

Love Thy Neighbor in Service

He Was A Fine Man...



Grab hold of your death. Really seize it. Stop right now and think of your funeral. Where will it be held? How many will attend? If you could be the one writing the words of those who will speak at your funeral, what would you have them say? Exactly what will be important at that time? Does your life now make sense in light of the funeral you know is coming but have not thought about?

Dreaming of heaven (or hell) is not terribly difficult. No one (other than those having near death experiences) has been there and you can pretty much make it whatever you want. The idea is rather elusive and personal to what we like here on earth. My expectation is that whatever we believe each to be, one will be dramatically better than we can image and one dramatically worse. Being

busy now keeps us from stopping to take the time to think about either to any real depth.

A funeral, however, is a dramatically different thing. Most of us went to funerals even when we were young. My parents asked me if I wanted to go to my grandmother's, whom I loved, when I was relatively young. The whole idea of death scared me so badly I had no desire to go and wanted to act like it never happened. I know that is not a very useful way to deal with death, however, many reading this letter have never even considered it except in passing.

Stop right now and write a paragraph or two about what you want your son/daughter/wife/husband or friend to say at your funeral. **REALLY STOP AND WRITE NOW!!!**

I am sure it was interesting. The question was: Is any of it true of your life now? Was it too depressing to even think about? Were you unable to actually write anything? Have no idea how anybody thinks of you? Have no idea about what you think of yourself?

One of the most interesting things about the journey of Love Thy Neighbor and serving the Father through the homeless is that I have found so many times I really had no idea what I wanted. The vision in my mind was almost always different from what the Lord had planned for me.

In Our Weakness

My weak points were huge. Pride, ego, and self were, and still are, much larger than I thought. What type of Christian I could actually be was well short of what I thought in my mind. How much I could give, how much I could serve and the time I was willing to hand to the Lord were all less than I thought. The whole process showed me in a true light my incredible need for Jesus Christ and His saving grace/forgiveness. My minds level of the time; talent and treasure I could give were far beyond reality.

However, I believe this to be the case for almost all of us. We have a vision of the life we want to live. In high school or college, the whole thing seems possible far off in

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the distance. However, life then happens. We get busy with work, then marriage and life suddenly throws all sorts of challenges. The siren song of power, wealth, prestige all press in and more time is demanded. Children are added to the mix and time becomes a vapor. If you are the typical American, your children are involved in forty different sports teams and mom and dad have become taxi drivers. Before you know it, 50 has hit and life is actually beginning to pass you by.

The concept of real change never even occurs as we are all so busy. Financial debt in mid-life is normally at its greatest, and we see no way to get free. The reality is we normally are too busy even to consider why we are doing what we are doing. This life seems to have just happened on its own. The chase for the things that appeared so valuable at 25-30 is much more hollow at 45-55. The problem has now become that change does not come easy after 45.

We are set in our ways, comfortable in our lifestyles and it appears one day the children may actually make it to college. The idea is once they have left for college then we can change. The reality is when they go to college more

of your time will be spent at work, vacation or the hobby you always wanted to do more of when the time came.

Have you forgotten your funeral already? What will it be? Have you considered the paragraph you just wrote for your funeral, could not even write or had zero desire to even think about? The words of your life are being written each day. The idea is a horror to really grasp. You mean to tell me that what is said at my funeral might be based upon the way I treated my family, friends, employees and strangers last week? How closely does your activity for the last week, month, year or years match what you wrote for your funeral?

If you are like most of us the distance is probably much greater than you would like.

What can you do?

We need your prayers! It is the most important thing you can do for the ministry.

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

(James 5:16 NIV)

LTN is committed to spreading the Gospel by Christ's example to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 22:39. To this end, LTN has designed programs with the purpose of helping clients build a relationship of faith in God, regain their dignity and eventually, regain their self-sufficiency. Contact us to learn more about the services and programs.

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Why is that so? Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV) says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" Feeling like you have been fooling yourself and did not even know it? You are not alone.

We all fall victim to ourselves, and then blame anybody we can find in the vicinity. My flaws, anger, lifestyle, etc. are the result of what mom, dad, cousin, boss, coach or anybody else we can think of did to me in the past. When does the responsibility pass to each one of us for our own lives; 20, 30, 40, 50, 60? You pick the age. What is your plan for the date of power transfer?

I have found in my own life, change inside of my head and in reality simply will not occur without some outside

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Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Matthew 22:39



And They Remembered His Words

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intervention. I do not have the courage, strength, will or desire on my own. There is however another way. Simply let Jesus Christ into your life at a real level. This does not mean to only attend church. However, that is a great place to begin the process. Deep, meaningful life change to the place you hope will be stated at your funeral will not come on your own. Rare is the individual who makes dramatic, moving in the direction of God, life change in mid-stream without some huge traumatic event. We simply will not make the change we even desire in our own heart. The best method and the one the Lord/Father designed is to seek Jesus Christ. Allow Him into your heart. The Holy Spirit will follow, and the movement you so desperately seek and hope to be said at your funeral will begin to occur.

God bless you,

John Chapman, Jr.