

Idleness – The Ruin of Sodom

By: Elder David Pyles

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. – Ezek 16:49

This text gives important insight to the root of Sodom's downfall. It was a place where a livelihood came easier than elsewhere (which will explain why Lot selected it), and having full stomachs, the people were afforded more time for leisure, and being caught up in pride, they thought themselves immune to the corrupting temptations that often befall the idle, then after succumbing to these temptations, they were deluded by the same pride to exalt themselves against God by supplanting His laws with perverted and self-justifying rules of morality wherein what had formerly been vice became virtue and what had been virtue became vice.

Early Americans were fond of proverbs, with one of the favorites being: "Idleness is the Devil's workshop." This is corroborated by the inspired text above. Temptations of all kinds are so prevalent in modern society that disregard for such wisdom will almost surely have consequences. One of the best ways to stay out of trouble is to stay busy. Jesus conveyed the same idea with the following words:

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. – Mt 12:43-46

This is a story about failed repentance. The unclean spirit left for awhile, but restlessly sought for opportunity to return. He got this opportunity when the space he occupied before became vacant. One of the lessons intended by this story is that evil cannot be displaced by emptiness. It must be displaced by something that is constructive and good. "*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good,*" (Rom 12:21).