

9-10-2023, COTR Texarkana

Title: Living with Eternity in Mind

Purpose: Provoke people to be gripped with the temporary nature of life and live their best life by living each day with eternity in mind.

Truth for Today: Our best life is found by living each day with eternity in mind.

Text: 2 Corinthians 4: 17-18

Topic: Eternity, Temporary, Paths

Series Title: "Your Best Life Now" ...is found by following God's ways!

Series purpose: Provoke people to embrace the path of Biblical truth to have a blessed life now and rewards in eternity.

## Living with Eternity in Mind

### I. Introduction

A. Review: Series: "Your Best Life Now". I'll show you how following the Biblical path will lead us to a blessed life now and rewards in eternity.

1. Pic God's Way/ World's. Last week we contrasted 2 paths we can take from Psalm 1. We saw the blessings that follow the path of God's ways and the tragic outcome of those who ignore God and follow the path of the world and do wrong.

B. Today we'll talk about 'Living our Best Life' by living each day with eternity in mind. Pic Eternal or Temporary We'll (1) Contrast the temporary and eternal, (2) We'll see where people will spend eternity? (3) Distractions on the temporary path, and (4) 4 ways how we can find our best life on the path to eternity.

C. Title: Living with Eternity in Mind

### II. Contrast the temporary and the eternal

A. Context, Paul suffering for being a Christian, [2 Cor. 4:17–18 (NIV) <sup>17</sup> For our light and **momentary** troubles are achieving for us an **eternal glory** that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup> So **we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**]

B. Def. Temporary: Things we do or obtain that won't last beyond this lifetime. They may not be bad but last only a limited period of time; they aren't permanent and have no eternal value. Life on earth is temporary. [Ja. 4:14 (NLT) ... Your life is like the morning fog—**it's here a little while, then it's gone.**] Yesterday I was a boy playing football; I blinked and was married with kids; now my kids are grown and I'm looking in the mirror at

my grandfather. One day, if Jesus doesn't come back 1<sup>st</sup>, I'll my body will die, and my soul will experience eternal life because Jesus is my Savior.

1. Most of what I do is temporary, e.g., working in my yard and garden, hunting ducks and turkeys, painting my house...it's not bad but it's just temporary.

C. Def. Eternal: Lasts forever, without end, permanent. Paul, [Titus 1:2 (MSG) My aim is to raise hopes by pointing the way to **life without end** (*ESV eternal life*)] The Bible teaches all people will live after their body dies. The only question is where. One day time will be no more while eternity is forever.

III. Where will people spend eternity? There are only 2 places: heaven, or hell.

A. Heaven 492 times in Bible. 3 heavens: sky, all the universes, dwelling place of God(Paul 3<sup>rd</sup> h) [Rev. 21:3–4 (NLT) I heard a loud shout from the throne...“Look, **God’s home is now among his people!** He will live with them, and they will be his people...<sup>4</sup> **He will wipe every tear** from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”] Heaven is a real place and followers of Jesus will live there forever. This is the goal of our best life.

1. There will be rewards in heaven for faithful followers of Christ. Jesus and Beatitudes, [Mt. 5:11–12 (NCV) <sup>11</sup> “People will...say all kinds of evil things about you because you follow me. But when they do, you will be blessed. <sup>12</sup> ...because you have a **great reward waiting for you in heaven...**]

B. Hell, Judgment Day. [Rev. 20:11–15 (NLT) I saw the **dead**, both great and small, **standing** before God’s throne. And the **books were opened**, including the **Book of Life**. And the dead were **judged** according to what they had done...<sup>15</sup> And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the **lake of fire**.] Jesus said, [Mt. 13:41–42 (NIV) The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom...all who do evil. <sup>42</sup> They will throw them into the **blazing furnace**, where there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.] Hell is a real place. God doesn't want anyone to go there but those who take the wrong path will.

IV. The choices we make on the path called temporary may not be bad but can tempt and distract us from what is eternal.

A. [Luke 12:15–21 (NLT) <sup>15</sup> Then he (Jesus) said, “Beware! Guard against every kind of **greed** (*Def. intense and selfish desire for wealth*) **Life is not measured by how much you own.**” <sup>16</sup> Then he told them a story: “A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. <sup>17</sup> He said **to himself**, ‘What should I do? I don’t have room for all my crops.’ <sup>18</sup> ... ‘**I know! I’ll** tear down **my** barns and build bigger ones...’ <sup>19</sup> And I’ll sit back and say to myself...you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!’” <sup>20</sup> “But God said to him, ‘You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’ <sup>21</sup> “Yes, **a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.**”]

1. Success, pleasure, money, work, turkey and duck hunts, and possessions aren’t bad unless they become the main path we follow. He didn’t pray and ask God what path to take; he just did what he felt like doing. He chose the wrong path.
2. What if he’d have taken some of his abundance and fed the poor in his town? That choice would have led him down a path with eternal reward.
3. Even if we aren’t greedy, we can be distracted by everyday life and lose God.

## V. How do we find our best life on the path to eternity?

A. 1<sup>st</sup> and foremost we must receive Jesus as our Savior. Sin separates us from God, and we need to be forgiven. We can’t work our way into heaven by doing good things. We need to turn to God and follow Jesus.

B. Use our time, talent, and resources to serve the Lord.

1. We’re all busy and we all have 24 hours a day; God has given all of us gifts and talents; we all have money and resources. People on the eternal path use some of what God has entrusted them to advance the KOG. If we’re not deliberate to plan time, use our gifts to serve the Lord, and invest some of our money in the Great Commission, the temporary path will consume all we have, and we’ll stand before the Lord empty handed. Our best life is lived on purpose for Jesus.
2. Some things we do for Jesus are planned, e.g., go on a missions trip or lead a Life Group. We also need to seize unexpected opportunities and meet needs in the name of Christ like the Good Samaritan. **E.g.**, Pic Karen & Artie Rayfield/ Project Hope, hotel closed, LaNell, money from benevolence, restaurant owner fed them.

C. Reach and disciple as many people for Christ as possible.

1. Jesus called this the Great Commission, [Mt. 28:19–20 (NLT) go and make disciples (*NCV followers*) of all the nations, baptizing them...<sup>20</sup> Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you...] [Romans 10:13–14 (NLT) For “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”<sup>14</sup> But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And **how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?**] That’s us!
2. My goal in life is to tell as many people about Jesus in every way I can before it’s eternally too late for them. You and I may be the only person standing between them and eternity. Our best life is lived helping people find Jesus. 2 practical things: (1) Church invite, (2) Bibles for missions \$5, \$1 on app.

VI. Conclusion: Show the love of Christ to people in need.

- A. [Mt. 25:31–40 (NLT) “But when the Son of Man (*Jesus*) comes...he will sit upon his ...throne.<sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people...<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are **blessed** by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you...<sup>35</sup> For **I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home.**<sup>36</sup> I was **naked**, and you gave me clothing. I was **sick**, and you cared for me. I was in **prison**, and you visited me.’<sup>37</sup> “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you...<sup>40</sup> “And the King will say...when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, **you were doing it to me!**’] People living their best life show God’s love to people in need.
- B. Summary: How to live each day with eternity in mind, (1) Receive Jesus as our Savior and follow Him, (2) Use our time, talent, and resources to serve the Lord. (3) Reach and disciple as many people for Christ as possible. (4) Show the love of Christ to people in need. This is how we live our best life now on the path to eternity.

VII. Response

- A. Prayer: (1) I’m convicted I’m living/ doing too much on the temporary path and not enough on the eternal. (2) Fresh commitment to live each day with eternity in mind.
- B. Souls: What does a person need to do to go to heaven? [John 3:16 (ESV) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever

**believes in him** should not perish but have **eternal life.**] Part of believing is following Jesus. Belief is action oriented, not passive. To follow Jesus, we must make a decision to change, i.e., repent, to turn and follow God. You can decide now.

VIII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

IX. Supplemental Material

- A. Revelation 22:3–5 (NLT) <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be a curse upon anything. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup> And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.
- B. Revelation 21:1–4 (NLT) <sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”
- C. 2 Timothy 4:6–8 (NLT) <sup>6</sup> As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. <sup>8</sup> And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.
- D. 1 Peter 1:4 (NLT) <sup>4</sup> and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.
- E. John 14:2–3 (NLT) <sup>2</sup> There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.
- F. Pascal’s wager

- G. John 12:25–26 (NLT) <sup>25</sup> Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for **eternity**.  
<sup>26</sup> Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.
- H. Context 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, [Luke 12:35–40 (NLT) <sup>35</sup> “**Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning,** <sup>36</sup> as though you were **waiting for your master to return** from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to **open the door and let him in the moment he arrives** and knocks. <sup>37</sup> The servants who are **ready and waiting** for his return will be **rewarded**. I tell you the truth, he himself will seat them, **put on an apron, and serve them as they sit and eat!** <sup>38</sup> He may come in the **middle of the night or just before dawn**. But whenever he comes, he will **reward the servants who are ready.** <sup>39</sup> “Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would not permit his house to be broken into. <sup>40</sup> **You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.**”]
- I. [Mt. 25:21 (NLT) “The master was full of praise. ‘**Well done, my good and faithful servant.** You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate...]