

Daily View

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

May 18, 2020

Lessons from a Bicycle I



Heidelberg, Germany.

Every parent and grandparent cringes just a bit when their beloved teenagers get their driver's license. Our grandkids never leave our house without a “drive carefully” reminder. However, if my experience is normative, riding a bicycle is just as, or more, dangerous.

From the time I learned to ride, I spent half my young life on a bike. And when you ride a bike that often, you get confident, even cocky. You think you can ride as fast as you want without risk. Wrong.

My first crash on a bike was actually on another kid's bike when I was in 6th grade. I had walked the couple of blocks to the schoolyard with Punky Taylor and when we got there, a bunch of boys were playing baseball. There was no summer activity more important in my life at that time than playing baseball. The guys asked us to play, but I didn't have my glove. Though it was a short walk back to my house, I was in a hurry so I asked one of the boys if I could borrow his bike. He said, “sure.”

I jumped on the bike and quickly peddled the slightly uphill route to my house, dropped the bike, ran up the stairs, got my glove and jumped back on the bike. I was so excited to get back to play that I rode that bike as fast as I possibly could on the slight downhill slope, right up to the all-dirt baseball field.

When I got there, I applied the brakes. I learned, at that moment, that the bike I borrowed had no brakes. No peddle brakes, no hand brakes. None. My only option was to run the bike into the chain link fence surrounding the field. The problem with that option was that there was a large wooden sign behind the fence, so the fence was not forgiving. The collision with the fence was violent. I hurt my leg and started limping back home to the words of the owner of the bike: “Oh, by the way, the bike has no brakes.” I just looked at him,

trying to hold back the tears — you know, because “there's no crying in baseball.”

I learned a life lesson from that episode: *take nothing for granted. Don't assume anything.*

There's also an important spiritual application, as you might have guessed (and it's not about *unforgiving* fences). The lesson is this: never assume that you have “arrived” and have nothing to learn. We can never take our level of knowledge for granted. I've met Christians who seem to be basing — I might say, *betting* — their salvation on old knowledge they learned years ago, instead of constantly testing it (I John 4:1). I'm not discounting the value of those things learned years ago, but we should never think that II Timothy 2:15 no longer applies to us. Paul said,

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

That command is for a lifetime. When I first announced my desire to preach full time, an older popular preacher actually said to me, “there will come a time when you'll be too busy doing meetings and other work that you won't have time to study.” I said to myself, “*Wuutt??*” It didn't ring true to me then and, 30 years later, it makes even less sense. It doesn't matter if you are 70, 80, 90 — or 30 — years old, if you think that you no longer need to be diligent in your study, you are riding a bike that has no brakes.

Prayer: “Father, please never let me become arrogant in my thinking about knowing your will. Please give me both the desire and the diligence to seek to more accurately understand and handle your word, so I will not lead others astray and be ashamed when I stand before you in judgment. Please give me the wisdom to see the truth more clearly and apply it to my life each day.”