



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

June 9, 2019

REFLECTIONS FROM WALKING IN A CEMETERY

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Deacons:

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Steve McCreary

Minister:

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Secretary:

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Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:00 pm

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I'm not sure how you feel about cemeteries, but I actually do my best thinking and reflecting anytime I find myself in a cemetery. Why? My priorities are quickly put in order, I realize we all have a limited number of sunsets, and I see firsthand the hurt one feels when a loved one is lost.

I recently had the opportunity to assist with a graveside service of someone who passed away untimely. Despite being strangers, those gathered in that small, quiet place not only had the love for the person who had passed in common, but we also shared the same unspoken thoughts of "what was, what is, and what could have been."

As the service ended and everyone began to have side conversations, some listened and some participated in those discussions, I began to make my way quietly around the small area looking at headstones. Some dated back to the early 1800's! As I scanned from one plot to the next, I found myself asking, "What happened to that person? Why did they die so young?" Or, "How do those parents endure after losing their children within a year?" I think, "How did life unfold for those who lived on for decades?"

While walking and talking, I had a short conversation with a gentleman I had known 20 plus years earlier. Now struggling to walk and remember, he told me he had lost his wife eight years ago and the pain of her absence was evident as he stared off toward the horizon.

My time in that cemetery was spent like my time in all cemeteries, quietly thinking about:

Love. We should love Christ by the life we live, we should love those around us, and we should love our family (**John 13:34**).

The shortness of life. Regardless of time spent on earth, time always passes quickly (**James 4:14**).

Preparing for death. We understand life will end, we can have victory over death (**I Corinthians 15:50-58**).

A life lost brought us together that day, but we will always share a bond. A bond that reveals we all have a void in our life from someone who passed on. We can prepare for these moments to the best of our ability and we allow our loved ones to live as we preserve their memory. An inscription I found while at this service says, "You are no longer by my side but you are forever in my heart." May we consider the brevity of human life.

Allen Jones

'It Was Just His Time to Go'

A person asked me about this recently. They had heard people say such things as “It was just their time to go.” There are many folks, even members of the church, who believe there is a set time for someone to die. In defense of such a view, some look to **Hebrews 9:27** where the Bible says, “*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*” However, the original Greek word translated “appointed” in this verse is also translated “laid up” in the three other verses where it is found in the New Testament. The word carries the idea of something reserved or awaiting. See **Colossians 1:5; 2 Timothy 4:8**. We have to recognize that this is a general principle since there will be some that will not have died when the Lord returns, **1 Corinthians 15:51-53**.

The Bible teaches that God has placed limits on the life span of mankind. “*The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength, labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away*” (**Psalm 90:10**). The limit of 70 or 80 years is not hard fast, but again, a general principle. Even now, with all our medical capabilities, the average life span is still near 80. Job said, “*Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass*” (**Job 14:5**). Job is not discussing a set number of days for each individual, but that God has placed general limits on how long men can live on this earth.

Additionally, consider that if a person has a set time to die determined by the Lord it could not be changed. However, the Bible teaches:

A Person Can Shorten His Days. “*But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee*” (**Psalm 55:23**). “*The fear of the LORD prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened*” (**Proverbs 10:27**).

A Person Can Lengthen His Days. As we read previous in **Proverbs 10:27**, “*The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened*” The scriptures also say, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou may live long on the earth*” (**Ephesians 6:1-3**).

We know the length of our life is not fixed because the Bible teaches that one’s behavior will affect his lifespan. Mankind can either shorten or lengthen his days. We don’t know precisely when it will be “our time”, but we can be certain that it will eventually come. Ask yourself, knowing the certainty of it, how should we behave? Are you ready?

“*Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him. For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad*” (**2 Corinthians 5:9-10**).

Jerry Sturgill