



O the thrill of fall! There is a chill in the air and bits of frost on the ground. The smell of firewood wafts through the air as chimney's puff their delicate white clouds from neighborhood homes. Nature's art is evidenced on every horizon as the trees manifest their otherwise hidden hues and

paint the landscape with warmth and beauty. The farmers are finishing their harvest and their silos are filled with the fruits of their labors. Indeed, fall is a wonderful time. O the labor of fall! The patio stuff needs

put away and those final little outdoor jobs that were put off all summer still need attention. And really, the chimney should be cleaned before the fireplace is lit. And the wood must be chopped, split and stacked before that beautiful glow can be enjoyed. And then there are those leaves. Though they are pretty they clog up the gutters and litter the yard. Its really quite the chore to rake and bag nature's bounty. Indeed, fall is a working time.

All of this brings me to a question about your leaves. Have you been in the hedges lately? That's where all the leaves hang out! You may see nicely raked yards, but look in the hedges; did they get all the leaves? Your yard could be raked in half the time if it wasn't for those pesky leaves hoarded in the hedges. Hedges are where the real work is done. I'm not so sure I really like hedges. In fact I'm pretty sure I can think of lots of things better than hedge work. Can't you?

Yet, did you know that Jesus was concerned about hedges? In the parable of the great supper He tells of a wealthy man inviting people to his luxurious banquet. Many gave excuses for not attending so he issues the order, "Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23 NASB). The reality that we probably don't realize is that the hedges is where the foreigners and outcasts would bed down at night. The hedges were on the outskirts of town and served as somewhat of an entrance to the city or what we might see on a street at the front of a subdivision. Those in the hedges were basically the homeless and hopeless people of the day. They had no rights and were unwelcome in the city and private homes. They were ignored, left behind, overlooked!

I wonder who lives in the hedges of your neighborhood? Have you been in the hedges looking for them? Are they welcome in your home? They may not even be homeless or helpless but are they hurting? Are they lonely? O, its easy to forget the hedges ... but that's where the real work is done.

Looking Up!

Pastor Chuck Circle