

IF YOU HAD BUT ONE WEEK TO LIVE

Man's days on earth are limited. There will be a time in all our lives when the title of this article will apply. We do not know when that time will be and since we do not know, every week ought to be lived as if it were the last.

Bible Study

If you had but one week to live, how much time would you spend in the study of the Bible? Would you live the last week you had on earth and not open the Bible? Is it not true that if we had but one week to live that a great part of that time would be spent in reading the Bible? Even if we had many other things that we wanted to do, we would not neglect the study of the Bible. Is this not proof that we know that we are not prepared to die when we let other things keep us from studying the Bible? If you would not neglect the study of the Bible if you had but one week to live, must you not study it every week you live to be ready to die? If this is true, does it not follow that many of us are not ready to die?

Attendance

If you had but one week to live and were able to go to the services of the church, how many would you attend? Would you sleep late and miss the Bible study? Would you miss the worship services if company came? Would you come on Sunday morning and fail to attend Sunday night? Would you attend the Bible study on Wednesday night or would you stay home and watch television? Would you go fishing Wednesday afternoon and not get back in time or the class? If you knew you just had one more opportunity to attend all the services of the church, would you not make a special effort to do so? Really and truly, do you think you would be ready to die having attended only one service the last week you lived? Should we not decide now that we ought to live every week this way or we will not be ready to die?

Liberality

If you had but one week to live, how liberal would you be toward the church? Would you spend the money you earn for all the things you wanted, and then if you had any left over, give that to the Lord? Knowing that you were soon to face death and that the only one that could bear you safely over the tide was the Lord, would not your heart be so full of gratitude to Him that you would give bountifully? If you had made \$100.00 the last week you had to live and this was your last Sunday to contribute to the cause of the Lord, how much of that \$100.00 would you give? Would you be satisfied to give \$.25, \$1.00, or \$5.00? If you knew you were making your last contribution, would not \$10.00 look rather small? My brother, if you would increase your contribution if you only had one week to live, don't you think you had better increase it now and give every week like you would if you had but one week, or else you would not be ready to die?

Neglect

If you had but one week to live and there came a call for something to be done in the church that you could do, would you say, "I don't have time. Get someone else?" Who would want to face death neglecting his duty? I am sure none of us would want to, but some of us will unless we change our ways.

Puffed Up

If you had but one week to live, would you hold a grudge against someone? If you had but one week to live, would you go around pouting because you thought someone had not treated you right? Would you want to die with your lips stuck out and a frown on your face? You know if you had but one week to live, you would forget such things. Does this not impress upon you the sober truth that you ought to forget them now, for surely your life is not what you KNOW it ought to be if you are puffed up and pouting.

Listen

If you had but one week to live, what would you want the preacher to preach? Would you want him to stand before you knowing that there were things in your life that would damn your soul and keep silent about it? Would you get angry if he touched on things that you were doing that were wrong? If he did mention something that came home to you,

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

SECOND MILE CHRISTIANITY

Text: _____

I. Go the Second Mile in _____

Notes:

II. Go the Second Mile in _____

Notes:

III. Go the Second Mile in _____

Notes:

REMEMBER AND OBEY

Text: _____

I. The _____ for _____

Notes:

II. The _____ of _____

Notes:

III. The _____ of _____

Notes:

PREACHER ON THE LOOSE

The preacher was wired for sound with a lapel mike, and as he preached, he moved briskly about the platform, jerking the mike cord as he went. Then he moved to one side, getting wound up in the cord and nearly tripping before jerking it again. After several circles and jerks, a little girl in the third pew leaned toward her mother and whispered, "If he gets loose, will he hurt us?"

would you pass it off by simply ignoring what he said? Would you sleep while he talked of matters of life and death? Some day you will listen to your last sermon and as we do not know which will be the last, do you not think that it would be wise to listen to every sermon as if it were the last?

If we wait until we have but one week to live, we might not be able to make up for all our wasted time, so let us work and live as if every week were the last.

-Franklin Camp

THE BEST GIFT

A man came home from work late again, tired and irritated, to find his five-year-old son waiting for him at the door. "Daddy, may I ask you a question?"

"Yeah, sure. What is it?" replied the father.

"Daddy, how much money do you make an hour?"

"That's none of your business! What makes you ask such a thing?" the father said angrily.

"I just wanted to know. Please tell me. How much do you make an hour?" pleaded the little boy.

"If you must know, I make \$20 an hour."

Looking up, the boy said, "Daddy, may I borrow \$9 please?"

The father was furious. "If the only reason you wanted to know how much money I make is just so you can borrow some, then you march yourself straight to your room and go to bed. Think about why you're so selfish. I work long, hard hours every day, and don't have time for such childish games."

The boy quietly went to his room and shut the door. The father sat down and got madder about his son's questioning. How dare he ask such questions only to get some money! After an hour, he calmed down and started to think he might have been too hard on his son. Maybe there was something he really needed to buy with that \$9. He didn't ask for money often.

The father went to his son's room and opened the door. "Are you asleep, son?" he asked.

"No, daddy, I'm awake," replied the boy.

"I've been thinking. Maybe I was too hard on you earlier," said the father. It's been a long day, and took my aggravations out on you. Here's the \$9 you asked for."

The boy sat straight, beaming. "Oh, thank you, Daddy!" he said. Then, reaching under his pillow, he pulled out some crumpled bills. He counted the money and then looked up at his father.

"Why did you want more money if you already had some?" the father asked.

"Because I didn't have enough, but now I do," the little boy replied. "Daddy, I have \$20 now! Can I buy an hour of your time?"

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "The only gift is a portion of thyself."

THE BOOK OF PROPHETIC APPEAL

Zechariah the prophet wrote and worked as a contemporary of Haggai. However, between the two is realized two very distinct approaches to their similar mission. Haggai, in encouraging the people to continue work on the temple previously abandoned, directly and explicitly told the people God was not pleased with their refusal to rebuild His house and that they needed to redirect their priorities lest they feel His wrath once more. Zechariah, though trying to reveal the same point, took a more indirect approach by relating visions to the people to assure them of the love and care of God, whereby they might overcome their indifference and finish what they had started. Though they each took a different approach success was realized and the temple was completed. However, Zechariah's teaching extended past just the need for the people to finish building the temple and touched on the future glory that temple would receive through the Messiah who would work in and around it in order to fulfill His purpose of salvation unto all man. It is those two sections into which the book of Zechariah is divided: (1) the need for the temple's completion (1:1-8:23), and (2) Judah's future glory and their salvation through the Messiah (9:1-14:21).

In the first section in which the temple's completion is stressed, Zechariah provides a series of eight visions to encourage the people to rise up and build once more. Among other reasons, the people had forsaken work on the temple possibly because they were afraid that further judgment would come upon them and it would once more be destroyed, thus they did not see any purpose in even starting it. However, in these visions God proves to them His close proximity if only they would once more serve Him. These eight visions are labeled: (1) the rider on the red horse (1:7-17), (2) the four horns and the four carpenters (1:18-21), (3) the man with the measuring line (2:1-13), (4) Joshua, the high priest, appears in filthy garments (3:1-10), (5) the golden candlestick with seven lamps and two olive trees (4:1-14), (6) the flying scroll (5:1-4), (7) the woman sitting in an ephah (5:5-11), and (8) the four chariots and two mountains (6:1-8). Without exception, each of these visions manifests God's protection of His people and the removal of evil from among them. With this reassurance of safety and righteousness, the people would be encouraged that all would be well and their efforts would not be in vain.

In the second section, the future is beheld with wonder and glory. With the temple rebuilt, service to God would once more reign and through the people's continuance would come the One long awaited, the Messiah. The enemies of Israel would be overthrown providing reunification and restoration of the people, and through this kingdom of peace would the Prince of peace be brought forth. It is His presence in the book of Zechariah that is so very prominent. No less than twelve times is Jesus Christ pictured in these writings (Zechariah 3:8; 6:12; 6:13; 9:9; 9:10; 11:12-13; 11:7-14; 12:8-9; 12:10; 13:1; 13:6; 13:7); and it is the continued mentions of Christ that give Zechariah's book a worldwide view. Dunn points out that:

“Zechariah's view is worldwide. The eyes of the Lord ‘run to and fro through the whole earth’ (4:10). ‘Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people’ (2:11). ‘And they that are far off shall come’ (6:15; Ephesians 2:13). Men of every nation will be drawn to Jehovah through the dispersion of the Jews, saying, ‘We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you’ (8:23). ‘...every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts...’ (14:16).”

Therefore like other of the prophets, who mainly focused their portrayal of future events in favor of Israel herself, Zechariah tried to help the people envision their work being a contribution to the greater good of all the world. Their being a part of something larger than themselves would aid them in finally finishing the temple in a four year period thereby returning to God's service in its entirety once more.

It is important, too, for the children of God today, adopted into God's family by the blood of Christ, to realize that the cause of Christianity is one far greater than one's self. The benefits of it not only apply to the individual, but to the world. Imagine how vastly different this world would be if not for Christianity. There would be no sense of morality, charitability, hospitality, and especially there would be no salvation. But by contributing one's life to the cause of Christ that life is also being contributed not just to the kingdom of God, but the preservation of decent society. If a people as stubborn and selfish as ancient Israel could unite under God for the greater good of the world to come, surely through the power of the word of God man today can unite in Christ for the greater good. If not, who knows what tomorrow might hold.

-Andy Brewer