

April 11th and 12th

LIFE IS SHORT...LIVE IT WELL

"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil."

EPHESIANS 5:15-16

For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ." "Most of God's people are contented to be saved from the hell that is without; they are not so anxious to be saved from the hell that is within." "Live near to God, and all things will appear little to you in comparison with eternal realities." "The greatest need of my people is my personal holiness." "Unfathomable oceans of grace are in Christ for you. Dive and dive again, you will never come to the bottom of these depths. How many millions of dazzling pearls and gems are at this moment hid in the deep recesses of the ocean caves." These quotes come from a young pastor named Robert Murray M'Cheyne. He was only a pastor for six years in Dundee, Scotland before he died at the age of 29. What's the story of this man, and how can God use his life to shape ours?

Robert grew up with high moral standards but wasn't born again until the age of 18. His oldest brother David was ill, both spiritually and physically. As M'Cheyne's biographer tells it, his brother's death pieced his heart with a thorn. He saw the depression and regret that his brother dealt with, but also saw before he died a sweet peace that David found because he found full reconciliation with God. The thorn of death woke M'Cheyne up to the sweet rose of Christ's beauty. He realized that all the knowledge and success in the world doesn't come close to the sweetness of Jesus.

M'Cheyne was forever changed by Christ. He enrolled in divinity school soon after his conversion. One of his professors, Thomas Chalmers, influenced Robert to love Christ deeply. Chalmers emphasized allowing the light of Christ to shine bright into believing hearts. He likened Christ's light to the shining of the sun's rays through an open window. He encouraged Robert and his students to open the dark curtains of life to see the beautiful light of Christ. During his studies, M'Cheyne was challenged to bring Christ to unbelieving sinners. His passion for lost souls is described in his memoir: "Such scenes I never before dreamed of. . . . "No man cares for our souls" is written over every forehead. Awake, my soul!" Struggling sinners saw this passion lived out in Robert's life. As he often passed by praying for them, many men would take their hats off in respect and state, "There goes a man who cares for your soul." His passion for evangelism and communion with Jesus stayed with him to his dying day.

What does God teach us through a life that ended at 29? We often question when God takes someone so young from this world. Why would God take someone so devoted to Christ at 29 when there are others who have already lived a full life that can be taken? The question betrays our sinful hearts. Instead, our questions should be turned to being faithful and fruitful in each day given to us. Robert's tuberculosis wasn't a thorn without also being a blessing. His failing health at a young age gave focus and intensity to every day of his life. His passion was being close with Jesus and sharing Jesus with others. Too often we see our lives as having plenty of time to get serious about God. Men, instead of looking at your months and years, gaze on the beauty of Christ to be used by Him today! How will you use your moments today for His glory?

Spend some time thinking about the beauty of Christ. Confess any ways that you have replaced his beauty and sweetness with idols. Ask Him to help you savor time with Him.

For Further Reading: 2 Timothy 4:1-8

