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Sermon outline for *If Today Were My Last Day on Earth*

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IF TODAY WERE MY LAST DAY ON EARTH?

Scripture Reading: II Kings 20:1

"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Set thy house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live."

Introduction

I. What if today were your last day on Earth? This is a challenging, sobering thought. If you had 24 hours, 1440 minutes left on earth how would you spend them?

Mrs Cochran at Hobbs - Rich Man

A. This knowledge would completely change your set of values.

1. Example of the man who said he would give a million dollars for a copy of the ~~New York Times~~ *Wall Street Journal* dated a year ahead.

The story goes an Angel appeared by his desk and handed him the paper. He feverishly turned to the stock market page, saw the price of stocks a year hence and greedily set down those he would buy and those he would sell. After several hours work with satisfaction he folded the paper and thought a year from now I'll be the richest man in the world!

But as he laid the paper with the front page exposed on his desk he read in the Head lines his name! Wall Streets shrewdest financier died today!! What was his information worth?

B. What questions would crowd your heart?

1. Where will I be tomorrow?
2. What have I left undone?
3. What do I need to correct?
4. What will become of my family?

C. One of these days you and I will come to our last day on earth.

1. Many of us will not realize it. Few people do.

DISCUSSION

I. Though you and I may not know when our last day on earth will be we are all well aware that we'll have a last day.

Ecc. 9:5 The wise man said: "For the living know that they shall die..."

Heb. 9:27 "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment..."

I Cor. 15:22 "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

Every oracle of reason, all our experiences, all revelation tell us:

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour,
The Paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Well did Job say: Job 30:23

"I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living."

Yet knowing this how many are making sensible preparation for that day! It has ever been thus.

A. In the day of Noah men came to their last day on earth and went about as usual. Matt 24:37-39

"And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man.

vs 42-44

"Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh."

B. In the days of Sodom and Gomorrah Affairs apparently went about as usual. These people were unaware that ~~this~~ was their last day on earth but it was.

C. In 79 A. D. thirteen miles from Naples Italy nestled the beautiful but profligate city of Pompeii. Little did they realize that ~~this~~ was their last day on earth! Suddenly the whole top of old Mt. Vesuvius was blown away. The city perished in 60 seconds!

D. In may of 1902 the ^{day} dawned bright in the little village of St Pierre on the Island of Martinique. The people were carefree and happy. The old volcano had been acting up a bit but the governor of the island visited the city and allayed the fears of the people. He assured them all was well. Suddenly the whole side of the mountain was blown away and 30,000 people had come to their last day. The only survivor was an old negro prisoner down in a dungeon!

On an on we could go. The inhabitants of Hiroshima the passengers on the Titanic 1603 of them, the more than 200 persons on the jet air liner, Joe Johnson, my ~~crop~~ dusting friend at Phoenix.

All these people knew that some day they would die and ^{manly} intended to make ready --later!

II. The Words to Hezekiah "Thou shalt die" are toall of us

A. The only exception that I can think of are those who will be alive at the coming of the Lord.

B. ~~There~~ is no country immune ^{to} ~~from~~ death. No climate to prevent it. It comes to rich and poor, young and old, regenerated and unregenerated, prepared and un prepared.

C. There are five main avenues through which death comest o man.

1. Disease. Body a target of unseen and deadly maladies. *Heart Attack - Bert Reynolds.
Cancer, Pneumonia, Stroke,*

2. Accident. There is no place that is positively safe. We can be killed on the hi-way, in our kitchens, bathroom, side walk etc. *Frecklich*
Things happen. Falls, electrocution,
3. Murder. We may make an enemy knowingly or unknowingly. We can be killed willfully or accidentally, by premeditated killer or maniac. *Sister*
Nelson
4. Suicide. People get beside themselves, they let their problems drive them distracted.
5. Old Age. Decay. Our bodies finally just wear out. Solomon has graphically pictured this in Ecc. 12:1-7

"Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain; 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 shall be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the street; when the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; yea, they shall be afraid of that which is high, and terrors shall be in the way; and the almond-tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his everlasting home, and the mourners go about the streets: before the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain or the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returned unto God who gave it."

III. Since we know that death is certain, that it is an appointment that we are all going to keep - what is the sensible and practical view to take of it?

- A. To be always ready! To live as if today were really my last day on earth because it may be! Today is all I have. That is why the inspired

penman wrote: Heb. 4:7

"Today if ye shall hear his voice,
Harden not your heart."

Heb. 3:15

"Today if ye shall hear his voice,
Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

We are assured of only the present. The past is dead,
the Future is unborn.

But how many have crucified their present opportunities
between two thieves, yesterday and tomorrow!

B. Today we can make things right with the Lord.

We can correct mistakes, right wrongs, and strive
to improve.

How many of humanities heartaches are left over
from yesterday or borrowed from tomorrow!

All our yesterdays God has taken back, all our to-
morrow are in his hands. So if this is my last day on
earth the best way to use it is to discharge fully my
responsibilities and duties of today!

IV. Though God is not going to speak to you and me direct-
ly as he did Hezekiah by an inspired ~~prophet~~ living
prophet yet he has spoken.

A. Would it not be wise for you and ^{me} ~~I~~ to set our
house in order?

B. If this were your last day on earth you'd be up
early. (I did not say you'd wake up early, you
would have never been asleep!) You would want
to achieve three things:

1. You'd see that your will disposed of your
possessions as you want them to go. *Wills*
2. You would as far as possible make right your
relation with every human being.
3. You would as far as possible make things right
with God.

C. If this were your and my last day on earth we'd be like Queen Elizabeth

"My Kingdom for an inch of time!"

Oh how I wish I had just another year. How differently I'd live!

D. As busy as we'd find ourselves we'd take time to read the Bible. The twenty-third Psalm, the fifteenth Chapter of I Cor. and Rev. 21-22 would take on new significance!

We'd pray more than we perhaps had ever prayed in one day in our lives!

E. If there was any one I had cheated or defrauded or refused to pay I'd try to find them and pay up.

F. If I had lied to any one or for any one and it had hurt them I'd want to find them and confess and say the thing I told you was not true. But today I go to meet God and all this must be straightened out!

G. Suddenly all my land, money, bonds, stocks would be useless! Scriptures that I had read many times would take on new meaning:

I Time. 6:6-7

"But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content."

Naturally I would want my family to have these things but as for me personally they would lose all their attractiveness.

H. If there existed any ill will, animosity between me and a brother I'd want it all ironed out. Do not want to die with bitterness in my heart toward any one!

I. If the last day of my life came on a day that any service was to be held at the church I'd want to be with the brethren one last time!

Might have argued before once a week is enough but today is my last day. Want to be there!

J. Would be concerned about my relationship to Christ. If any doubt as to whether or not I had obeyed the Gospel I'd remove the doubt. Would not even argue about Baptism!

CONCLUSION:

I. There are few people who would not do as we have said if they knew that today were their last day on earth.

A. Then why do we not do them any way. This could be my last day.

The fact that we would do them if it were demonstrate our realization of their importance.

The present moment is the only time we are assured of.

One of these days will be my last day, your last day and as we close out said the inspired John so will we spend eternity.

Rev. 22:10

"And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteous still; and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still; and he that is holy, let him be made holy still."

"SET YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER FOR YOU ARE GOING TO DIE."

Hobbs 3-25-62 Well Received

Dora 4-4-62

Healdton 5-1-62

Hobbs Radio 8-5-62

Odem 2-12-63

Tulsa 6- -63

Bovina 9-10-63

Duncan 10-9-63

Hobbs 6-13-65

Goodyear 1-24-66

clovis 8-7-66

Artasia 4-5-67

Pecos 9-22-67

Colombia City 3-24-68

Tulsa 8-30-68

Altus 8-27-72

Panhandle 10-27-73

Lawton 2-26-78

Murrow 4-7-85

Givanite 10-12-86

Cache 2-1-87