

Reflecting on a Life Lived

Introduction

1. Most everyone has been to a funeral, some have attended many funerals.
 - A. At most funerals where there is a casket, at the end of the memorial service, individuals are invited to walk by the casket and look at the deceased body for the last time.
2. All of us will one day face the reality of death. Each day someone is affected by the death of a family member, loved one, or dear friend.
3. On some occasions, when people die, we may need to comfort and console those grieving at the loss of their loved ones. At other times, we will be the ones enduring grief and loss while friends and family come to comfort us.
4. When we view the casket that contains the body, we no doubt have many thoughts that flood our mind. What are some of those thoughts that we have as we view the body for the last time?

The End of Life's Journey

1. When I look at the body in the casket I am reminded that my life is so very short, no matter how many years I may live on earth.

Psalms 90:9-10 For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; We finish our years like a sigh. The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

- A. The Psalmist's descriptions here do not begin to suggest that we will live forever here on earth. Our life on earth is only temporary – a time and place to prepare for something better.**

James 4:13-14 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? **It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.**

- 2. May we all truly appreciate what we see when we look at the body in the casket.**

Scripture Fulfilled

- 1. We have read from Psalms 90:9-10 and James 4:14 which declare the temporary nature of this life.**
- 2. Remember also, that the Holy Spirit said:**

Hebrews 9:27 And as **it is appointed for men to die once**, but after this the judgment,

- A. The word "appointed" means; "to be reserved; to wait."**
- B. It is a promise that all of us will die one day. This is appointment that is "reserved" or "laid up" by God that this will in fact happen.**
- 1) The only exception will be those who are still alive when Jesus returns again at His second coming.**

1 Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

3. **Since we do not know when we will die or when Jesus will return again, the wisest thing we can do while we are now living is to prepare now for death.**
 - A. **As we gaze into the casket – be wise. Prepare for eternity because it will last forever!**

The End of Decision-Making

1. **Take a moment and think about all the things that we often times put off until “tomorrow.”**
 - A. **The sad truth is “that tomorrow never comes” for some and that “some” may very well include any one of us.**
 - B. **Decisions to make are left undone. Words planned to be spoken are left unsaid.**
2. **If one has not become a Christian by the time he has died, he can no longer make the choice to turn his life over to God!**
 - A. **It is too late once we have drawn our last breath.**

2 Corinthians 6:2 For He says: "IN AN ACCEPTABLE TIME I HAVE HEARD YOU, AND IN THE DAY OF SALVATION I HAVE HELPED YOU." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, **now is the day of salvation.**

Hebrews 3:7-8; 15 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION, IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS,.....while it is said: **"TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE,** DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION."

3. **To leave a life of sin and live for Christ – the decision must be made now. We can't make that decision when we are dead!**

The End of Our Earthly Work

1. **When I look at the body in the casket I am reminded of the end of opportunities and earthly service.**
 - A. **It is the end of being able to teach others the truth as the reality of “paradise” or “torment” is now realized.**
 - B. **It is also the end of being able to be a good example and doing good things for the Lord.**

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; **and through it he being dead still speaks.**

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that **they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.**"

- C. **At the same time, if the one who has died has lived wickedly, living an unrighteous life, the wickedness has stopped as well. No longer will they be actively involved in evil deeds, nor saying evil things.**
2. **When gazing into the casket I see someone who will do nothing more upon this earth. Their soul has left the body – ending their earthly work.**

James 2:26 For as **the body without the spirit is dead**, so faith without works is dead also.

The End of A Family Relationship

1. All relationships end at death.
 - A. The apostle Paul and even Jesus Christ dealt with this fact.
 - 1) Jesus taught that marriage is not “a thing” in heaven.
Matthew 22:23-30
 - 2) Paul taught that when a mate dies, the surviving spouse has the right to marry another.
Romans 7:1-3
 - B. When reflecting upon the one laying in the casket, we will at times witness the end of an earthly relationship and see a surviving spouse that is no longer bound in marriage to anyone. Marriage is for this earthly life only.

Can't Change Our Eternal Destiny

1. It is only during this time, the time that we have life on this earth that we have the opportunity to change our eternal destiny.
 - A. We can choose to live for God fully and completely resulting in salvation, or the ways of the world which will result in eternal condemnation.
 - B. After death, we will not be able to choose to do what is right, nor will we forsake the wrong.
 - 1) The example of the rich man:
Luke 16:19-31
 - 2) The word of God teaches:
2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:12

2. It is so very important that we turn from our sins and become a child of God NOW – before it is too late!

Mark 16:16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Revelation 2:10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Ourselves In a Short Time!

1. To be quite honest, this last point is really the very first thing I think about when I look at a body in a casket.

A. The casket reflects the “end of all men.”

Ecclesiastes 7:2 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 take it to heart.

Ecclesiastes 9:5 For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten.

2. I am soberly reminded that as this person’s body is, so will mine be one day – and in the shortness of time – it won’t be very long.

James 4:14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

3. How carefully are we considering our ways? This is very serious!

Conclusion

1. We must make sure that our priorities are right.

Proverbs 27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.

- A. We don't know what will happen in a day. Nor do we know when the time will come for people to file past our casket for the last time.

Psalms 90:12 So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

2. As we go through life a day at a time, let us make sure that we put God and His righteousness first.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

3. May we always appreciate the brevity of this life and make the most of every day by being the kind of person God wants us to be.

4. Let us serve Him all the days of our lives so that at the end of this journey on earth, people will walk by our casket and take comfort that we sleep "in Jesus."

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

Death is not extinguishing the light from the Christian; it is putting out the lamp because the dawn has come. (unknown source)

