

To Live and Love Today

Dan Nelson – pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

What is the most important thing you have to do today? As you peruse your schedule of today's appointments and "to do list", what are the most absolutely crucial "must do's"? We live in a fast paced world that seems to move at warp speed. With technological advances, efficiencies, and "progress" surrounding seemingly every moment of our lives, people are finding themselves moving at lightning speed. And the demands that are placed upon us seem to be almost endless. With all of our modern conveniences that are purported to enhance our lives, why is it that so many people are missing out on living?

I was listening to a song on the radio about a man that was diagnosed with a terminal stage of cancer and only given a short time to live. Upon realizing that his time remaining in this life is quite short, he began to evaluate his activities. He decided to make every moment count. Instead of doing the same things that he routinely filled his day with, he would now focus his energies on things that mattered. His relationships would be enhanced because he would value each person to his fullest ability, be more patient if problems arise, express his love without holding back, and appreciate the blessings in his life now, and not wait until some future time that may never come. His revised examination and assessment of life and living was summed up in the question "Why did I wait to live until it was time to die?" and isn't that what so many of us do?

The fact is that many people do not get that opportunity of forewarning regarding the remaining time expectancy to live this life. For most of us, we do not know when we will die. But a reasonable mind would say that one thing is certain; we all have our day. The Bible says, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb 9:27). It's been said that the death statistics are quite impressive, everyone we know who was born will also someday die. Jesus told a story about a man who relied on the wrong things. He counted on the fact that his retirement account that he had built up would be secure and that he would have plenty of time remaining to enjoy it. Jesus said he was foolish because he lived according to a false assumption for that day was to be his last. The scriptures teach that this life is so deceptively short; it is like a mist or a fog that soon disappears in relation to eternity. The Bible compares this life to a beautiful flower that doesn't last but quickly fades away.

Now you might be thinking that, with all this talk about death, this article is a bit gloomy, but it's not meant to be. I sure hope you don't get thrown into a depression after reading this. If so, you will have missed the point. My intention is to remind you of an important truth, one that we are naïve when we avoid. With a

reminder of the shortness of life comes a freshness of reason to live today. Jesus taught us to live "today" to its fullest, to love today with all that God has given us because "tomorrow is promised to no man".

So what do you have to do today that is important? Look again at your schedule. Have you made time for the people that you love? Make an appointment in your own calendar to set aside time for them. Inherent in this realigned priority is a modification of scheduled tasks; television viewing may be replaced with a bit more conversation. Necessary errands might be done together with people that you love. You might find yourself picking up the phone and reaching out to someone. One might begin to notice the beauty around them and even "stop to smell the flowers". I mean that literally, go ahead and smell a flower. Consider that you have been warned; tomorrow is not promised to you, if you get another day, that too is a gift. But whatever comes tomorrow, let's live and love today. We all might find hugs and kisses to be sweeter and more frequent. Kindness and self-control are in ample supply. And our newfound gratitude for the blessings in our lives fills our worship of God and our prayer. And then we realize, wow, we are living the abundant life today! Now put this paper down right now and go tell someone that you love them!

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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Sunday Worship:

9:00 & 10:30am
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

Mid-Week Study:

7:00pm Thursday
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View