"If I Had One Month Left to Live"

(A New Year's Message)

(2 Kings 20:1-2 and Selected Scripture)

12-29-2024

2 Kings 20:1-2 - *"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD,* ***Set thine house in order****; for thou shalt die, and not live.* ***Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD****…"*

Why do some get serious at the 11th hour of their life?

1) There's a realization of FINALITY
   (This is it! I will not pass this way again)
2) There's a sense of URGENCY
   (Whatever I'm going to do, I'd better do it now!)
3) There's an awareness of PRIORITY
   (What matters most, must get done first!)

What would you do if you had one month left to live?

I. I would make sure I was rightly related to God
Example: The Thief on the Cross (Luke 24:39-43)

II. I would seek God's wisdom and help
Example: James 1:5

III. I would make sure my conscience was clean regarding others
Example: The Apostle Paul (Acts 24:16)

A. I would seek to correct all wrongs committed against others

B. I would seek to finish unfinished ministry for others

IV. I would make evangelism the preoccupation of my life
Example: The Last words of Jesus prior to his ascension (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8)

V. I would admonish my family and friends to cling to Christ
Example: Barnabas - Acts 11:23

VI. I would make sure that my family was taken care of
Example: Jesus seeing that Mary was provided for and taken care of (John 19:27)

VII. I would use every last heart-beat to teach humility & servitude to those open to listen
Example: Jesus washing the disciple's feet (John 13:3-5)

There are no regrets in a life lived for God.
* If I would do these things then, shouldn't I do these things now?

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Hezekiah sought the Lord for mercy!

--Hezekiah was one of the <u>good</u> kings of Judah.

--He began his reign at 25 and reigned for 29 years in Jerusalem (2 Ki. 18:2)

--READ 2 Ki. 18:3-7 - "And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. . ."

--Military attacks and threats would no doubt take a toll on Hezekiah (perhaps leading to great stress).

To appease Sennacherib, the King of Assyria, Hezekiah stripped from the Temple 11 tons of silver and one ton of gold as tribute money. This did not satisfy Sennacherib, so he sent his Rabshekah (or "commander") to Jerusalem to intimidate the people and threaten the city with destruction.

However, Sennacherib's plans and threats came to nothing, as God answered Hezekiah's prayer (2 Ki. 19:14-19). The Messenger of Yahweh (19:35) destroyed Sennacherib's army, and he himself was killed by his two sons.

Sometime after this, King Hezekiah became ill. The illness manifested itself with an incurable tumor ("boil").

What did Hezekiah do on the news of his impending death? He prayed and made his appeal to God.

Note: The fact that Hezekiah was told (by God) that he would die, yet God chose to lengthen his life says this:

1) God hears the prayer of a desperate heart
2) God can choose to alter His decision in response to repentance and faith

None of us know the time of our departure, but we are just a breath or heart beat from it!
"The distance between glorified spirits in heaven and militant saints on earth seems great; but it is not so. We are not far from home—a moment will bring us there."

Why do some get serious at the 11th hour of their life?

1) There's a realization of FINALITY
(This is it! I will not pass this way again)
Hebrews 9:27
And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:
There is NO Video Game or PC Game Restart or "Respawn" button to life;
Once lived, no second chance; No reincarnation.

2) There's a sense of URGENCY
(Whatever I'm going to do, I'd better do it now!)
Pride & Procrastination are perhaps the two greatest deceivers

3) There's an awareness of PRIORITY
(What matters most, must get done first!)

Ask God to reveal to you what your Priorities should be and then live for what really matters. God/Family/Others

What would you do if you had one month left to live?

When you think of Bible people on their death bed, what did they get done? What were their last words? The Patriarchs blessed their children (Ex: Jacob with Joseph)

In preparation for death . . .

--Abraham purchased his burial plot of land for himself and his wife (Gen. 25:10).
--Jacob under Divine leading blessed his sons (Gen. 49:28)
--Joseph encouraged his family to trust God, who would bring Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land (Gen. 50:24).

What would I do if I had one month left to live?

I. I would make sure I was <u>rightly related to God</u>

Example: The Thief on the Cross (Luke 24:39-43)

Just moments before his death, he went from unbelief to faith in Christ. "Remember me when you enter your kingdom," he said. And the Lord said, "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

Last-minute conversions are possible but not always probable. Most people die suddenly and in an unexpected manner.
Today if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts (Heb. 3:7-8, 14; 4:7)
Trust Him now! (2 Cor. 6:2 – Now is the day of salvation)

When you are about to pass into eternity, it does not matter how much money you have in the bank ("For what shall a man profit. . . ." Mk. 8:36). "Riches profit not in the day of wrath" (Prov. 11:4).

As a believer, I would examine my heart to see if there be any wicked way in me. Is there any unconfessed sin? Any sin of omission?

II. I would seek God's <u>wisdom and help</u>

Example:

James 1:5 - If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Perhaps the greatest of all trials is to be told by a doctor: "You have just six months to live." At the pinnacle of this greatest of tests, we would do well to beseech God for wisdom. One would need to know what to do, how to proceed, how to plan, how to prepare for the inevitable.

So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom. *Psalms 90:12*

III. I would make sure my conscience was <u>clean regarding others</u>

Example: The Apostle Paul (Acts 24:16)

When giving his defense before Governor Felix, the Apostle Paul said: *Acts 24:16 - And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*

"A clean conscience makes for a soft pillow" (Spurgeon).

A. I would seek to correct all <u>wrongs committed</u> against others

Matthew 5:23-24 - Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Being right with others matters more to God than any offering we could give to the Lord.

Is there anyone I have sinned against? Is there anyone I wrongfully slandered? Have I taken anything that didn't belong to me? Was there any inappropriate act of sexual contact that I need to be honest about? Have I honored my authorities? My parents? Do I owe an apology to anyone for anything?

B. I would seek to finish <u>unfinished ministry</u> for others

Acts 20:26-27 - Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

I'd be especially conscientious toward my ministry to my family (my spouse, children etc)

Perhaps I'd contact everyone I knew, to share a last minute greeting, give them an admonition, say a word of encouragement, and wish them God's blessings.

I think I would tell people how much I appreciate them more. I'd say the words "I love you" more. I'd hug my spouse, kids, and grandkids more.

IV. I would make <u>evangelism</u> the preoccupation of my life

Example: The Last words of Jesus prior to his ascension

Matthew 28:18-20 - And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mk 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Acts 1:8 - But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Proverbs 11:30 - The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

Daniel 12:3 - And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

V. I would admonish my family and friends to <u>cling to Christ</u>

Example: Barnabas - Acts 11:23

Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.
Acts 11:23

VI. I would make sure that my <u>family was taken care of</u>

Example: Jesus seeing that Mary was provided for and taken care of

John 19:27 - Then saith he to the disciple (John), Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

'Behold thy son (John) . . . behold thy mother (Mary)" –

Note: Jesus is not deifying or venerating Mary or attributing to her a position of "mother" of the church or giving her any power over John by this statement (as Roman Catholicism teaches), but rather is entrusting her into John's care so that he might meet her needs by opening his home and caring for her as a son would care for his mother.

Widows are to be cared for (Acts 6:1-2; I Tim 5:3-10)

The statement at the end of verse 27 proves that this is the intended meaning, as it explains that John would take Mary to his home and care for her as his mother.

"The dying Savior thinks of the comfort of His mother" (Robertson, p. 303).

VII. I would use every last heart-beat to <u>teach humility & servitude</u> to those open to listen

Example: Jesus washing the disciple's feet

John 13:3-5 - Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

He demonstrated a <u>HUMBLE SERVITUDE</u> (v.3-5)

v. 3
"All things into His hands" – He is the Creator, owner, and controller of all things in the universe!

"By Him all things consist (hold together)" – (Col. 1:17).

"All power (authority) is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Mt. 28:18)

The point of verse 3 is this: Jesus knew His greatness (he was fully aware of who He was, what He possessed, and where He came from) and yet He still humbly served His disciples.

It is one thing for someone of low stature, low "caste," low position to serve someone by washing their feet. But for the "Lord and Master" (v. 14) to do this is the ultimate demonstration of humility and selfless service. How often do we see someone of great wealth or position performing a humble task for some no-name individual?

The duty of the <u>lowest</u> domestic slave was to wash the feet of visitors.

v. 4
"He ariseth from supper" – Normally we are tempted to rest after a big meal, but Jesus gets up and washes 12 men's feet

"Laid aside His garments" – In order to have freedom of movement, Jesus humble removes His royal outer garments (His tunic) and wraps a towel around His waist to get to work on the disciples' behalf.

Sometimes we, too, just take off our suit coats and roll up our sleeves to do something on behalf of someone else.

"Girded Himself" – Perhaps this humbling foot-washing was recalled by Peter "when in 1 Peter 5:5 he exhorts all to 'gird yourselves with humility'." (Robertson, p. 237).

v. 5
The action of washing feet required several humiliating features:

1) Jesus got on His hands and knees
2) Jesus would scrub one of the dirtiest and stinkiest parts of their body
3) Jesus would pour water onto their feet, then rub the feet and in between the toes before drying them with His towel

Conclusion:

In reality, we have only truly lived the number of years we have lived for God.

> "I remember a man's tombstone on which was inscribed "Here lies one who died a child three years old at the age of eighty." You are only as old as the number of years you have lived unto God. "

There are no regrets in a life lived for God.

> "Never, never did we know a Christian who repented of his Christianity. We have seen Christians so sick, that we wondered that they lived—so poor, that we wondered
> at their misery; we have seen them so full of doubts, that we pitied their unbelief; but
> we never heard them say, even then, "I regret that I gave myself to Christ." No; with
> the dying clasp, when heart and flesh were failing, we have seen them hug this treasure to their breast, and press it to their heart, still feeling that this was their life, their joy, their all. "

At the end of life's race, I want to be able to say with Paul: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" - 2 Timothy 4:7

God does not inform us as to when we are going to die, so that we might live by faith and yield to Him without any ulterior motives.

Recap:

What would you do if you had one month left to live?

- I would make sure I was <u>rightly related to God</u>
- I would seek God's <u>wisdom and help</u>
- I would make sure my conscience was <u>clean regarding others</u>
- I would seek to correct all <u>wrongs committed</u> against others
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- I would make <u>evangelism</u> the preoccupation of my life
- I would admonish my family and friends to <u>cling to Christ</u>
- I would make sure that my <u>family was taken care of</u>
- I would use every last heart-beat to <u>teach humility & servitude</u> to those open to listen

* If I would do these things then, shouldn't I do these things now?

The tragedy of a wasted life:

John Greenleaf Whittier wrote the well-known lines, "For all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: *It might have been!*" (MacArthur, Matthew p. 96)

Whatever you need to BE, <u>BECOME it NOW</u>!
Philippians 3:13-14
Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Whatever you need to DO, <u>ACCOMPLISH it NOW</u>!
Ephesians 5:15-16
See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Whoever you need to REACH for Christ, <u>TELL them NOW</u>!
1Co 9:16 - For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

"Brethren, see poor sinners round you slumbering on the brink of woe;
Death is coming, hell is moving, can you bear to let them go?
See our fathers and our mothers, and our children sinking down;
Brethren, pray and holy manna will be showered all around."
Brethren, We Have Met To Worship (Holy Manna)
Words: George Atkins, 1819.