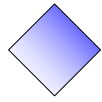


# The Voice of Truth



April 27, 2014

## "What is Your Life?"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

*"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:13-17).*

What are your dreams, plans and goals for the future? Too many people place emphasis in all the wrong places when they think about the future and what they will do with their lives. We are prone to be too earth-bound in our thinking and to leave God out of our plans. People need to take life inventory. James's question, "What is your life?", when properly viewed, will enable us to take a life inventory.

What is your life from the standpoint of duration? It is a vapor (James 4:14-15); it is here only briefly and then is gone. James is saying stop and consider! Before making plans for the future, determine what sort of life you have. Is it permanent, abiding, enduring; will it be here tomorrow, next week, or the following year? "For my days are but a breath" (Job 7:16). "Remember how short my time is" (Psalm 89:47). "There is but a step between me and death" (1 Samuel 20:3). Man's days on earth are pictured as a flower that is cut down, and therefore soon withers (Job 14:1-2; James 1:10-11). Man's days on earth are pictured as a fleeing shadow (Job. 14:2). Life passes quickly as the "eagle hasteth to the prey" (Job 9:26). Man lives but one time on earth (Hebrews 9:27). With life as uncertain as this, how foolish are we to plan the future without regard to Him Who holds the future in His hands? Boasting of a definite future on earth is evil because it denies God's power and will (James 4:15-16).

It is imperative that we recognize that God has a plan and a will for life on this earth. "Even every one that is

*called by my name: for I have created him I for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him" (Isaiah 43:7).* What should be man's purpose in life? "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). We are to trust in God! If we will let Him direct us, then our lives will be immensely enriched. A study of Ecclesiastes reveals that Solomon tried basically the things that men try in their effort to find a purpose for being; the conclusion of chapter 12, verses 13, 14, is a studied conclusion: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Your life is a gift from God and is to be used for His glory. All men need to be confronted with the question: "What is your life?" We are urged to "examine ourselves" (2 Corinthians 13:5). The following poem should focus attention on this article.

### Life's Clock Author Unknown

The clock of life is wound but once,  
And no man has the power  
To tell just when the hands will stop,  
At late or early hour.

To lose one's wealth is sad, indeed,  
To lose one's health is more;  
To lose one's soul is such a loss,  
And no man can restore.

The present only is our own,  
Live, love, toil with a will;  
Place no faith in "Tomorrow",  
For the clock may then be still. ♦

#### In This Issue...

Page 1 - "What is Your Life?"  
Pages 2 to 3 - "You Only Get One Chance ..."

Page 3 - THE ONE BODY  
Page 4 - Just Suppose | "OUR GOD IS ABLE" | What Must I Do To Be Saved?

## “You Only Get One Chance ...”

By Jarrod Jacobs

“One” is a very interesting word. This word stands for unity, and wholeness. It tells us how many churches Christ established (**Matt. 16:18**). “One” is what Christ prayed that His disciples would be (**Jn. 17:21**). It also represents the number of times we get to live in this world! We have one chance to live and no guarantee as to how long that life will last, so we need to make the best of this opportunity.

The apostle Paul understood this fact and told the Corinthians, “...behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (**II Cor. 6:2**). Jesus Himself understood that when He walked upon this earth, He only had one chance at it. So, we find Him being very busy and “about (His) Father’s business” from an early age (**Lk. 2:49**). In fact, while He was on earth, it was said that, “there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (**Jn. 21:25**). Jesus accepted what many people today do not, and that is that our time is fleeting upon this earth (**Jn. 9:4; Jas. 4:14**). Many people act as if they are going to live forever upon this earth. This is a mistake! Our time on earth is limited, so we need to make the best use of it we can.

It bothers me when I hear folks talking about “wasting time,” or “killing time.” I realize these are expressions, and I don’t consider the wording as “sin,” but I wonder if we realize what we are saying. Our life on earth is temporary. The longer we live, the closer we get to its end. Since this is the case, it seems to me that we would be trying to do as the Ephesian letter instructs and “redeem the time” (i.e., use our time wisely and properly) rather than trying to waste, or kill, or otherwise mutilate the time we have left on this earth! The passage of time is deceitful in a way, for as it passes, there is no pain or any other similar notification associated with it. Time passes by and we often are blissfully unaware. We can be anywhere on earth or in space, and time continues to pass. No force on earth can stop time from passing, so we need to make the best of what we have left!

What do we have to do on earth that is so important? Actually, there are many important responsibilities we must accept. If we neglect or shirk our responsibilities, then we will answer to God for that on the day of Judgment (**II Cor. 5:10**).

### You Only Have One Chance To Live Your Life.

Think about your age. Do you realize that you only get to be your age ONCE? You only get to live March 30, 2014 one time! If the Lord wills that we live tomorrow, then this day is gone forever and will never come back, just like every other day, month, and year previous to today. If He does not will that this world stands to see another sunrise, what have we given in exchange for this day?

James noted, “Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town, and spend a year there and trade and make a profit’ — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time, and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live, and do this or that’” (**Jas. 4:13-15**). Think about this passage! Just as the mist disappears off the lake, or the steam from a pot dissipates into the room, so also one’s life vanishes quickly after being born. Knowing this fact, what will we do to make sure our lives have meaning and purpose?

Let us think seriously and soberly about this day and every day and make sure the things that we do are done to the glory of God (**Col. 3:23; I Cor. 10:31**).

### You Only Have One Chance To Raise Your Children.

Just as parents’ lives pass quickly, so also our children are quickly passing through this life. Though we wish they would stay the same age, we know our children will not stay their current age all their lives. Some parents may “think” their children are still children, and yes some adults still act like children, but time continues to move along, and that little 5 year-old swiftly turns 25, 35, 45, 55, etc.!

God has placed a great responsibility upon parents to make sure and teach their children the Lord’s way. This was so in Old Testament days (**Deut. 6:6-9**) and continues today (**Eph. 6:4**). Parents need to realize that there is a precious soul that has been given to them for a little while, and that this person is aging just as the parents are (**Jas. 4:14**). If parents shirk their responsibilities in teaching and training, then who, pray tell, will teach these precious ones?

*Continued from Page Two, "You Only Get One Chance ..."*

If I shirk my responsibility, I need to know that Satan is more than willing to teach my children (**I Pet. 5:8**)! He would be happy to get a hold of them and keep them for his own. I only get one chance to bring my children up right, and to teach them, not only the facts concerning living on earth, but more importantly, the facts about how to get to Heaven (**Mk. 16:16**)! There is only one opportunity while they are in my home and under my roof to teach them about the Lord, about His sacrifice (**Jn. 3:16**), about God's love (**Rom. 5:8**), and about my being willing to sacrifice and live for Him in order to go to Heaven (**Rom. 12:1-2**)!

The question is not, "Who will teach my children?" As we noted, Satan is ready to do it! The question is, "Will I be the one teaching my children the truth?" The Bible tells parents to do this (**Eph. 6:4**). Will we accept our God-given duties, or will we shirk our responsibilities? We can only answer this for ourselves, but rest assured that we will only get this chance once in their lives; and it will not come our way again!

### You Only Have One Chance To Be Saved.

While we recognize that some people spend their lives and talents on sinful and wicked deeds, we also recognize that there are people who are trying their best to improve things on this earth. It is to these folks we speak at this point. Yes, some folks pour their lives into education, or into architecture. Some people will spend their lives in service to others. Many are involved in noble pursuits on this earth. Yet, for the good these things can do, all of these things are meaningless if our soul is not right with God. Remember, Jesus asked the question, "*For what will*

*it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).*

Knowing that our time on earth is fleeting, today may very well be your last chance to make your life right with God! When we think about it, even if we are allowed to live our "*threescore years and ten, or ... fourscore years*" (**Ps. 90:10**), we really have a "narrow window" of opportunity to make our lives right with God. This is because for the first few years of life, we are too young to believe and be baptized (**Mk. 16:16**). Babies cannot make conscious decisions about their faith; nor have they sinned (**Ezek. 18:4, 20**)! Therefore, they are not subject to the gospel message. Assuming that one lives to an "old age", we see that in one's old age, he/she may not be mentally capable of making the conscious decision to believe in Christ, and then to be baptized for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**). Yet, if some tragedy occurs while in our youth and our opportunity to obey God is taken away, (through death or injury) then we have even less time than others to believe on Christ, repent of our sins, and be baptized (**Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38**). Therefore, our "window of opportunity" for salvation in Christ is narrow, and we must make the right decision before it is too late! Today may very well be our "last chance"!

### Conclusion

Sometimes the games we play allow for "do-overs," but life does not! Let us not shirk our responsibilities, or waste our lives in vain efforts of this life. Let us submit our wills to God's will and let us be found living a faithful life to God, (**I Cor. 15:58**) and teaching our children this way so long as we live! *Credit: The Old Paths - 3/30/14 ♦*

## THE ONE BODY

The church is the body of Christ, "And he is the head of the body, the church (**Col. 1:18**). There is only one body, one church. "*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*" (**Eph. 1:22-23**). The New Testament teaches that there is only one body; this one body is the church. We are "fellow heirs of the same body" (**Eph. 3:6**). We are "reconciled to God in one body" (**Eph. 2:16**). Christ is founder of only one church. "*Upon this rock I will build my church*" (**Matt. 16:18**). Jesus did not say that we would build a church, His church or one of His churches. He said, "I will build my church." The word "church" signifies singularity. Jesus did not build many different churches, but one! None should encourage any to seek the church of your choice, but the church of Christ's choice, that is, the one that is Christ-built, blood-bought (**Acts 20:28**), the one in which He is the Saviour of (**Eph. 5:23**).

Since there is one, and only one church and since Christ saves only those in that one church; thus, if one living today is not a member of that church (**Rom. 16:16**), then he is not saved. ♦

***Don't think you can ignore the Lord in this life and  
He will give you a crown in the Life to come. ♦***

### Just Suppose

1. Suppose that your church membership was good only for one year at a time and that renewal depended on your faithfulness in attendance, stewardship and service. Would you retain your membership in the church?
2. Suppose that membership was limited to those who could give a valid excuse for absences. Would your absences be acceptable?
3. Suppose that some parents could look into the future and see the dreadful results of neglecting the teaching of Christ. Would they be different parents?
4. Suppose members were as enthusiastic about church events as they are about sporting events. Would there be a marked difference in the life of the church?
5. Suppose that every member attended church services as much as you did. Would we need more seating, or would the building be closed and for sale?
6. Suppose that renew our dedication to Jesus Christ. Our attendance and stewardship would increase and all would rejoice in the Lord! ♦

### "OUR GOD IS ABLE"

- TO SUBJECT ALL (Phil. 3:21)
- TO SAVE & DESTROY (James 4:12; Matt. 10:28)
- RAISE THE DEAD (Heb. 11:19)
- PERFORM PROMISES (Rom. 4:21)
- AID THOSE TEMPTED (Heb. 2:18)
- MAKE GRACE ABOUND (2 Cor. 9:8)
- KEEP THAT COMMITTED TO HIM (2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:9)
- DO MORE THAN WE ASK OR THINK (Eph. 3:20-21; Mark 9:23)
- SAVE ALL WHO COME TO HIM THROUGH CHRIST (Heb. 7:25) ♦

*Don't think you can ignore the Lord in this life and  
He will give you a crown in the Life to come. ♦*

*Truth is truth even if no one believes it.  
Error is error if everyone believes it. ♦*

### What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

### About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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#### Schedule of Assembly

**Bible Study:** Sunday, 9:00am  
**Worship Service:** Sunday, 10:00am  
**Bible Study:** Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

**www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com**