

From Our Pastor June 16, 2018

Sabbath Greetings to everyone!

It is probably the only flower to have conquered a nation, but it has. The most powerful nation in history, the United States of America, has been overwhelmed by the a flowering plant known as the Poppy.

Homer wrote about the Poppy. He called it a “wondrous substance.”

Those who consumed it, he marveled, “did not shed a tear all day long, even if their mother or father had died, even if a brother or beloved son was killed before their own eyes.” For millennia, it has salved pain, suspended grief, and seduced humans with its intimations of the divine. It was a medicine before there was such a thing as medicine.

According to the New York Magazine (Feb. 2, 2018) “The poppy’s power, in fact, is greater than ever. The molecules derived from it have effectively conquered contemporary America. Opium, heroin, morphine, and a universe of synthetic opioids, including the super-powerful painkiller fentanyl, are its proliferating offspring. More than 2 million Americans are now hooked on some kind of opioid, and drug overdoses — from heroin and fentanyl in particular — claimed more American lives last year than were lost in the entire Vietnam War.

Overdose deaths are higher than in the peak year of AIDS and far higher than fatalities from car crashes. The poppy, through its many offshoots, has now been responsible for a decline in life spans in America for two years in a row, a decline that isn’t happening in any other developed nation. According to the best estimates, opioids will kill another 52,000 Americans this year alone — and up to half a million in the next decade.”

What terrible damage we have brought upon our blessed nation!

If a foreign enemy were causing this much death and suffering, we would send in the Marines. But the enemy is ourselves, godless society. Of all the many social indicators flashing red in contemporary America, this is surely the brightest. We have no apparent ability to come to terms with or deal with this wave of mass death. It has become part of everyday life. Why has a nation--and in particular a generation--turned to mind altering drugs? Reasons for addiction listed are limitless. Some blame pain medications based on opioids that quickly become addictive. In some cases, people “experiment” seeking a temporary “high” feeling of happiness or serenity and then become hooked.

The NY Mag.com observed, “What few are prepared to acknowledge in public is that drugs alter consciousness in specific and distinct ways that seem to make people at least temporarily happy, even if the consequences can be dire. unless you understand what users get out of an illicit substance, it’s impossible to understand its appeal, or why an epidemic takes off, or what purpose it is serving in so many people’s

lives. And it is significant, that the drugs now conquering America are downers: They are not the means to engage in life more vividly but to seek a respite from its ordeals.

On a broader scope, the opioid crisis and the resulting swath of destruction are symptoms of a people who have lost the keys to real happiness. Should we be surprised?

God's word tells us, " Happy are the people whose God is the LORD!" (Psalm 144:15) Yet as a nation we have rejected God and our schools teach that life came by accident and therefore our life has no purpose. God's word tells us, "...Rejoice with the wife of your youth." (Proverbs 5:18) When the Creator made man and woman he blessed them and said it was " very good." Yet in recent years there has been an incredible effort pushed on society to erase the difference between male and female and make all forms of existence and perversion acceptable.

God's word tells us, "... children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward. ... Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them."(Psalm 127: 3-5) Yet frequently would be parents choose money and career, illusory at providing happiness, over the rewarding joy of raising children of character and the reward of a larger family.

Of the thousands who are escaping life's experiences or ending their lives through substance abuse, I would guess that very few have a working knowledge of the Bible or comprehend God's incredible plan for mankind as revealed in God's Holy Days (Leviticus 23).

The true keys of a happy life are revealed to us in God's word. Those words have been written down for us to read and live by. As John wrote, " And these things we write to you that your joy may be full." (1 John 1:4).

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