

Sermon Outlines

The House Of Mourning - Gospel

Readings

- a) Ecclesiastes 7:2 - "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart."
- b) John 5:24 - "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Introduction

The difference between our perspective and God's in the matter of true evaluation.

- 1) Places we do not like to frequent:
 - a) A funeral home
- 2) Places we do like to frequent:
 - a) Weddings
 - b) Graduations
- 3) God's evaluation:
 - a) Better to go to the house of mourning than the celebration. Why?
 - i) We face the reality that this will be the end of all of us, except those who are saved and alive when the Lord comes.
 - ii) The wise individual thinks carefully, "What happens after I die?"
 - iii) Tonight as we consider the passing of life to death, I want to consider, how we can pass from death to life?
- 4) What are the benefits of visiting a place of death?
 - a) We lay it to heart, that is, we stop and take evaluation of what is life?
 - i) Illustration: An orange traffic light ideally causes us to slow down and be prepared to stop.
 - b) The death of an individual is God's orange traffic light to those who are living, which is saying, slow down and be prepared to stop.
 - c) Why does a death cause us to slow down? It is God forcing us to:
 - i) Face the reality that "life ends"
 - ii) Face the major question, "What is my life?"
 - iii) Face the question, "When will my life end?"
 - iv) Face the question, "If I were to die within the next 24 hours, week, month, year, where would I spend eternity?"

What is life?

God told Adam that if he ate the fruit of the tree he would die (Gen. 2:17)

- 1) God did not expand on what "death" was. He left it an unknown and the unknown is always more frightening than the known.
- 2) This raises the questions:
 - a) What does it mean to die?
 - b) How did Adam die?
 - i) At the instance the fruit was eaten he died spiritually, that is his fellowship with God was broken. He was aware of shame and something had been lost, for it would seem to me that the nakedness he and Eve were aware of was more than physical (Gen. 3:7).
 - ii) Then after 930 years Adam physically died (Gen. 5:5), and that "death gene" was passed on to all his family (Rom. 5:12).
 1. Every human being is born with a sin nature, they are dead spiritually (Eph. 2:1) and will physically die.
 - c) Death is the cessation of the physical life God gives or the spirit life of fellowship with God.

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The Delusion Of Denial

Satan does not want man to see his true condition before Him therefore he has multiple tactics to prevent him from thinking about his condition before God and the afterlife, some of which are:

- a) Deny that man is dead and can by works merit God's salvation, i.e if I do the best I can, etc.
- b) Have man focus on the here and now and not think about eternity, only sports, entertainment, business, etc.
- c) Deny there is a God and when an individual dies there is no after life.
- d) Deny that man without God cannot be satisfied therefore, Satan will attempt to give life meaning without God, for instance:
 - i) Physically: Arnold Schwarzenegger could have thought, "If only I could be the best body builder in the world then I would be happy". But, fame and fortune did not bring satisfaction and contentment.
 - ii) Abilities: Pavarotti could have thought, "If only I could be the best tenor in the world then I would be happy". But, fame and fortune did not bring satisfaction and contentment.
 - iii) Man comes to points in his life and often at the end finds it empty.
 1. Absalom died without ever receiving the priority of the leadership which he longed for (2 Sam. 15:1-6).
 - (a) His life ended in disappointment and spiritual death, which is evident from his father's wailings (2 Sam. 19:4).
 2. Haman suffered from an imagined distinguished glory (Esther 6:1), and in the end, physical and spiritual death (Esther 7:10).
 3. Cain refused the truth of God's way (Gen. 4:7) and in the end physical and spiritual death (Gen. 4:16).
 - (a) He lived the rest of his life knowing there was no salvation for him.
 - (b) Could that happen to an individual today? Absolutely!
 4. Bob Marley, the music legend, was the inspiration behind many liberal movements in the world such as the Rastafari movement and legalizing marijuana. At 36 years of age he died from skin cancer in 1981. His last words were spoken to his son Ziggy, "Money can't buy life".
 5. Sir Winston Churchill's reported last words were, "I'm bored with it all."

Nothing this world has to offer can save or satisfy.

The Leading Question

Of my considered priorities one question remains, "What can I carry with me when I die?"

- a) The funeral home does not have a single coffin or casket with a place for a wallet or check book.
- b) We are forced to consider: "What did?"
 - i) What did Michelangelo carry with him of his great artistry when he died? Nothing!
 - ii) What did Mozart carry with him of his glorious music when he died? Nothing!
 - iii) What did Einstein carry with him of his great thinking ability when he died? Nothing!
- c) God's evaluation and exhortation:
 - i) "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mk. 8:36) Nothing!
 - ii) "Better to go to the house of mourning," for it is the end of all men and the wise take it to heart (Ecc. 7:2).
 - iii) "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deut. 32:29)
 - iv) "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12)

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The Realization And Consideration

Discover that a life without God/Christ is an empty existence and ultimately leads to banishment from God forever.

- a) The story of Luke 15

Consider the question:

- a) What is the purpose of my living?
 - i) A man called "Nobel" had a relative and as he read the relative's obituary he realized a mistake had been made. They had mistaken the relative for him. It mentioned that he was the discoverer of dynamite. It made him stop and think, "The only thing I am known for is my discovery, nothing else". He realized how shallow life was.
- b) James the holy apostle asks, "What is your life?"
 - i) He is asking a double question, "What is life in its duration?" and, "What does your life consist of?"
 - ii) The ancient wrote:
 1. It is like a hand breadth: "Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah." (Psa. 39:5)
 2. It is like a weaver's shuttle: "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope." (Job 7:6)
 3. James writes it is like a vapor: "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (Jam. 4:14)

God's Answer Is Two Fold

- 1) Get right priorities. "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12) How?
 - a) Understand that which the Lord has done because of His love for the individual.
 - i) He saw my helpless plight (Rom. 3:23)
 - ii) He went to Calvary and there gave Himself as a substitute for me (1 Cor. 15:3). Note the words: "The just for the unjust" (1 Pet. 3:18)
 - iii) He swapped places for me and offers cleansing from sin's penalty, a restored fellowship with God knowing that while I live on this earth I shall never die and be cast into Hell.
 - iv) He gives eternal life (Jn. 3:16)
- 2) What ought I to do?
 - a) Consider, "What is the greatest priority of life for every man and woman?"
 - b) How can I get right with God?
 - c) Repent of your sins and self trying to please God, for salvation is not by works (Eph. 2:8-9)
 - d) Accept Christ as Lord and Savior and receive salvation (Acts 16:31)
 - e) Accept the free gift of salvation (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8)

Decision Making

Now the crucial time has come, the decision is now being made "Will I accept the warning of approaching death and accept God's free gift of salvation or reject it"?

- a) It is an "either" or "or" decision, I will either accept or reject, that is your decision to make.

May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13

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