



DEVOTIONAL

The Day After Tomorrow
5 - 10 July 2010

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Monday 5 July 2010

A glimmer of what lies ahead

Scripture readings:

Matthew 25 vs 1-13

James 4 vs 14-17

As human beings we tend to focus on our immediate needs. We are sometimes held in bondage by our past or gripped by fear of the future, but we seldom think further than this life. Now and then we are jolted by an unexpected event or tragedy and reminded of our mortality – of the life that begins when this one ends – but most of the time, unless we are consciously trying to do so, we are not particularly focused the eternal. In reality though, tomorrow is not guaranteed for any of us and the moment when this life intersects with eternity is really just a heartbeat away at any given time.

The parable in Matthew 25 is one that reminds us that we need to be ready and prepared at all times for Christ's return and for the beginning of our new lives with Him. For the Christian, this event is one that should not bring with it a sense of fear because we know that our eternal destiny is resting securely in the nail pierced hands of our Saviour. While our final destination may not be source of concern, the reality of heaven – of eternity, judgement and accountability for what we have done with our lives on this earth – should lead us to pause and ask: Am I living with eternity in mind? If I knew that the sun were setting on this life and were rising on the next right now, what would I regret? What would I wish I had an opportunity to change or do differently?

May you have the courage and wisdom today – now, in this moment – to make that change and to stand prepared for the beginning of forever.

Tuesday 6 July 2010

Eternal Significance

Scripture readings:

Psalm 39 vs 4-7

Romans 14 vs 11-14

Matthew 12 vs 35-37

1 Corinthians 3 vs 10-15

Luke 12 vs 2-3

On the one hand, our lives are nothing more than a momentary existence; a breath, or a vapour in the wind. In light of eternity, our few years on this little earth may seem small and insignificant, but on the other hand, the time we have been given here has repercussions, not just in our immediate futures, but in the everlasting Kingdom of God.

The Bible makes it clear that our salvation is determined by our faith in and our relationship with Christ, but faith without works is dead and we will still have to account for what we did with the lives God gave us. One day, we will stand before the judgement seat of God and give account for the words we spoke, the things we did and the things we didn't do. All of our lives have eternal significance and in a sense, this life is just preparation for the next.

What I do today matters. What I say today matters. Who I choose to become today matters... now and forever, because today I am preparing for tomorrow and for eternity.

"When you fully comprehend that there is more to life than just here and now, and you realise that life is just preparation for eternity, you will begin to live differently. You will start living in light of eternity and that will colour how you handle every relationship, task and circumstance. Suddenly many activities, goals, and even problems that seemed so important will appear trivial, petty and unworthy of your attention. The closer you live to God, the smaller everything else appears." – Rick Warren

Wednesday 7 July 2010

A life that matters

Scripture readings:

Galatians 2 vs 20

Philippians 2 vs 11-12

Philippians 3 vs 7-11

If our lives and all the decisions we make today impact eternity, how do we go about making sure we live lives that are truly significant?

True significance starts with the decision to accept and follow Jesus. Our lives ultimately become meaningful when we connect with God, carry out His mission and purposes and become more like Him. Therefore, it is not just about being saved, but about “working out” our salvation with fear and trembling... discovering day by day, as we draw closer to God and come to know Him more intimately what it really means to be saved and to live out that salvation in the world. It is when we stand in awe of Who God is and what He has done in us that we can be moved to action for Him and begin to change the world... and eternity.

Paul grasped the true essence of significance when he wrote in Philippians that he counted all else loss for the sake of knowing Christ. He had managed to find a way to live with an eternal perspective in which his priorities were clearly in order. When our lives are ordered in such a way that we can connect with God and then convey His love and grace to those around us, then we are accomplishing very significant things in the spiritual, no matter how small, menial or ordinary the things we are doing in the physical may seem. As we learn to become less, Christ can become more in us and we will make a more and more significant impact on His Kingdom. When we choose to be crucified with Christ so that we no longer live, but He lives in us, we have found the way to true significance.

Thursday 18 July 2010

Wise and prepared

Scripture readings:

Proverbs 1 vs 7

Ephesians 5 vs 15-17

James 1 vs 5

James 3 vs 13-18

The parable of the 10 virgins is one about wisdom and foolishness in which Jesus is warning His followers that they need to be wise and prepared, rather than foolish and caught off guard.

To be foolish implies that one has been fooled and duped. The virgins who didn't end up getting into the feast were those who had been fooled into complacency and laziness. We are often blinded to what is really important by the busyness and complications of our daily lives. Sometimes we are lulled into a false sense of security about our relationships with God or our current state of affairs and we allow the enemy to blind us to the things that really matter.

True wisdom begins with seeking God and realising that we will never see things clearly or accurately until we see them from His perspective. Wisdom means being aware of the schemes of the enemy to make us blind, comfortable or afraid and it means being proactive in seeking God and in living fully in today, but for eternity. The Scripture assures us that God freely gives wisdom to those who ask for it, so today, may you be encouraged to ask.

Friday 9 July 2010

Oil for your lamp

Scripture readings:

Matthew 25 vs 8

1 John 2 vs 17

Psalms 119 vs 19-20

Revelation 3 vs 16

It is easy to become distracted by the world and all its concerns. We are quick to become apathetic and passive about our faith and our relationships with God. It requires an active, concerted effort to keep our passion for Him alive; otherwise, before we know it, we are like the five foolish virgins who have run out of oil and whose lamps have gone out, leaving us in darkness... far from God.

Like a flame cannot burn unless it has fuel, our love and passion for God cannot survive if we do not feed it. Just as our relationships wither and die when we do not make time for them or spend energy cultivating them, or our bodies atrophy and stop functioning when we do not give them nourishment and exercise, so the love and passion of our spirits flicker and die when we neglect to draw near to God and find refreshing for our souls.

How would you say you are doing in terms of nourishing your spirit? Is your flame of love for God burning brightly or is it in real danger of going out? Are you finding the time and making the effort to ensure that you are fuelling your relationship with God so that your light can burn brightly no matter how deep the darkness or how long the wait?

Saturday 10 July 2010

Fuel consumption

Scripture readings:

Take some time today to do a bit of a spiritual inventory. Prayerfully reflect on the following questions:

1. How would I rate my relationship with God right now on a scale from 1-10? (1 being practically non-existent, 10 being the best I can imagine)
2. How are my passion levels? Would I say I am hot, cold or lukewarm?
3. What has led me to this spiritual place / season?
4. What am I doing to replenish myself spiritually / to ensure I have extra oil to keep my love for God burning?
5. What are the things that really sap my spiritual fuel and deflate me? How can I avoid these things or proactive steps to deal with them?
6. What are the things that fill me up, refresh my soul and grow my relationship with God? How can I do more of these things?
7. What is one thing I can practically do *today* to:
 - a. Draw closer to God?
 - b. Make sure I have an eternal perspective?
 - c. Live an eternally significant life?
 - d. Make sure that I am living wisely?
 - e. Am prepared to meet my Maker?

“It ought to be the business of every day to prepare for our final day.”

– Matthew Henry