

BREVITY, DESTINY, ETERNITY, AND YOU

I. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 & Various Other Scriptures

A. 66 years ago today Mark Thogmartin was born. 45 years ago on September 3rd, Mark & Donna were married. At the Sweet Corn Festival I sat with a friend I've known since I was 4 years old. The day before that with another friend I've known since I was 5. Perhaps you've heard the Latin phrase, *Tempus Fugit*. It means, *time flies*. How true!

B. There's lots of theological debates about the end times. While biblical eschatologists study every Scriptural nuance for signs and clues, the likelihood of a unified perspective on Jesus' return and the end times is highly unlikely. Some make maps and prophecy charts. Others stock their apocalypse bunkers with freeze dried rations, canned goods, and even ham radios. Some see no ambiguity in the book of Revelations while others see quite a bit. But here's a prophetic word I think we can all agree on: In less than 100 years this little church will be comprised of people other than us sitting here. So with respect to the end of days, our personal end of days will be here sooner rather than later...

C. Not for the sake of being morbid but rather for the sake of walking in reality and the promises of eternal life, I'd like to read through a number of passages that are not ambiguous. Let's not hear these as bleak, unless of course you've yet to do business with God in terms of your eternal destiny, but rather let's hear these words as from God to help and encourage us as we endeavor to live in the here and now for His glory and prepare to live in His glorious presence forevermore... Let's hear some Scriptures...

1) **Job 7:6-7 (AMPC) kicks us off:** *6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. 7 Oh, remember that my life is but wind (a puff, a breath, a sob); my eye shall see good no more. (Job gets the facts right but not the conclusions...)*

2) **Job 9:25-26 (NIV) laments:** *25 My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy. 26 They skim past like boats of papyrus, like eagles swooping down on their prey. (We must remember Job's lost everything and is covered with boils...)*

3) **Job 14:1-2 (NLT):** *1 How frail is humanity! How short is life, how full of trouble! 2 We blossom like a flower and then wither. Like a passing shadow, we quickly disappear.*

4) **Psalm 103:15-18 (NLT) also laments but with much more hope:** *15 Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die. 16 The wind blows, and we are gone--as though we had never been here. 17 But the love of the LORD remains forever with those who fear Him. His salvation extends to the children's children 18 of those who are faithful to His covenant, of those who obey His commandments!*

5) **Psalm 39:4-8 (NLT) is actually a prayer:** *4 LORD, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered--how fleeting my life is. 5 You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand. My entire lifetime is just a moment to You; at best, each of us is but a breath." Interlude 6 We are merely moving shadows, and all our busy rushing ends in nothing. We heap up wealth, not knowing who will spend it. 7 And so,*

Lord, where do I put my hope? My only hope is in You. **8** Rescue me from my rebellion. Do not let fools mock me. **(How old are you? Look at your hand!)**

6) Psalm 90:1-12 (NIV) takes us even deeper in prayer: **1** Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. **2** Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God. **3** You turn men back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, O sons of men." **4** For a thousand years in Your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. **5** You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning-- **6** though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered. **(Our birth and our death are both in the hands of the Lord!)** **7** We are consumed by Your anger and terrified by Your indignation. **(The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom!)** **8** You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence. **9** All our days pass away under Your wrath; we finish our years with a moan. **10** The length of our days is seventy years--or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. **11** Who knows the power of Your anger? For Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due You. **12** Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. **(Psalm 90 was actually penned by Moses; it kinda sounds like he was having a tough day.)**

D. Before I move on, let me answer Moses' last question: "Who knows the power of your anger?" As stated in our message a week ago, Jesus, knew that anger firsthand. He who bore our sin, felt His Father's wrath against that sin as He was slain on the cross. **Romans 5:9 (NASB)** "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." **These verses we've been reading emphasize our brevity, but listen to 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 (ESV) announce our destiny:** **9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep (living or dead) we might live with Him.

E. So while I might say things like: "Life is short." or "Time flies." or "Tempus fugit." or "None of us really know how old we are." Those words don't come across so sad or morbid or terrifying when we're in Christ and our destiny is eternity with Him. While our verses today contain cryptic words for unbelievers, they're encouraging words for us who believe. So where do you stand personally? Consider this: God invites you to walk out your remaining days with Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior whether that be minutes, days, months, or decades!

F. All of us here are either under God's wrath still or Jesus has already borne it. But I believe you're hearing these words not to have hell scared out of you but rather the Hope of Christ instilled in you! Has God drawn you here to remind you you're destined for wrath or drawn you here to let you know you've been chosen to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ who has already been punished for your sins? I believe it's the latter. I urge you to embrace the latter by faith...

G. 2 Corinthians 6:1-2 (NLT) affirms: **1** As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it. **2** For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation. **(Please go home and think about these words.)**

H. Adoniram Judson, Baptist Missionary to Burma (1788 - 1850) wrote: "You have but one life to live in which to prepare for eternity. If you had four or five lives, two or three of them might be spent in carelessness. But you have one only. Every action of that one life gives coloring to your eternity. How important, then, that you spend that life so as to please the Saviour, the blessed Saviour, who has done everything for you!"

I. Some churches spend too much time looking back. They become preoccupied with the past--they're mentally and emotionally stuck in the glory days. They may utter phrases like: "Them were the good old days!" or "We never used to do it that way." or "I long for the days when God was really moving, not like now."

J. Some churches spend too much time looking ahead. They boldly announce big plans, many of which God has nothing to do with. Some hop on every bandwagon that rolls through, extolling fads over truth. They utter phrases like: "Too many here are stuck in their old ways!" "God's doing a new thing now." or "It's time to make room for a new generation--let old things pass away, let new things come."

*** Bring back the quilting bees! No let's have some raves for Jesus!**

K. Thanksgiving at our house back-in-the-day, there was a place for everybody. There was room for Grandparents & Great Aunts & Uncles. There was room for the smallest of children. Card tables were set up, high chairs were fetched, extra plates were laid out, guests were made welcome, and everyone had a place at the feast. I pray with all my heart the same is always true here with us. But even better than that, God has set a place at His Table for you. You'll never receive a greater invitation than that! And this I believe is your destiny...

*** Close with Prayer...**

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[Job 7:6-7 \(AMPC\)](#)

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Interlude **6** We are merely moving shadows, and all our busy rushing ends in nothing. We heap up wealth, not knowing who will spend it. **7** And so, Lord, where do I put my hope? My only hope is in You. **8** Rescue me from my rebellion. Do not let fools mock me.

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1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 (ESV)

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Romans 5:9 (NASB)

9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 (NLT)

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Quote by Adoniram Judson (Baptist Missionary to Burma - 1788-1850)

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spend that life so as to please the Saviour, the blessed Saviour, who has done everything for you!"

- Adoniram Judson, from *The Life of Adoniram Judson-Volume 3*, by Edward Judson, pg. 473.

Bonus Goodies

"Number of My Days" - Joni Eareckson & Tommy Walker

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFyG-myerXs>

The Brevity and Urgency of Life - Billy Graham

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFyG-myerXs>

Two Minutes to Eternity - By Marshall Shelley

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2011/july-online-only/minuteseternity.html>

Ashamed Sinner, Unashamed Savior - Erik Raymond

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/ashamed-sinner-unashamed-savior/>

More Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras

Job 14:1-2 (NLT)

1 How frail is humanity! How short is life, how full of trouble! **2** We blossom like a flower and then wither. Like a passing shadow, we quickly disappear.

James 4:13-15 (NKJV)

13 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"; **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. **15** Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (AMP)

16 Therefore we do not become discouraged [spiritless, disappointed, or afraid]. Though our outer self is [progressively] wasting away, yet our inner self is being [progressively] renewed day by day. **17** For our momentary, light distress [this passing trouble] is producing for us an eternal weight of glory [a fullness] beyond all measure [surpassing all comparisons, a transcendent splendor and an endless blessedness]! **18** So we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen; for the things which are visible are temporal [just brief and fleeting], but the things which are invisible are everlasting and imperishable.

Galatians 4:4-6 (ESV)

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive

adoption as sons. **6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

Romans 5:6-8 (ESV)

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For one will scarcely die for a righteous person--though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die--**8** but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Ephesians 1:7-10 (ESV)

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, **8** which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight **9** making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ **10** as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Quote by W.B. Hinson

"I remember a year ago when a doctor told me, *'You have an illness from which you won't recover.'* I walked out to where I live 5 miles from Portland, Oregon, and I looked across at that mountain that I love. I looked at the river in which I rejoice, and I looked at the stately trees that are always God's own poetry to my soul. Then in the evening I looked up into the great sky where God was lighting His lamps, and I said, *'I may not see you many more times, but Mountain, I shall be alive when you are gone; and River, I shall be alive when you cease running toward the sea; and Stars, I shall be alive when you have fallen from your sockets in the great down pulling of the material universe!'*"

Quote by St. Ignatius

"Realize that illness and other temporal setbacks often come to us from the hand of God our Lord, and are sent to help us know ourselves better, to free ourselves of the love of created things, and to reflect on the brevity of this life and, thus, to prepare ourselves for the life which is without end."

Quote by Billy Graham

"What is the greatest surprise you have found about life?" a university student asked me several years ago. "The brevity of it," I replied without hesitation. ... Time moves so quickly, and no matter who we are or what we have done, the time will come when our lives will be over. As Jesus said, "As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4).

Quote by Phillip Brooks

"Forgive, forget. Bear with the faults of others as you would have them bear with yours. Be patient and understanding. Life is too short to be vengeful or malicious."

Quote by Edmund Vance Cooke

"Death comes with a crawl, or comes with a pounce, and whether he's slow or spry, it isn't the fact that you're dead that counts, but only how did you die."

- Edmund Vance Cooke, *The Lutheran Observer, Young Men's Column*, March 18, 1904.

Quote by Benjamin Franklin

"You may delay, but time will not."

What Happens When We Die? - From the Westminster Confession

"The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption: but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledges none."

- *The Westminster Confession*, (Chapter XXXII), 1646.

Hard to Believe: Wallet Returned After 63 Years

Memories flood back for man, 78, after discovery behind gym bleachers

AP News, June 30, 2009

BAKER CITY, Ore. - Bill Fulton doesn't remember losing his wallet, but its return helped him remember the past. The leather stayed smooth and the cowboy design unblemished. The zipper moved with ease. And when he looked inside, the contents brought back memories from 1946, when he apparently dropped the wallet behind the balcony bleachers in the Baker Middle School gym.

Fulton's Social Security card and bicycle license, bearing the address where he lived during his teenage years, were positioned in their respective compartments, apparently untouched since the year after World War II ended.

"After that long, my gosh, it stayed in good shape," Fulton told the Baker City Herald. "It's hard to believe."

Worker Nathan Osborne found the wallet — along with old homework, lost library books and a 1964 talent show program — while removing the bleachers for renovations on June 17. It was brought to Fulton's door the following day by Melanie Trindle, the Baker Middle School secretary.

"He was pretty much amazed," Trindle said. "He just kept saying, 'Thank you. Thank you so much.'"

Middle School Principal Mindi Vaughan said the brown pine bleachers were connected to the gym balcony's brick wall and had remained in the same place since the school, known as the Helen M. Stack Building, opened in 1936.

Fulton, 78, said he probably lost the wallet while cheering for the Baker High basketball team with a group of friends. Though a high school team, the Bulldogs played at the middle school gym back then.

Fulton said he returned to the gym in the 1960s to watch a basketball game. It's likely he was within a dozen or so feet from his old billfold that night. Both of his children attended the school, so they also must have come near it.

Fulton said the bicycle ID was needed because he delivered medicine for Rodamar Drug. He was surprised, however, that his student ID wasn't inside. He said he always kept it there.

But rather than focus on what was inside the wallet, Fulton said the recovery has led him to reflect on his life — one that took him to the Korean War and Berlin before a return to Baker City. He worked at Ellingson Lumber Company for 30 years, from March 1964 to April 1994.

Since his retirement, Fulton has enjoyed spending time with his 11-year-old black lab, Smokey. The two often hike the nearby mountains.

Trindle's knock on the door, wallet in hand, induced a slight ripple in his life, prompting him to consider times he hadn't thought about in many years. Fulton said he's "covered a lot of country" since 1946.

"Where did all the time go?" Fulton said with a deep sigh. "It's hard to believe that the times have gone so fast."