

12-4-16
WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IF
YOU REALLY KNEW YOUR TIME WAS SHORT?

It is hard to believe that we are in the last month of the year. Soon 2016 will be history. The older we get, the more history we should have learned from. Yet one thing is for sure, for those who will not learn from history they are doomed to repeat history.

God has given us about 6,000 years of recorded history to learn from. About 4,000 years are given right in the Bible. The last 2000 years we have in our history books.

Now there are some things that we all need to know, or should know, but for the most part we do not seem to take it in as reality. Time stops for no one. We are all ruled by the clock and we should make the most of the time we have. Especially when it comes to our relationship with people.

As we wrap up this the 12th month of the year and soon the first month of the new year will be upon us, I think it would be good to do a little self examination.

There are some things that the Bible says we should be prepared to face. What if we were to face them this week, or month, or year, what changes would we make in our lives?

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IF:

I. WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IF YOU KNEW THAT GOD WERE GOING TO TAKE FROM YOU THE CLOSEST PERSON YOU HAVE ON EARTH

One thing is for sure in this life is that nothing is forever. People are taken from us. People we love. Some of the hardest things we have to deal with in this life are the loss of loved ones.

In the book of Kings we have a record of Elijah and Elisha, and what Elisha did when he learned that Elijah would be taken from him.

II Kings 2:1 And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

II Kings 2:2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el.

II Kings 2:3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

II Kings 2:4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

II Kings 2:5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

II Kings 2:6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

II Kings 2:7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

II Kings 2:8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

II Kings 2:9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

II Kings 2:10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

II Kings 2:11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

II Kings 2:12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

II Kings 2:13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

II Kings 2:14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

II Kings 2:15 And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

Most of us live like those who we lean upon and depend upon will be with us forever. They will not.

There are two ways you can learn something: You can learn from personal experience, or you can learn from the experiences of others.

When Elisha heard that God was going to take Elijah from him he would not leave his side. He wanted to glean everything from him while he could.

In fact three times Elijah said to Elisha tarry here for the Lord sent me somewhere else:

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II Kings 2:4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

II Kings 2:6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

Each time Elisha said no way, I am not going to leave your side.

What if you knew that that mentor, that loved one, that parent, that teacher, or that spiritual leader was going to be taken from you? What would you do different? I would think you would

make some changes in your schedule to take advantage of the time so you could spend more time with them. This is what we see with Elisha and Elijah!

I think about the story of Mary & Martha. Martha was all cumbered about with the details of this life. Mary ignored all that and decided to spend time at the feet of Jesus. She did the wiser thing.

A few years back I preached a message entitled, "Avoid Catching the Martha Spirit on Christmas." We talk a lot about the Christmas spirit and I suggested in that message that a lot of people around Christmas catch the Martha Spirit.

Martha was all cumbered about making preparations for the meal with Jesus and she forgot about the importance of sitting at the feet of Jesus. I often see around this time of the year many of us are so busy with the season that we forgot the reason for the season. We busy ourselves with Christmas Programs but we should ask ourselves why are we doing these things if we have a bad spirit about them. Don't catch the Martha spirit. She got her eyes off Jesus and became critical of her sister! So when someone catches the Martha spirit, tempers flare, gossip abounds, and people become critical of others.

What would you do different if you knew that a loved one was going to be taken from you?

If Martha Knew Jesus was going to be taken I think she would have sat at his feet like Mary.

- 1. So many have neglected to take time to spend with their spiritual mentors or that earthly Father, Mother, etc. They are too busy with the affairs of this life.***
- 2. We act like our loved ones are going to be around forever. How often we neglect spending quality time with those who God will soon take from us.***

Elisha would not leave Elijah's side. Elijah was saying the Lord sent me here and there. No use bothering yourself to come with me. Elisha said as the Lord liveth I will not leave your side.

I recall when my Grandmother was in the Hospital I was going to visit her. She said don't bother I am doing better and they are going to release me. Just the next day I got a call that she had passed away that night. A last opportunity missed to see my grandmother.

How often I find myself wishing I could talk to my mother one more time. Seemed she knew all the relatives and all the history of the family. All these things are now lost.

That loved one in the Hospital, it may be the last visit you can make with them.

Had a Cousin who got Cancer. When he learned he did not have long to live he took off work and spent time with his children. He had 4-5 businesses but now they were not important any more.

I think of a Cousin whose son died in a tragic accident. He never would have guessed that when he was saying good bye to his son it would be for the Last time. He went out with some friends and drowned..

WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENT?

Ladies, what would you do different for that husband of yours?
Husbands, how differently would you treat your wife?

Children, what different choices would you make if God were to show you that this would be the last year you have to spend with your parents and God were to take them?

Don't neglect choosing to spend that quality time with that loved one.

II Kings 2:6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

Elisha was able to take up the mantle of Elijah because he choose to spend time with him before he was taken up. That loved one is not going to be around forever. Someday there will be regrets.

How many people start a work only to see it fall apart because there is no one to take up the mantle after them.

Churchs.
Businesses.
Trades.

Elisha became a great prophet because he saw the importance of taking advantage of the opportunity to spend time learning at the feet of Elijah.

We need to take advantage of opportunities to learn and spend time with great men and leaders while there is time left.

It always amazes me how haphazardly people attend church. It seems the ones who need it the most are always the most guilty. Jesus said

Matthew 13:12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

Elisha became a great prophet because he wanted more. He wanted a double portion of the spirit of Elijah. He wanted to go on and do greater things. When he asked Elijah for a double portion Elijah said, you ask for a hard thing.

In other words, only God can give you this and our attitude towards our earthly leaders, I believe, shows God how much we really want His blessing in our lives. These blessings only come from God. How do we expect to get them if we really never exert any effort in finding them?

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
Matthew 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

II. WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IF YOU KNEW GOD WERE GOING TO TAKE YOU HOME TONIGHT, THIS MONTH, OR THIS YEAR? WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

Luke 12:16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

Luke 12:17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

Luke 12:18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

Luke 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

Luke 12:20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

Luke 12:21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

What would you do differently if God were to show you that your soul is soon going to be required of you?

Those who live to eat drink and be merry do not really believe in a judgment day.

PAUL SAID, THOSE WHO EAT DRINK AND LIVE TO BE MERRY DO NOT BELIEVE IN A RESURRECTION, OR THAT THEY ARE GOING TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD.

God calls this type of person a fool.

Others live to secure themselves on this planet.

Money in the bank.

Security, of homes and possessions.

Ease, etc..

I have talked with many people in Hospitals who do not have long to live. Everyone knows it, yet they still do not change anything. How sad.

Visited a Fellow dying from cancer. He was still smoking through a tube.

Advice of Solomon:

Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

Ecclesiastes 12:2 While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

Ecclesiastes 12:3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

Ecclesiastes 12:4 And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low;

Ecclesiastes 12:5 Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the **grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:**

Ecclesiastes 12:6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

As we get older the Bible says,
The grasshopper shall be a burden and desire shall fail.

Once visited a lady in Hospital. She will not eat because the food didn't taste any good, she said. I had to help her pour water, even that was a burden.

What if you knew your soul would be required of you? What would you do differently?

When we fall sick suddenly our schedules all change.
Suddenly the things that seemed to be pressing upon you no longer seem important.

Had a friend who was diagnosed with liver cancer. I was the first one he called when he found out he had cancer. Not his wife, not his son, not his daughter, he called me, because he knew it was time to talk about the LORD.

What would you change if you really knew your appointed time was soon?

As we come to the end of the year it is a reminder to me that soon we will come to the end of our lives and we should make the most of what we can do to serve the Lord, to prepare to meet Him, seek him while we can.

Stop Putting off salvation.
Stop Putting off getting baptized.
Stop Putting off giving.
Stop Putting off service and witnessing.

III. WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IF YOU KNEW AND BELIEVED THE LORD WERE COMING BACK TODAY, THIS WEEK, MONTH, OR YEAR?

Matthew 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

Matthew 24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Matthew 24:41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Matthew 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Matthew 24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Matthew 24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Matthew 24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Matthew 24:46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Matthew 24:47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

Matthew 24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

Matthew 24:49 And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

Matthew 24:50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, Matthew 24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

1. *The Bible says we are in the end times and Christ is soon to return. Yet what do we do about it?*

Sad how people live, like He will delay for another thousand years.

When our Lord returns it will be like a 9-11. No one expected it and our nation watched in horror as they saw those towers that represented strength and security fall to the ground.

Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

Matthew 24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

2. *Hardened sinners will refuse to repent, and this is why the Lord's return is such a terrifying thing to the unsaved.*

Revelation 6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

Revelation 6:16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

Revelation 6:17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

What would you change if you knew the Lord were to return tonight, this week, month, or year?

For those who are living for themselves and for the pleasures of sin and this world, the Lord's return is a terrifying thing!!!

WHAT IF scenario:

We are forewarned in Scripture to make preparation, but so many live foolishly and do not heed God's warnings.

Jesus.. spent 3.5 years preparing His disciples for the day when He would leave them.

Elijah clung to Elijah when the realization hit him that he was soon going to leave him.

Jesus warned us time and time again that most people are going to be caught off guard when He returns.

Let us take advantage of the short time we have to sit at the feet of Jesus, attend church, spend with our spiritual mentors and loved ones who we can learn from, spiritual leaders.

The best way for us to live is to live as if our souls could be required of us any day.

We need to live as if the Lord is coming soon.

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IF: you knew this were the day and your soul would be required of you?

WHAT WOULD WE DO DIFFERENTLY!!!

Would your schedule change?
Would you do things differently?

Would you watch what you watch on T.V.?
Would you go where you are going to go?
Would you say what you would say?
Would you do what you planned?

Would you have a change of priorities? If so, these should be your priorities, anyway..

Elijah said, with resolve, when he found out Elijah was going to be taken from him:

II Kings 2:4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

What resolve. What wisdom.

It is said:

Proverbs 13:20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Do you want wisdom? Hang out with people of wisdom.

So sad that young people value the company of fools rather than people of wisdom. Do you want wisdom? Associate yourself with people of wisdom.

What a contrast we have with Elisha in the latter part of this passage.

II Kings 2:23 And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.

25 And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

One of the greatest problems we see with young people is the problem of who they allow themselves to be influenced by. There was a crowd of young people who apparently heard how Elijah was taken up to heaven a whirlwind.

So they came out mocking Elisha and said go up you bald head. Elisha was apparently bald, where as it was said of Elijah that he was a hairy man.

So who we allow ourselves to be influenced by will no doubt lead to our blessing or cursing.

PSA 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

PSA 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

PSA 1:3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

PSA 1:4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

PSA 1:5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

So, in contrast to Elisha, we have this group of young people who mock God's man, and the Lord who performed the miracle of translating Elijah into heaven.

You would think they would fear.

So we need to learn to choose who we look up to and are influenced by.