

A Mind To Work

It seems when times are good remaining faithful is particularly difficult for God's people. In Amos chapter 6, verses 1 through 8, the people are described as living lives of plenty: *Who lie on beds of ivory, stretch out on your couches, eat lambs from the flock and calves from the mist of the stall.* They were enjoying the good times: *Who chant to sounds of stringed instruments, and invent for yourselves musical instruments like David.* In Chapter 2, God announces judgment on His people because they have not kept His commandments.

We are very blessed people at Karns. And because we are blessed, there are both risks and challenges. When times are favorable, as we are now experiencing, God's people can be deceived by peace and prosperity and are at risk for developing a sense of self-sufficiency. There is a particular vivid simile, credited to Leo Tolstoy, in which a great man is likened to the ram the shepherd is fattening for slaughter. Because the ram grows fatter, and perhaps is the dominant sheep in the flock, he may imagine he is the leader of the flock and that other sheep go where they go in obedience to his will. He may think this and the other sheep may think it also. Nevertheless, the purpose of his selection is not the role he believes himself to play, but slaughter. The parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:12-21) also clearly shows the deceitfulness of riches. The family of God's people at Karns can, if we are not vigilant, enjoy the many ways God has blessed us as a congregation and individually, and yet, become lukewarm as was the congregation at Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22).

Our theme for the year 2013 is taken from Nehemiah 4:6b, *---for the people had a mind to work.* The challenge we face is to use the blessings God has given in ways that honor our Lord and His body, the church. The fact that there are a number of people in our immediate community who do not know about the Lord's church is enough to keep us humble and motivate us to share our faith with our neighbors and work to build up the Lord's body in Karns. Let's all remember, to whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48).