

Wisdom Is Better than Gold

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Don't think so much about the end. I mean, God is as concerned with the process as He is the end. And you just think about getting up tomorrow, and it may seem very commonplace to you. It may seem just another day. But it's not. That day is the first day of the rest of your life. That day tomorrow is very important and you ought to have ears wide open. Your mind thinking full steam. Lord, what do You have for me today? What do You want to teach me today? What can I accumulate today? What can I gather today of the wisdom and the knowledge of God? We've got to realize like five times in the book of Proverbs it says that wisdom is better than silver and gold. It's better than the finest gold, better than the choicest silver. We want to know God's economy, right? We want to think with God's economy. Sometimes you can get fooled, right? Here's a nickel. It's bigger than a dime. And you're telling me that a dime is worth more than a nickel? Yeah, that's right. And so we've got to take God at His word. He says wisdom is better than silver and gold. And so, look, if you glean some wisdom tomorrow, you've got something more than silver and gold. The world is chasing it! The world is after all this stuff and all these things and a better car and what have you. But look at God's standard. Look at God's economy.

And so, you know, I'm going the way of all the earth. And when it comes to the end, you know... here I am, Lord. I'm this far in my sanctification. This is how far I've come. By the grace of God, I've come this far. I raise my Ebenezer at last and say thank You... for any progress that I've made in the knowledge of God or in victory over sin, the progress that I've made in sanctification. Thank You. By the grace of God, we are what we are.

And so when we come to the end, you know, you just feel like... Colossians 3:11. Christ is all. You come to the end. And you know, that's really all I've got. That is all I've got is whatever relationship I've got with the Lord Jesus Christ. That is all I've got. He's the only thing I've got. Death is going to strip me of my dear wife. It's going to strip me of my children. Or vice versa. And it's going to strip me of everything I own - I don't really own it. We're just stewards. But everything - my body's going to be stripped away. All that we've got is: Lord, it's just You. It's just You... It's just You and me.

And you wonder... here I am facing eternity. Here we are. Facing eternity. And Lord, do I really love You or not? Do I really love You or not? Or have I been deceived? Do I have reality? I mean, we've just taken the Lord at His word, right? And yet, down deep, yeah, you've taken the Lord at His word and you know the Word of God is self-authenticating. You know there's no book like that book. You know it's the Word of God. You know it's a book from above. You know, it's breathed out by God and you're resting your whole life on what's written right here. You know, in a way, it's kind of scary. You're resting your eternal welfare on this one book. That there is a God there and this is what He's like. This is a manifest of the God Who is there. This is a manifest of the mind of God. This is revelation of the invisible realities. This is a revelation of the spiritual realities. This is what it's going to be like. So you're just taking the Lord at His word and you're ready to be launched out into eternity, and believing that there's going to be no surprises in a way. This Lord that I've served all these years, I know Him. There's nothing new.

It's just going to step through a veil. And perhaps it will be less surprising, less new than we think.

And you know, you just appreciate the emphasis over and over in the New Testament that death is sleep for the Christian. It's described as sleep. What's so bad about sleep? You know, we've gone to sleep many times. I've done it a lot. And so, the Bible wants to tell us that, that this is just like sleep. And so that's okay. And so, like I say, what we have is what we have with the Lord.

And I can remember also, another thing that I thought of was that what I prayed after I found out I had the cancer was: Lord, if You just let me live, if You'd just heal me of this, I'd serve You all the harder. And I felt like that prayer was coming back. It just came back to me dead. Like, you know, like the Lord was saying you don't make deals with Me. You know, look, I gave you 40 years, it was, 40 years to serve Me. Forty years, it was your opportunity. You had plenty of opportunity. A lot of Christians don't have that much. A lot of great men of God, they died before 60. A lot of them died before 30.

So, you know, you don't make deals with God. You better serve Him with all your heart right now by faith, without any pressure. You don't make vows to God when you get in a pinch. You better do it right now. God has set things up so it's in good faith you serve the Lord. You serve Him in good faith. And God has set things up honorably. You either take God at His word and order your life on that basis, or you don't. And so, you just appreciate the Lord all the more the way He sets things up, so, by faith.

And that occurred to me also in Proverbs 2, or Proverbs 1, it says, "Then they will call on Me and I will not answer; they will seek Me, and they will not find Me." And you know, you know, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord...'" I mean, the Bible teaches that most of the church goes will topple off of their pew into hell with a Bible in their hand and a prayer on their lips. Most of the church goes! Don't mention the world, but most of the church goes. Many! Not a few. And so, "Then they will call on Me, and I will not answer." They get in a pinch at the end of their life and they start crying out to God and He says forget it. He doesn't answer them. He won't honor that prayer. He wants men to seek Him by faith when they're not in some kind of a pinch and feel like they're going to die.

You know, I mean, admittedly, there's like the old Puritan said, there is one deathbed repentance recorded in the Bible - the thief on the cross. There is one and only one that we might not presume. But there is one that we might not despair. But I mean, it ought to scare us. It ought to make us tremble. We ought to feel it for the lost folks around us that their prayers are going to be turned down in the end.

And another thing that I thought of is John 8:24. Three times the Lord (8:24 in John), three times the Lord talks about those who die in their sins. "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." And I mean, that phrase: you'll die in your sins - I've heard of people dying in their car, dying in their bed, dying in their house, dying in the water, dying in a manure pit, dying in a grain bin, but none of that compares to dying in your sins. As I said earlier, if we have come to Christ and we have trusted that He died to pay our sin debt and our debt guilt is not on us, and we're not going to die in our sins, how blessed we are! "Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven." "How blessed is the man whose iniquities are covered." How blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes righteousness without works.

Another verse that the Lord quickened to me is John 17:24. "Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me be with Me where I am that they may behold My glory..." Now you think of that, fellow believer. That the Lord Jesus, He has this desire. You know, you better not desire that you hang around on earth too much. It might be contrary to the Lord's desire. Because He says I desire that those whom You've given Me be with Me where I am.

I remember one time, Terri and I were visiting our parents in the wintertime down in South Texas. And they didn't have room in their trailer house, so we had to go stay in a nearby motel. And they said why don't you just leave the kids to stay with us? They can sleep here on the floor. There we were in the motel and you know, we just kind of felt... we kind of missed the kids. We wanted them with us. And you think of that with the Lord Jesus. "I desire that those whom You've given Me be with Me where I am." How can that be that the Lord would have that kind of a loving desire for us? And would have such an unselfish desire "that they may behold My glory"? We have no idea what it's going to be, this revelation that is coming when we're going to see the glory of the Lord manifested. It is going to be so great. I mean, the half's not been told like Bathsheba said. And it's going to be so great, the show, the revelation, the power, the glory of the Lord is going to be so great that that's going to be one of the penalties put upon the lost man. They shall pay the penalty being banished away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. They're going to miss the show if you pardon the expression.

And then another thought is Acts 20:24. Paul says, "...that I may finish my course with joy." That I may finish my course with joy. Each one of us, we want to finish our course with joy. No grumbling, no murmuring, no griping, no "what if?" and "if I'd only..." There is a way to come to the end where you can face eternity with a clear conscience. You can face eternity with good confidence. Like Spurgeon says, the way to make your deathbed pillow soft is to fill your life with hard work, and not only hard work at work, at your vocation, but hard work in the pursuit of God. Taking pains with these things. Sacrificing to get to the meeting. Sacrificing your time to pick up the Bible and read it. Sacrificing your sleep. Yes, it takes work to pursue God. And so, you do that, you'll be able to come to the end just glad you did. That I may finish my course with joy. We want to go down with a shout. We want to go up with a shout saying thank You, Lord, thank You! We're just glad to have served the Lord of glory. That I may finish my course with joy. Not grief, not regrets, not grievances, not apologies. Not: I need to make this right, that right, call somebody in that I can make things right with him, foot shuffling at the last moment. We don't have to have that. To escape it, keep things right day by day with God and man, with brother and sister.

Another thought that occurred to me too is you know, you get the feeling in Hebrews 12, it says we're surrounded with such a great cloud of witnesses. Hebrews 12:1. Surrounded with this cloud of witnesses. You know, like cheerleaders up there. Cheerleaders on the side. Here we are in the arena of faith, right? In the arena of faith. Yeah, like a battlefield. And I mean, I just have felt it so deeply. What a privilege we have, brother and sister, what a privilege we have to be servants of the Lord, to be called by God to do His work, His will, His way. What a privilege is ours! What a privilege to sing these songs right here like we did tonight in the enemy's camp! I mean, it's going to be wonderful to sing these songs in Heaven, but I mean, there's something so special, such a privilege we've got to sing these songs right here in the enemy's camp by faith. I mean, it must make the devil mad that there's all this affliction here below and all this

difficulty, all this tribulation, "suffer affliction with the people of God," You know, these phrases, yeah. But nevertheless, here the devil sees us boasting in Christ, singing the songs of God in spite of it, in spite of all the stuff he puts on us, in spite of all his fiery darts, here we are pressing on, pressing through, going on with God and singing His praises.