

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

The Lord Will Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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Time To Waste

Introduction

I was in town one morning and met a mother and daughter who live up our street. There were some pleasantries and then I asked if they wanted a ride home, to which they declined saying, "Thanks, but we have time to waste". As I pondered on that statement I thought of how often I have said it or acted as if I had time to waste. Several observations came to mind:

- a) We never say that when there is a deadline to meet.
- b) I have been with several people at the moment of death and I have never heard them saying, "I have time to waste"
- c) How much time I have while not saying the words have lived in the attitude, "I can waste this time"
- d) Time is a precious commodity when each second can never be taken back. We can relive the emotions of a former time, we can recall the memories of another time, but we can never live that time again. As Bill Gaither sang so many years ago:

We have this moment to hold in our hand,
To hold as it slips through our fingers like sand,
Yesterday's gone and tomorrow might never be,
We have this moment -today.

One of the things which astounds me is the rate at which time passes, especially now that I am older. When we all were young time meant nothing, it was just a date on a piece of paper, now things are different. Sunday I go to be with the saints and then suddenly it is Thursday night, the mid week meeting, and then it seems I just take a breath and it is Saturday night! Where has the week gone? Where has the last half a century gone? The days and years have long gone since I was a young married man, then a young father, then before I know it my children were getting married, and almost without interruption I was a grandfather, and now at 73 the grey hair is on me, the muscles are not what they were, the dreams of yesterday are now shelved never to be lifted again. I ponder, "Did I have time to waste?" As I see my peers go down the valley one by one, the truth is repeatedly impressed on me, "I do not have many years ahead" and the words of scripture flood my mind:

- a) "My days as an handbreadth" (Psa. 39:5)
- b) "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle" (Job 7:6)
- c) "For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (Jam. 4:14)

Is There Time To Waste?

The answer to this question depends so much on the spiritual condition of the individual. I had a very interesting discussion with my beloved brother Jim Barron who was released from this vale of tears only a few months ago. About

four weeks before the Lord took him home, as he lay on the hospital bed, turning to me he asked, "Rowan, do you believe in angels?" Assuring him that I did, he said with full clarity of mind, "I saw one standing right there at the foot of the bed". We talked about the heavenly visitor but what struck me was the response to the questions I asked him. I asked, "what is it like to know very soon you will be in Heaven and finished with this life?" His response was, "You get your priorities corrected". He had no thought of, "I have time to waste". After that visit of the angel, Jim was as relaxed as I ever saw anyone, and he died in perfect peace.

It was back in about 1974 after a gospel meeting a young man and I sat on the platform step as we discussed the need for salvation. I did not know what lay ahead for a couple of weeks later I got the news he had committed suicide due to a drug overdose, and died without God's salvation. That young man tragically is in hell, not because he was a drug addict, but because he would not accept Christ as Saviour. If only I had known there was no time to waste, for that was the last gospel meeting he was ever in.

What Do Some People Say?

In those final moments some put on the face of bravado, others face the cold reality of eternity without God, and thank God for others it is, "going home". What do some of the unsaved say?

- a) Edward Gibbon, author of the 'Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire': "All is lost, irrecoverably lost. All is dark and doubtful."
- b) Marilyn Monroe: "I don't need your Jesus." Related by Billy Graham who tried to present the Gospel message to Marilyn just before she died at age 36.
- c) Joseph Stalin (who murdered many millions of his countrymen), while on his deathbed, as related by his daughter Svetlana to Malcolm Muggeridge: "He suddenly sat up, groaned, shook his fist at the ceiling as if he could see beyond it, then fell back and died."
- d) Sir Francis Newport allowed his name to be used on a brand of cigarettes. On his deathbed he cried out: "Oh eternity. Oh eternity". He uttered a groan of inexpressible horror as a cried out, "Oh the insufferable pains of hell, forever, forever."
- e) Voltaire, one of history's best known atheists, often stated that, "by the time I'm buried, the Bible will be non-existent." His last words were: "I am abandoned by God and man; I shall die and go to hell alone."
- f) Robert Ingersoll, noted lecturer and avowed anti-Christian on his deathbed said: "Life is the cold and barren value between two eternal peaks. I strive in vain to see beyond the distant height. I cry out and the only answer I hear, is the echo of my empty wail."
- g) Queen Elizabeth I grabbed her physician by the sleeve and pulled him down over her bed and said: "Half of the British Empire for six month of life." He could not even give her six minutes, and she died.
 - i) In those last moments when the individual is aware that life is ebbing fast away, in which each tick of the clock seems to have the voice of death crying aloud, "I am on my way", then, "there is no time to waste", and for many they enter a Christless eternity.

Some of the expression of those who know the Lord, redeemed by His precious sin removing penalty bearing sacrifice on the cross of Calvary?

- a) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, beloved preacher and author, on his deathbed: "I can hear them coming!" He sat straight up in bed and asked: "Don't you hear them? This is my coronation day. I can see the chariots, I'm ready to board."
- b) Dwight L. Moody, famous preacher and founder of the Moody Bible Institute, while on his deathbed: "Can this be death? Why it is better than living! Earth is receding, heaven is opening. This is my coronation day".
- c) Augustus Toplady, author of 'Rock of ages'. His final words: "All is light, light, light."
- d) President George Washington: "Doctor, I am dying, but I am not afraid to die." He folded his hands over his chest and said: "It is well" (As related by his wife Martha).
- e) David Brainerd, (well known missionary): "I am going into eternity and it is sweet to me to think of eternity."

Concluding Thoughts

There are several considerations on why we must not assume that we can waste time.

- a) There is no time to waste in serving the Lord for, “The coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (Jam. 5:8) and when He comes, the days of opportunity to serve Him here will be forever over. His coming is imminent and as the old hymn said, “It could happen any moment”, therefore wisdom directs us to be, “redeeming the time” (Eph. 5:16. Col. 4:5).
- b) There’s no time to waste in serving the Lord because at the rate the world is moving in opposition to God and His anointed, we may have very few days of freedom left to preach the true gospel of, a Heaven to gain and a Hell to shun.
- c) If I were unsaved, knowing that the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man (Gen. 6:3) and there will come a time when the Holy Spirit will make us aware of salvation for the last time, and then never again to strive with the individual, I would not wait another moment, neither would my head rest on my pillow until I was sure of my salvation and Heaven at the end of this earthly sojourn.

There's a line that is drawn by rejecting our Lord,
Where the call of His Spirit is lost,
And you hurry along with the pleasure-mad throng,
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

Chorus:

*Have you counted the cost, if your soul should be lost
Tho' you gain the whole world for your own?
Even now it may be that the line you have crossed,
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?*

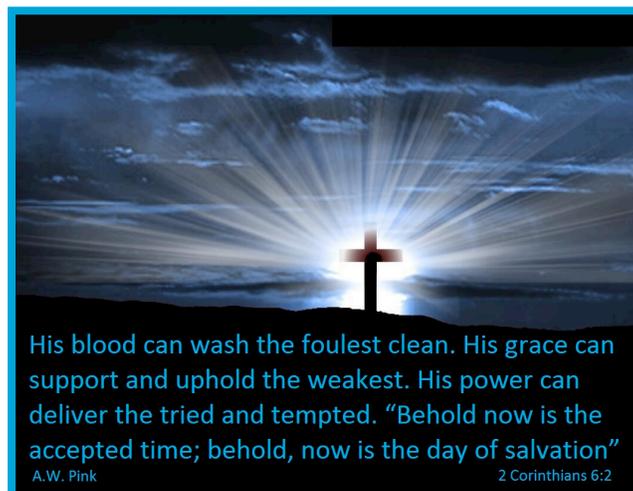
You may barter your hope of eternity's morn,
For a moment of joy at the most,
For the glitter of sin and the things it will win,
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

While the door of His mercy is open to you,
Ere the depth of His love you exhaust,
Won't you come and be healed, won't you whisper, I yield
I have counted, I have counted the cost.

God says:

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

(2 Cor. 6:2)



... Rowan Jennings

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