

Hebrews 9:27

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

You Only Die Once

We talked last week about only having one life, but tonight I want to alter our focus slightly to death. Being mindful of our death helps us to live fuller and more focused lives.

Live Like You Were Dying - Tim McGraw

The song tells the story of a man who is diagnosed with a lethal disease. Faced with his own mortality, this man decides to live his life to the fullest. And the chorus of the song tells us what he did:

I went sky divin',
I went rocky mountain climbin',
I went 2.7 seconds on a bull name Fumanchu.
And I loved deeper,
And I spoke sweeter,
And I gave forgiveness I've been denying,
And he said someday I hope you get the chance,
To live like you were dyin'.

I have often thought about how a disease like this would impact my own life ...

It would not be a good thing, but at the same time it would help bring the important things back into focus.

I have heard different stories about people who were diagnosed with cancer. They knew their time was short so they spent more time with their loved ones and some of the greatest most valuable experiences happened during these times.

Being mindful of our death helps us to live fuller and more focused lives.

During the 12th century, there were catholic monks from the Carthusian order. They lived in monasteries and led silent and somber lives. The only words that would ever be spoken between the monks was a simple phrase, "Frater, memento mori." which in English means ... "Brother, remember thy death."

The monks attempted to keep this concept of mortality at the forefront of their minds because they wanted to live for things that mattered. They wanted to make sure they lived for eternal things.

They would repeat this phrase over and over again. Frater, memento mori! Brother, remember thy death.

People that have their mortality in mind usually live more impacting lives.

Richard Baxter - 1600's - "I preached as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men."

"Every time I got behind a pulpit to preach, I preached like it was my last time to preach."

He didn't waste time preaching fluffy feel-good sermons, he preached about important things. He preached about eternity, Heaven, Hell, sin, forgiveness, God's love, etc.

The awareness of his mortality impacted how he conducted himself in life. He preached as a **dying** man to dying men.

Psalm 39:4

4 Lord, make me to know mine **end**, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am.

The psalmist prayed to God for an awareness of his mortality.

Everyone is going to die. Whether by tragedy, sickness, old age, or natural causes, everyone at some point is going to die!

They have done studies on the leading causes of death and scientists have found the number one cause. Want to know what it is? **Birth**. They have concluded that 100% of people who are born will die, therefore birth is the leading cause of death.

Shake your neighbors hand and tell them you're going to die!

Psalm 89:48

48 What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.

He is asking a rhetorical question. Of course everyone that is alive will die! Of course it's impossible for a man to deliver his soul from the hand of the grave. Death is unavoidable. It is coming for everyone, and we need to be mindful of it.

The whole reason we want to be mindful of death is so that our lives can be lived right, and ultimately so that we can be right with God.

Ecclesiastes 11:3

3 If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

Have you ever heard the phrase, “As a tree falls, so shall it lie.”? This phrase has roots that tie back to this scripture. (Pun intended)

Often times in scripture the metaphor of a tree is used in comparison to a person.

Isaiah 61 uses the phrase “**oaks** of righteousness”.

Psalms 1 - The psalmist is talking about a godly person who delights in God’s Word and in verse 3 he uses the phrase, “they shall be like a **tree** planted by the rivers of water.”

Throughout the Bible this metaphor is used and Ecclesiastes 11:3 is one of those times. Solomon is writing in this verse about trees but he is really referring to people.

Ecclesiastes 11:3b

and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

Whatever direction the tree falls in, that’s the direction it will forever be in. A tree can’t get up and change position after it falls. As a tree falls, so shall it lie.

Parallel ...

Whenever the end of your life comes, whatever direction it was going in is the direction it will **forever** be in. The state that your life is in at the point of death is the state that it will **forever** be in. If you live life as a sinner and die in that sinful state, then you will forever be a sinner and will be judged accordingly, but if you live for Jesus, are saved by His grace and die in *that* state, then you shall forever be saved. In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

And that’s why we focus on death; because one second after death there’s no do-overs! There’s no second chances after you die. If you die saved, you’ll be saved. But if you die lost without God, you will be lost ... for eternity.

You need to make sure that you get your **life** right with God so that you can face death and **die** right with God ... because you only die once.

Hebrews 9:27

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

Even atheists believe the first part of this verse, but not the last part. Atheists, and certain other people, believe that after you die ... nothing happens. They think it doesn't matter how you live because to them death is the final act; the closing curtain. But the Bible let's me know that after death we will all be judged, and then spend eternity either in Heaven with Jesus, or in a lake of fire in a place called Hell.

2 Corinthians 5:10

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

As we pass from this life to the next through the doorway of death, we will find ourselves face to face with God and we will be judged. Whatever state our lives were in at the time of death is how we will be judged.

John 12:48 tells me that I will be judged according to the Word of God.

John 12:48

48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

The Word of God is what will someday judge us. Even if we rejected it in life, it will judge us. Even if we ignored it, it will judge us. Whether theist or atheist, it will judge us. Whether rich or poor, it will judge us.

We must live according to this book because our lives will be judged according to it!

I have good news tonight ...

We don't have to leave this place without getting our lives right with God. We are able to look into the Bible and see what it asks of us to do, and we can obey it.

Perhaps you are wondering what it takes to be saved. You are not the first person to ever wonder this.

Acts 2:37-38

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Repentance

Baptism

Holy Ghost

Martin Luther, the great reformer, once said this:

“There are two days in my calendar: This day and that Day.”

He understood that he couldn't change the past and he wasn't guaranteed the future. The only two days he was guaranteed was today and the day his life would end.

You are guaranteed the same two days! You need to take advantage of **this** day and make sure you're ready for **that** day. Don't put God off one more day. Get your life right tonight!

2 Corinthians 6:2b

2b behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.