

Make the Most of Life – Come Sailing

Introduction

We only have one life to live! Accordingly it's important that we make the most of it! More importantly however, is how we live this one life that God has given us! Ecclesiastes chapter 12 is an important motivator for making the most of life.

*Honor and enjoy your Creator while you're still young,
Before the years take their toll and your vigor wanes,
Before your vision dims and the world blurs
And the winter years keep you close to the fire.*

³⁻⁵ *In old age, your body no longer serves you so well.*

Muscles slacken, grip weakens, joints stiffen.

The shades are pulled down on the world.

You can't come and go at will. Things grind to a halt.

The hum of the household fades away.

You are wakened now by bird-song.

Hikes to the mountains are a thing of the past.

Even a stroll down the road has its terrors.

Your hair turns apple-blossom white,

Adorning a fragile and impotent matchstick body.

Yes, you're well on your way to eternal rest,

While your friends make plans for your funeral.

⁶⁻⁷ *Life, lovely while it lasts, is soon over.*

Life as we know it, precious and beautiful, ends.

The body is put back in the same ground it came from.

The spirit returns to God, who first breathed it.

⁸ *It's all smoke, nothing but smoke.*

The Quester says that everything's smoke.

The Final Word

⁹⁻¹⁰ *Besides being wise himself, the Quester also taught others knowledge. He weighed, examined, and arranged many proverbs. The Quester did his best to find the right words and write the plain truth.*

¹¹ ***The words of the wise prod us to live well.***

They're like nails hammered home, holding life together.

They are given by God, the one Shepherd.

¹²⁻¹³ *But regarding anything beyond this, dear friend, go easy. There's no end to the publishing of books, and constant study wears you out so you're no good for anything else. **The last and final word is this: Fear God. Do what he tells you.***

¹⁴ *And that's it. Eventually God will bring everything that we do out into the open and **judge it according to its hidden intent, whether it's good or evil.***

Sobering is it not? Don't worry this talk I trust will get a lot more inspirational!

Body

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God has not told or expected man to understand or even comprehend the complexities, mysteries or futility of life, but he has instructed man to:

- **Persevere through the difficulties of life:**

James 1:2 – 4 ² *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

James 1:12 ¹² *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*

- **Enjoy life as His gift:**

Ecc 5:18 – 20 ¹⁸ *Then I realised that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labour under the sun during the few days of life God has given him— for this is his lot.*

¹⁹ *Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work— this is a gift of God.*

²⁰ *He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.*

- **Make the most of every opportunity:**

Ecc 9:12 *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.*

- **Live life in reverence towards God obeying His commands:**

Ecc 12:13 *Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*

James 1:22 - 25 ²² *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³*

Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it— he will be blessed in what he does.

- **Live life with an awareness of the fact that he will face a future judgement:**

Ecc 12:14 *For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.*

James 1:26 – 27 ²⁶ *If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.*

By remembering these five simple points we will be able to keep a proper attitude towards life and God. Fully appreciating and enjoying the life He gives.

As a church we have been **talking about going sailing again!** This stirs a sense of adventure in me, how about you?

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Is your life exciting? What I mean by exciting is this: coupled with the challenges and responsibilities of life that you have at work, home and the local church, essentially all your relationships, responsibilities, hobbies, interests and job – what you are about! Is it, challenging, fulfilling, adding value, extending the kingdom of God and positively influencing those around you?

If not – adjustments are required. **You only have one life to live, SO live it well, live it to the full - make it count.**

So then, how do you get from “Here” – present reality to “There” – future objective?

In the life of a business, organisation or church it is the responsibility of the leaders, to get people from “Here” to “There”, by clearly holding up and reminding the staff or congregation of a vision set before them! However EACH of us has the responsibility to navigate and chose the paths of OUR OWN lives. **Accordingly we all lead, even if it only ourselves.** It’s from this perspective that I am teaching this morning – LEADING OURSELVES from “Here” to “There”.

A few comments then on how you start to “Go Sailing” and get from “Here” to “There” or in other words how you can take yourself from **where you are to where you think you should be!**

1. In every set of circumstances you always have a choice:

- To accept the status quo and stay “Here”; or
- Bring life and change the present in the hope of a better future and move to “There”.

Quite frankly to accept the status quo is a cop out – I believe there is always more in God! Whilst “Here” may be familiar and even safe, if:

- “Here” is not an adventure,
- “Here” is not expansive,
- “Here” lacks challenge ,
- “Here” is not fulfilling,
- “Here” is not adding value,
- “Here” is not extending the Kingdom of God,
- “Here” is not positively influencing the lives of others,

then it’s like living in the pig sty when you could be occupying the mansion! Simply put you cannot and must not accept the status quo and stay “Here”!

Are you ready to set sail leave the safety of the port and embrace the fuller more meaningful future that God has in store for you?

If so it starts and ends with intimacy with God!

2. Spend quality time with the one who holds the future and head his voice!

Jesus said “My people hear my voice and heed it!” For this reason every one of you (myself included) should be hungry and thirsty to hear God’s voice as:

- You read His word;

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- You wait on and even expect the prompting and guiding of the Holy Spirit.

You need to still the other voices that shout for your attention and be sensitive to receiving the word of God, or as Bill Hybel's puts it the whispers of God!

Without hearing from God you will battle to move from "Here" to "There" in straight lines.

Will you do what you need to do to hear from God and head His voice? If so you are ready to go sailing!

Every time you hear the whispers from God and obey, your life will be transformed from one level of Glory to another.

Read prophetic encouragement re: the telescope!

Accordingly the only advice I can give you is this. If you want to be more visionary and trust God for the future He has in store for you then you need to spend more time with Him and in His word. From this place he will show you the next step.

3. Overcome your fears, leave the pig sty of the safe and familiar - take a step of faith set sail and leave port.

How do you do this?

Firstly you need to realise that if **failure isn't an option** then neither is success! The only people who haven't failed are those who haven't tried! Practice makes perfect, practise increases your batting average. **Turn setbacks into celebrations and press on!**

Secondly, **you leave port!** By sowing the seeds received in the whispers from God, sow many seeds as He leads!

Thirdly, **turning back is not an option!**

Once you leave the safety of the port "Here" the next destination is "There". The journey takes time – who knows days, months years? Keep the faith!

At the beginning of the journey there is the excitement of having left the port "Here"!

Towards the end of the journey the excitement returns as the destination "There" comes clearly into sight!

However, on the journey from "Here" To "There" there is a **danger zone**. Right here in the middle a little like being caught in the Doll Drums between the Trade Winds at the Equator.

In the danger zone:

- you can tend to forget just how bad it was at the port of departure "Here"; and
- you can lose sight of the port of destination "There".

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Storey of the rubber duck at Sodwana!

In the danger zone you need to **continually replenish your vision bucket**, remind yourself of the whispers from God, and why He instructed you to move from “Here” to “There” in the first place.

What is it that drains your vision bucket, **as Jesus put it the cares and worries of the world:**

- Jobs to do;
- Kids to raise, disciple and educate;
- Bills to pay;
- Meetings to attend;
- Etc...etc...etc...

For this reason you need to **be continually filling your vision bucket** by:

- Reviewing the words or whispers received from the Father;
- Remaining in the word to receive fresh new revelation;
- Waiting in anticipation of new and fresh whispers from the Holy Spirit;
- Quietening the noise of the cares and worries of the world in God’s presence.

What keeps you on the journey is the sense of deep calling to deep, knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt that you will get there someday!

In Conclusion

To “Go Sailing” and make the most of this life that God calls you to, to live well, and to live to the full, you require a ticket! A two coupon ticket of FAITH and WORKS. The coupon of works is not good for passage, and the coupon of FAITH is not valid if detached from WORKS!

James 2:14 What good is it my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such a faith save him?

James 1:24 You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone!

Friends may the favour and blessing of God be upon us this year, may our sails be filled with FAITH and may our WORKS be so great that only God can receive the glory for what He does through us!