

# Be ready always

ODCC 24/05/09 (*Be ready always.doc*)

**Text:** Luke 12:35-41

## Introduction

1. I am preaching on this subject today because a friend of ours is dying of cancer. He is in the position where he wants to remain absolutely positive and focused on recovery but he also realises that nothing about his future is certain.
  - a. Gaille (my wife) and I talk with them from time to time hoping that in our conversation the subject of eternity will arise but it never does.
2. I want to speak about death today. I am not giving an in-depth study on it because of time (we need a shorter service because of a member's meeting after the service) but it these few thoughts are weighing so heavy on my heart that I want to express them today.
  - a. I am not attempting to be morbid; I hope that at the end this message will be seen as positive.

## Some facts about death

1. What is death? It is the end of life as we know it. It is when every part of the body ceases to function.
2. It is the opposite of life. The dictionaries seemed to find it hard to describe life but essentially two words seem to always be associated with it. They are: **vital** and **functional**.
  - a. *Vital* – think of shining eyes; soft, warm skin. Think of a smile and a warm embrace. Think of a dancer (not a ballet dancer but a rap dancer!) movement and energy and strength, etc.
  - b. *Functional* – think of every part of the body healthy and working as it should. Think of communicating, talking, a special look, the squeeze of a hand. Think of sharing, a meal, a joke, a secret, etc.
  - c. With death all communication ceases. Nothing works so that instead of the body renewing itself decay has set in.
3. Death brings total loss. Were you wealthy? You leave it all. Were you famous? The memory of you will fade and you'll be forgotten. Were you talented in some way? They all cease and you can accomplish no more. Were you important? Death doesn't consider the importance and necessity of people, etc.
4. Death is eternal!

## Some facts about life

1. You only have one.
  - a. If you completely mess it up you do not get a second chance.
  - b. If you make mistakes you only have a small window of opportunity to fix them.
2. Life is very short – even if you live to a 100, a 100 years is short. So don't think that you have a long time because no-one has long.
3. Life is very uncertain. You do not know what can happen before the end of this day.
4. Life does not get easier as you get older. Youth is the time when you have energy, drive, strength and may the Lord help you if you have youth and you're wasting it on something quite trivial. Age brings a whole set of inhibitors.
  - a. It's a terrible thing to get to old age and have regrets about what might have been, or could have been, or should have been and it's too late to change the past.
  - b. Of course, having said that, sometimes even in old age, we can make a difference (John & Lorraine in Bali).
5. Life is temporal.

## Some facts about eternity

1. Too many people – even Christians – live their lives without any thought about eternity. Probably this is because too little is known about it. It is the unknown, the uncertain.
  - a. And so death is like this wall – we come to it and it is the end.

- b. What's on the other side of the wall? Nothing (some people say), but there's always something on the other side of a wall. Have you ever seen a wall with nothing on the other side?
  - c. Others say that it's possible that there is something but we'll have to wait and see. There's no attempt to find out and there's no attempt to prepare.
  - d. The Bible exhorts us to prepare even though it admits that it is beyond the scope of the human mind to grasp what eternity is like (1 Cor 2:9). *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also* (Matt 6:19-21).
2. These scriptures teach us that the whole of life is, as it were, a staging ground to prepare us for eternity. We cannot afford to give eternity little or no thought.
    - a. The condition in which we enter eternity is the condition in which we stay. The Catholic Church teaches purgatory but the Bible does not.
    - b. We're told, *We also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain for He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation"* (1 Cor 6:1-2).
  3. How can anyone live this life without considering eternity and without preparing for it. The prophet said to Israel, *"Prepare to meet your God, O Israel"* (Amos 4:12). The key word for our lives should be **prepare!** (be ready)

## Conclusion

1. Jesus, speaking to His disciples told them that He was going away to prepare a place for them. He was going to prepare eternity for them. He says to them, "You know the way to the place I am going." Well, they weren't certain. "No, we don't know the way. How can we know the way?" Jesus said, "I AM THE WAY."