

November 1, 2015

Someone recently shared the thought that the only reason for living was for their children. Although this may have been an oversimplification of their life's purpose it was their prime focus and motivation. We could be critical of them having such a limited vision but on the positive side they came to the point of recognising they had an actual reason for living. The goal was a wholesome one, "other centred" and outside their personal benefit.

There are a multitude of "things" people live for that are self centred. I heard the obituary of a man who lived a wasted life in petty crime who said that "all he ever wanted was a Cadillac." General Motors was the only beneficiary of his life!

But what happens to our motivation for living if that reason is removed, if our children die or we never get to own the Cadillac? We can add to that any other purpose or passion as our goal but the consequence is that we can quickly spin out of control into a self destructive death spiral of bitterness. There is the mother who loses her son and then spends the rest of her life mourning him and blaming God; and then there are the First Nations who are suffering an epidemic of suicide, especially amongst their youth. Our secular society has removed God from the curriculum of life and there is no hope. Without Him all we have is this short span of existence where we hope death takes away the pain.

As Christians we are "not as those who have no hope." We have a final destiny with God all because of what Jesus has done. But do we have a reason or vision for living in the NOW, or are we just "marking time" till Jesus comes? One of the weaknesses of the teaching of the Rapture of the Church when Jesus returns has been a form of spiritual suicide. Paul addresses this clearly in his second letter to the Church in Thessalonica.

Paul, when under pressure and extreme persecution faced the same challenge when he declared that he was torn between the desire to depart to be with Christ (which he considered far better) or remain on earth for the sake of the welfare of the church.

We therefore need to examine the real reasons for living. Paul indicates in his letter to young Timothy that "My only purpose in life is to please God" (Phillips) and because his goal was not self first but God he was able serve others without serving becoming the reason for living. The scripture does state that "Without a vision the people perish;" that statement contains not only the hope that a vision or purpose gives us but also the consequences of failure to have a reason. Without vision we have no hope, without hope we atrophy until we shrink and die both physically and spiritually.

As in the case of the prodigal son "He came to his senses and said... I will." He had to come to the end of himself before he could take action to rebuild his life. ***It is never, never, never too late.*** One of the crucified thieves next to Jesus and at the point of death found a moment of life while the other missed the Saviour of the world... as Moses exhorted "Choose life."

God has for each one of us an ultimate glorious purpose, way beyond our wildest dreams or understanding and while we are on earth each and every day is part of that destiny. May God give us grace to walk in faith till "Then shall we know fully, even as we are fully known."

We pray; "Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth even as it is in heaven." I confess that in the past I had projected that prayer only into future fulfilment but I have since applied that prayer to the present; "Your Kingdom come NOW in me, Your will be done NOW in me just as it is in heaven." I am reminded that every angel, cherubim or heavenly host does His will continually and Jesus said; "I only do what I see the Father doing and say only what I hear the Father say;" that has become my prayer.

My vision is to see that prayer come into greater reality to the degree that it is possible this side of heaven and it starts with myself, then this local church, then finally "making disciples of all nations."

"Thanks be to God, he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus. Therefore, dear brothers, stand firm, let nothing move you. Always give yourselves FULLY to the work of the Lord because you know your labour in the Lord is not in vain." 1 COR. 15 (NIV)

Shalom.

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