

**QUIET TIME GUIDE
FOR Friday 5/08
FROM JACK MILLWOOD**

Greeting:

Recently my son and I went to the beach with some of the other the family. Of course the women pulled up their beach chairs and lathered on the lotion to make themselves have that luxurious dark tan. After a good **three minutes** of that, my son and I were ready for action. After a period of swimming and boarding, etc we decided to set out on a project. Being two obnoxious Alabama football fans, we decided not to build a sand castle on the beach. Anybody can do that. We decided to build Bryant Denny Stadium, where Alabama plays football. We of course know the stadium and its intricate details, so we set out on our architectural adventure. For the next hour and a half we designed, engineered and built our football stadium. We started with the football field with each ten yard strip. The end zones had “Alabama” written on one end and “Roll Tide” in the other end zone. In the middle of the field we had the big “A” for Alabama. We built the fence that goes around the field. Then came each deck of the stands that seats 97,000 plus. It was a huge monstrosity. People came from all over the beach to see our incredible sand stadium. We were proud! For the next twenty minutes or so we spoke to our adoring public and answered questions and gave tours of our stadium. It really was nice. Of course we had to listen to the obligatory comments from my wife that “*only the two of you*” would do something so absurd. I prayed that God would help her one day understand. She is after all a woman. It was about then that someone pointed out that the tide was about to reach our stadium and that soon it would be washed out to sea. That hurt! It was then my son, God bless him, came up with a genius idea. He is after all my offspring! He said, “Dad, Lets change the names in the end zone from Alabama to “Auburn.” Auburn is Alabama’s hated rival. He said, “Dad, The ‘tide’ will ‘roll’ right over Auburn!” He is such a good boy! What a play on words! So we did. Suddenly it was transformed into Auburn’s stadium. (*I am not making this up. We did every thing I am saying*) Within in very short time the “*tide rolled*” over Auburn and swept it out to sea. It was a true moment for father and son! Our crowd then was truly convinced that were were indeed two guys who needed serious mental help. Probably! At any rate I could not help but think about that event today as I read the later part of Psalm 103. The Palmist talks about how transitory our lives are. We are here and then we are gone just like our sand made stadium. He also, in one of my favorite Psalms in the whole Bible, talks about how our sins are washed away.

Scripture for today:

Psalm 103: 8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; 14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. 15 As

for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; 16 the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. 17 But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children- 18 with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. 19 The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. 20 Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. 21 Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. 22 Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

Life Application:

Like the sand stadium our lives on Earth are short term and bound to come to an end. ***“As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.”*** It a moment, as soon as the tide hit the stadium, it became to break into pieces. We were actually surprised that it took a good bit of time for it to fall apart. We had packed it so tight and hard that it weathered more of the sea than we ever would have imagined. It reminded me that no matter how strong we are, how many resources we have amassed, that life is till short and bound to come to an end. You may live 60, 70, 80, 90, or even a 100 years but sooner or later life on earth ends and our entrance to eternity begins. It is smart to live our lives with eternity in mind. We much each find something in our lives that lasts beyond this temporary journey we are on. That is why we must build our lives on the Lord. The Psalmist says, ***“... from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, ... The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.”*** In a fleeting world it is nice to be tied to a secure foundation. I encourage you today to live with a view of eternity and not just a short time focus on what is around you. Like our sand structure, all that is around us will drift away in time and only what is done for God will last. The wonderful thing about our relationship to God is that it is not dependent upon ourselves or our performance but upon his grace. In one of the greatest passages in the whole Bible, the Psalmist describes how God treats our sins and our failures. ***“He will not always accuse, ... he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”*** Think of it. All your failures, your mistakes, your transgressions against a holy God are removed by the grace of God when you ask him for forgiveness. He removes them as far as the east is from the west. As I stood on the shore of our beaches and looked out across that vast ocean, I was reminded that my sins are gone. They are buried in the deepest sea. Like the stadium I built they are now washed away. Like the pebbles in the sand they are swept back into the sea. I can only see a short distance across the ocean from the shore. Farther than I can see, all the way across the ocean, half way around the world, my sins are cast from me. God no longer sees my sins any more than I can see the sand structure that is washed away. You are forgiven and your relationship with God restored. The next day I went out to the same shore and I can tell you that there is absolutely no evidence that a football stadium structure was ever on the shore. I can not find one single piece of evidence that it was every there. Do you understand that this is how God's grace works? When God forgives

you he washes away your sin. There is now no evidence that you ever committed that sin. It is gone completely. I use to sing a little chorus that says, "*Gone, gone, gone, my sins are gone. Buried in the deepest sea, yes that is good enough for me. Praise God my sins are gone.*" Today bring any sign of disobedience to God. Ask him for his forgiveness. Do not make any excuses. Ask him to wash away the guilt of your wrong doing. Ask him to help you redirect your life to live for eternity and not just for the moment. Don't waste your time any longer building lives that will only be washed away. Invest yourself in eternal work. Just for the record, of course I knew the waves would crash my stadium and wash it away. The truth is that I could have cared less about building a stadium of sand. What I was building was a relationship with a young man, my son, that is more precious to me than life itself. That time spent with him, our mutual project, can not be taken away. I shared with him this quiet time today and what God taught me through our engineering feat. We sat and talked about these eternal lessons. No, come to think of it, our little sand structure was time spent well after all. If he learns that God loves him "*like a father*" then this was an eternal investment.

Spiritual exercise:

Examine your life today. Are your building sand castles that have no meaning for eternity or are you building a life that will last? Are there areas of your life outside of God's control? If so discover God's ultimate forgiveness and let him restore your soul.

Thought for the day.

Life is short, make it count for eternity!