



April 18, 2010

Lessons From A Mine Disaster

Earlier this month we watched the news of the explosion in West Virginia that claimed the lives of over twenty miners. Investigations have been underway in the wake of the disaster to identify what went wrong and determine if the accident could have been prevented. News coverage showed video inside a similar mine and seeing this from the safety of the living room still made me claustrophobic. To think of working miles underground in narrow passages too narrow and low to stand in is not something most of us would want to do. Each day miners enter their workplace, cut off from the safety of the aboveground world, and perform a hazardous mission to extract valuable resources, knowing the dangers that they face. Miners have safety in their minds at all times and are prepared to face the risks of their occupation with the hope of being able to survive. Spiritually, life is much like working in a coal mine. Each day folks go out into a world filled with the darkness of spiritual ignorance not realizing the dangers that surround them. Various influences seek to blind us from seeing the light of the truth that God has given us. John describes this in the opening of his Gospel account. ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” (John 1.1-5).*** Satan seeks to keep us in the dark through his influence in the world (2 Cor 4.4). God revealed himself to us by sending his son into the world and preserving a record of his work in the inspired word. Many believe that they are protected from disaster not realizing they have been misled. We have the tools to prevent this in God’s word. Through reading, coming to an understanding of God’s commands and obedience we can escape the darkness. When we obey the Lord we have access to the blessings of being his children. Paul states, ***“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” (1 Thess 5.5).*** John writes, ***“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” (1 John 1.5).*** In the West Virginia mine accident there was hope that some of the miners reached safe areas that would keep them alive. As time went on it was discovered that they were unable to reach the protections in place and perished. God has given us his word and salvation within our grasp. Obstacles can be overcome that would hold us back if we are willing to reach out and do what is necessary. The miners were caught off guard by the sudden nature of the explosion that released poisonous gases and killed them. God has warned us of the coming judgment and we are all aware that death is a consequence of human life. The Lord does not desire that any should perish and this is the reason why Christ came into the world. The writer of Hebrews states, ***“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment...” (Heb 9.27).*** Obedience to the Lord and patience will allow us to escape the wrath of God which will be revealed against those who do not obey (1 Thess 1.10). Most of us would not want to face the dangers of working in a coal mine but many are content to face life and the inherent pitfalls of earthly existence every day without the benefit of God’s saving grace. Had the miners knew what was about to happen they would have taken steps to avert the tragedy. God gave us his son, revealed and preserved his word and is willing to save all who will come to him in obedience, trusting the promises that he has made. As Peter exhorted those on the day of Pentecost to ***“...Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” (Acts 2.40),*** we have the same exhortation today. The decision is ours.

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