.org/sermons/

Also, check us out online:
On the web: www.altadenabaptist.org

Contact Information:

general office communication:
altabap@aol.com

prayer requests:
altabaprayer@aol.com

Connie Larson DeVaughn, pastor

George Van Alstine, associate pastor

ALTADENA BAPTIST CHURCH
791 E. Calaveras Street
Altadena, CA 91001-2447
(626) 797-8970

Last Year's Dust

I first came to Pasadena in 1958 as a 21-year-old single student attending Fuller Theological Seminary. From the time I arrived, I was writing almost every day to Judy, back in New Jersey, who a couple of years later would become my wife. I needed part-time work, so I answered an ad I found on the student bulletin board to do some window-washing in a well-to-do neighborhood. It was early October, a time of year when I was used to the air being a bit nippy and the leaves on the trees changing to fall colors. Here I was in California, working hard in the full sunlight as if it was mid-summer. Later that night on the TV news, I learned that the temperature that day had risen to 100+, and I was amazed, because I hadn't felt that uncomfortable. Someone explained to me that the low humidity in Southern California made the high temperatures more tolerable. I reported these new experiences in my letter to Judy.

A couple of months later, a family I had befriended took me to a restaurant in Arcadia. (I can't remember the name, but I could drive there today.) As I got out of the car, a nearby shrub caught my eye. The first thing I noticed was that it was green in mid-winter, at a time when that type of plant would lose its leaves in my hometown. Then I was struck by the fact that there was *dust on its leaves*. I realized that back East, leaves never accumulated dust. They were too busy budding and blossoming in the Spring, doing their Summer thang, being washed by occasional rain showers, changing color in the Fall and, finally, dropping off in submission during the first snowfall of Winter. *I had never before seen dust on leaves*. That night I wrote to Judy about my first-time experience of seeing leaves covered with ***last year's dust***.

Continued on other side...

October 16, 2024

(Continued from other side)

Reflecting on this, I'm aware of how much of my personal life and my ministry since then has been spent dealing with *last year's dust*. Instead of maximizing the present and building toward the future, I tend to groove on things I could have, would have, should have done differently in the past. If only such-and-such hadn't happened . . . Well, it did, so get over it!

If I've been open with God, confessed and repented of my missteps, he's forgiven me. If I don't forgive myself, that's an insult to him. He wants me to move forward, and he's promised he'll go with me. In fact, he's a few steps ahead, beckoning me to step out into the future with him. If I'm still looking at the dusty leaves of my past life with my magnifying glass, I'm more like a paleobotanist than a follower of Jesus.

Those of you who have lived in other parts of the country, where they actually have seasons, you know how darkness and gloom can get to you during the Fall and Winter; but you also know how stimulating and reviving the emergence of a new Spring can be. Basking in Southern California's continuous Summer can be glorious, but it can also be gloriously boring!

Lord, deliver us from taking the sunlight for granted! Also, deliver us from wasting our lives being dust inspectors. Help us to embrace any season you send us as a gift of your grace.

Pastor George Van Alstine

p.s. This is my latest letter to Jersey Judy.