

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

March 27, 2020



Bamberg, Germany

The Joy of Insignificance

In October of 2018, we took a river cruise that took us through four countries in Europe. The big cities, Paris and Prague, were exciting to, but we were even more impressed by many of the smaller towns in Germany. Bamberg, pictured above, was one of those towns. This is an iconic little city, typical of many of the cities in Germany. During our tour, however, the guide mentioned that the appearance of Bamberg today is very similar to the way it looked in the past (the city's founding dates back to 900-1000 AD). I found that interesting because most of these little cities were bombed during WWII by allied forces. Nuremberg, another beautiful city, about 40 miles south of Bamberg, was 90% destroyed by bombing, primarily because it was a key city in the rise of Hitler's Third Reich. Therefore, much of what you see today in Nuremberg is reconstruction that attempts to capture the look of the city prior to WWII. But Bamberg's buildings are original because was never bombed at all. Why? The tour guide said ***“because there was nothing of significance here.”***

“Nothing of significance.” It's not hard to imagine that, at times during the 1930s and early 1940s, people in Bamberg wished they were one of the important cities, where “the action was,” like Nuremberg, Munich or Berlin. But, alas, they were just a little city that few took notice of. And when it came time to bomb Germany into submission, the allies looked and little Bamberg and decided it was of ***“no significance.”*** Surely, in those days, the citizens of Bamberg found joy in their insignificance. And today, 65 years later, the city is just as picturesque as it was before 1945.

Is there lesson for us? How many people today are busy trying to seem significant? They spend an inordinate amount of time and energy seeking approval, searching for attention. Social media is a ready vehicle for them. Post something — the more controversial the better — and you can count on getting some attention. And for some, *any* attention, even if it's negative, is fine with them. It makes them feel “significant,” and they have their reward.

I can't think of anything (other than rank immorality) that is less like Jesus than seeking glory from men. Jesus said of himself, “I am meek and lowly in heart.” He pointed to children, who typically were considered less significant in society, and said, “unless you are like children, you have no place in the kingdom of God.” He also said it is the poor in spirit, and those who mourn, and the meek and pure in heart who are blessed, not the “significant” people. And he said, “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets” (Luke 6:20). He also issued a wake up call: he said that *those who seek glory for themselves are not able to even believe in him*: “How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?” (John 5:44).

It's been my observation over the years that the people who seem to be the most joyful people, in good times or bad, are those who couldn't care less about being noticed, getting attention or seeking approval.

They have found there is joy in insignificance.

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