

Could This Be The Last Day Of Your Life?

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Luke 12:13-34

Most people fear death.

Have you ever thought about dying? Have you thought about not being with your loved ones that you would leave behind? Do you think about what it would be like for you after you die? Do you think about unfinished business here before you die? Do you think, “Lord, I’m not ready to go yet!”?

Bro. Otto Alvarez came up to Lorenzo some time back and talked to us about the work he was doing in Mexico, and the more he talked and answered the questions various people threw at him, the more excited he got. At one point he said, “I sure hope the Lord comes tonight!” One brother revealed that he thought to himself at the time, “Whoa! I’m not ready yet for that, yet!”

Whenever someone mentions the idea that this life may come to an end, there is a certain uneasiness that most of us begin to feel. We are not alone in that feeling; in fact, there is always a kind of fear involved in discussing this subject.

When people are faced with the prospects of death their reaction to it varies greatly, depending on whether, or not, they are a Christian. A person of the world, more often than not, would choose not to think of death at all.

John Wayne, at age 71, explained that he sometimes had difficulty watching his old movies. He said, “It’s kind of irritating to see I was a good-looking 40-year old, and suddenly I can look over and see this 71-year old ... I’m not squawking, mind you ... I just want to be around for a long time.”

Woody Allen once said, “It’s not that I’m afraid to die. I just don’t want to be there when it happens.”

Today, some people’s fear of death is so strong and their confidence in technology so great that they are spending tens of thousands of dollars to have their bodies frozen at the time of death. Their hope is that they might be revived to live again when a cure is found for whatever caused their death.

Many people become absolutely terrified at the thought of their life ending. Louis XV, king of France, was so afraid of dying that he ordered that the word “death” should never be mentioned in his presence. He also ordered that every statue be moved to a location where he would not see an image of someone who had already

passed on, so that he would not be reminded that he, himself, would someday die. But for all his fears, Louis XV died of smallpox on May 10, 1774.

Many people can identify with the feelings of the king of France. On one hand, we see the tremendous scientific and medical accomplishments of the last few decades. It has been said that the average person in his home today can treat diseases better than doctors could seventy-five years ago. But, on the other hand, we are beginning to sense that science and technology will not allow us to live forever here in this life.

Many people think death for them is a long way off.

In spite of the uncertainty about the future, there is still the idea in the minds of most people that they will be alive for many years to come.

They just cannot bring themselves to consider the possibility that their lives will end someday. Why is this? Maybe it is because people get too busy with other things. They get too busy making money, buying land, building houses, raising children, and generally trying to keep the bills paid. They get so busy, in fact, that they forget to pray and study the Bible and go to church and live godly lives. So many individuals around us today exist without any sense of direction, without any purpose, and without any notion of living more acceptable lives in the eyes of God.

If they could ever slow down long enough to think about it, they would certainly admit that the time is coming when we are all going to die. Human experience tells us that this is so, and every time we drive past a cemetery, it is further emphasized. People may go to a funeral and hear the preacher read the words of Job from the Bible:

Job 14:1-2, *“Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.”*

A true Christian looks upon death as but a doorway into that greater life in which God has in store for the faithful. Those Christians that remain behind grieve not because a fellow Christian had died and was gone forever, but because a dear one will be sorely missed until they meet again.

When Lazarus had been dead for four days Jesus found Mary and Martha weeping because of their loss. Jesus himself also wept because of his empathy for these women who were so sad, even though He knew Lazarus was with God. Jesus used this moment as an occasion to show that He was the Son of God by raising Lazarus from the dead, so that others would believe.

Some people at the loss of a beloved family member are overcome with grief for days, weeks, months, and even in some cases years. It's not healthy for someone to let their minds linger continually on their loss.

People know all of this, so why are they still rushing through this life without making any plans for the next one? Maybe in all of their activity, they have placed too much faith in the word "tomorrow". Yes, they may lose their jobs — tomorrow. They may get sick — tomorrow. They may die — tomorrow. But, as far as today is concerned, those are things that only happen to other people.

It would do us all good to slow down and think about the question: Could this be the last day of my life? The hourglass is running out for every person. Could it possibly run out for you today? Could there really be just a few more grains of sand left in your hourglass? Could this be the last day of your life?

We cannot avoid dying

We cannot live forever.

The truth is that we will not live forever in this life. There was a man in the Bible who forgot that fact, and the Lord told a parable about him; we call it the parable of the rich fool. It was the story of a man who owned a big farm. God sent sunshine and rain, and this farmer had a very successful season. In fact, at harvest time he had so much grain that his barns could not hold any more, so he decided to tear down his barns and build bigger ones. After all, he had plenty of money stored away and plenty of security for the future:

Luke 12:17-19, "And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

But Jesus called that man a fool:

Luke 12:20-21, "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

This man had forgotten that death is real and that it is an absolute, certain fact of life. He had also forgotten that the God who gives life has the power to take it away. So this prosperous farmer

did not live to enjoy all of that prosperity. We must not be that foolish!

Some people hide their fear of death in their “success”.

People today can hide their fear of dying very well. They can cover it up with the pursuit of their “success”. They can say to themselves, “I’ll show the world what I’m worth — I’ll get money. I’ll buy everything I want. I’ll go to all the parties. I’ll rise to the top of the company and be king of the mountain, and nobody is going to stop me.”

But people should listen to the words of those who have reached success in the eyes of the world. Many of them say they are miserably unhappy about their lives.

Let us never believe Satan’s lie that death will not touch us for years to come. He wants us to forget about the passing nature of life, and he tries to convince us that happiness comes from making more money, going to more parties, and trying to experience the latest thrill. Unfortunately, he doesn’t tell us that all of these things will fade in time, and then we must face God in Judgment.

There are people who are very successful in the eyes of the world, but one day they will die and be buried in fine caskets with many flowers. Then Christ will say to them, “You fool.”

Death is coming to all of us, and possibly sooner than we may think.

Even when a person lives a normal lifespan, the time passes so quickly. As Job said: Job 7:6, “*My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope.*”

Have you ever seen an old-fashioned loom? The shuttle shoots back and forth across the loom, and each action takes only a second. The most common statement that we hear from older people is, “How did life go so fast? What happened to all the years?” They will often speak of things that happened a half-century ago as if they took place yesterday. Let us all make sure that we understand that we cannot stop time — we cannot even slow it down. It will truly go faster than a “weaver’s shuttle.”

Life can end very suddenly

The story of the rich fool should also teach us that life can come to an end very suddenly. God said, Luke 12:20, “...*Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee...*”

The rich fool was a very successful farmer and was obviously a good businessman. There is no evidence that he was dishonest or was a bad citizen in the community. He just didn't realize how abruptly life can be taken away. He could steer the plow through the fields, but he could not steer clear of the grave that night. He had not planned on meeting God within the next few hours.

So many people think that they will be ready for death. They think that they will call the family members around the bedside and read the will and say goodbye to everyone, but it usually never happens that way. Most people die very unexpectedly. There is usually no warning that it is going to be the last day of their lives.

Sometime, just read the obituary column in your local newspaper. There are few cases where family members knew that death was coming so soon. No one has the power to control when his life will end unless he commits suicide. It is up to the Lord when our time comes.

James 4:13-15, “*Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.*”

Too many people put off becoming a Christian until they can get everything just perfect in their lives. But Jesus says life is but a vapour. It is here for a little while, then it is gone. Planes crash, cars wreck, houses burn down, diseases strike, and the vapour of life suddenly disappears.

How, then, should we live?

Not fearful, but obediently. We should not be terrorized by the thought of dying. Paul had a good attitude concerning death.

1 Cor. 15:55-57, “*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

The answer to the fear of death is to obey the gospel and live a life that is faithful to that gospel. Obeying the gospel means humbling

ourselves to the will of God and obeying His commands. To become a Christian, we must:

Believe. John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

Repent. Luke 13:3, *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”*

Confess Christ. Matt. 10:32-33, *“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”*

Be baptized. Acts 2:38, *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”*

Once we have obeyed the gospel, then the blessings of God are showered upon us.

The Apostle Paul said: 2 Cor. 5:1-8, *“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”*

Some say they want to think about it awhile before they become a Christian. The problem with “thinking about it” is that there may not be much time left for that thinking.

Every person must make a decision

The gospel of Christ forces each of us to make a decision today. A person does not become a Christian by accident or just by default because he lived in a Christian family. One does not stumble into being a Christian. It is a conscious decision that must be made. And that decision doesn't need to take days, weeks, months, or years to make. Examples abound in the New Testament scriptures where the decision to become a Christian was done immediately.

Acts 2:38-41, *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”*

Philip and the eunuch. Acts 8:26-39, *“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”*

When most people fall asleep tonight, they will be thinking about many things. What will the weather be like tomorrow? What bills have to be paid tomorrow? How will the job go tomorrow? How will I perform in the game tomorrow? Will that cute boy ask me out?

But the real question should be: If the Lord calls me away from this life this very night, will I be ready to meet Him in Judgment? The rich fool made a tragic mistake by placing his faith in his own

ability to survive and take care of himself, rather than live obediently to God and place his trust in Him.

Whether we depart from this life tonight or not, the truth is that a hundred years from now, all of us present this day will have died. Our ultimate destiny will have been sealed — either an eternity in heaven, or an eternity in hell. Your fate is in your own hands.

We must begin to plan today for that eternal life offered to us. Are you ready to begin today on that road that leads to heaven?

