

Examining the Finish Line



The secret to living right today is found in a series of personal questions.

- *How do I wish to die?*
- *How will I want to be remembered?*
- *What material things would I want to leave behind?*
- *What messages do I want to transmit to the next generation?*

As we pray for a meek and humble heart, it should be little surprise that The Lord blinds us to our true progress. This help us win the battle against pride by keeping us tuned into what He has done and is doing rather than counting our trophies.

Point! The motivation to live life uprightly today is found in these finish line questions.

For a person with a fully functioning moral compass – these are enough to lead us towards the straight and narrow. Alas, some are so blinded by sin they must ask deeper questions still...

- *Where am I likely to go after my death?*
- *How am I living or behaving inauthentically?*
- *What am I struggling against that I can simply release?*
- *What am I agreeing to that I should be fighting against?*

Point! When you have answers to these questions about *knowing your end*, you will retain the motivation to start truly *living your life*.

Jeremiah 29:11 KJV "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an *expected end*."

There are very few things that end in the Word of God – your time on earth is one of them.

- **Expected** = A cord as an attachment, to bind together.
- **End** = the last or end of something

At some point we will each have our last: Breath, sunrise, worship service, altar call, cup of coffee, last daydream, book, devotional, prayer, meal, family time, or kiss.

Key Point! We cannot choose IF these events will happen, only the CONTEXT of when they occur.

A hurried peck on the cheek? ~ or ~ Or a moment when you affirm your love for her.

Drab heartless worship service? ~ or ~ Give God your full embrace?

Stale, obligatory prayer? ~ or ~ Anointed, yoke breaking prayer?

While it is prophesied, commanded, indeed its appointed once for a man to die, living one's life by faith is a personal choice!

Numbers 23:19 KJV God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Creating a Dwelling Place for The Lord

In the Old Testament, there are three primary places that God dwelt with his People:

1) The Tabernacle

Beginning in the Old Testament (OT) book of Exodus, God designed it so that his people could tear it down, carry it around, and set it back up as they traveled through the wilderness.

Point! *God dwells in the earnest growing heart – this speaks of those who life by faith, are learning how to please God, and growing in trust.*

2) The Solomonic Temple

King Solomon replaced the temporary tabernacle structure with a larger, stationary building called the Temple. It was well built and fully furnished.

Point! *God dwells in committed, established souls – this speaks of mature believers that are grounded in Truth.*

3) The Second Temple

Ezra and Zerubbabel led a construction project to rebuild the Temple (516 BC). This second Temple lasted until the ministry of Jesus but was not as grand as the First Temple.

Point! *God dwells in the broken and rebuilt temple – this speaks of backsliders that come home.*

Key Understanding! After everything you have been through, nevertheless, you too can be fashioned into a dwelling place for the Lord this evening!

At your end, I wish your soul has a sign out front that reads, “NO VACANCY”

Protecting the Dwelling Place

Matthew 26:39 KJV And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.**

The Gospels record that Jesus spoke (roughly) **31,500 words** as he taught, ministered and trained His disciples. Surprisingly, after the Garden, Jesus spoke very little – only **47 words**.

Many of us, if we should be subjected to the same treatment as Jesus was that day – would have something to say about it.

Observation: The difference is, I believe is that Jesus already knew he was at the END – His focus was now upon choosing the CONTEXT of His end.

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| 1) <i>Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do</i> | <i>Gave Forgiveness</i> |
| 2) <i>Today you will be with me in paradise</i> | <i>Gave assurances</i> |
| 3) <i>Woman, behold, thy son! Behold, thy mother!</i> | <i>Secured Future</i> |
| 4) <i>My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?</i> | <i>Conquered doubt & fear</i> |
| 5) <i>I thirst</i> | <i>Remained hungry</i> |
| 6) <i>It is finished</i> | <i>Work Finished</i> |
| 7) <i>Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit</i> | <i>Spoke Faith</i> |

Submissive before the **Guards** that abducted & beat him;

Meek before the **Pilate** who questioned him;

Silent before the **Herod** who mocked him.

It could be said that Jesus was remarkably quiet during his trial and crucifixion. Why?

POINT! He was Examining The Finish Line & Protecting the Dwelling Place.

Notes: _____

Living with Eternity in Mind

Ephesians 4 ESV

1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

1 Peter 4:7-10 KJV

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

The grace of God is MANIFOLD - meaning It is not one dimensional. It means that grace, *IS* grace from any direction you look at it.

- With any handicap – you can still win the game!
- From any distant starting point – you can still make it home!
- With any disability – you can still finish strong!

*“Thou art the way, the truth and the life.
Without the way, there is no going. Without the truth, there is no knowing.
Without the life, there is no living.”
- Thomas A. Kempis*

Much as the secret to living right is found in asking the right questions, the key to happiness is placed within the revelation that,

*"Nothing in my life **is** or **was** an accident."*

*Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side.*