

# Your Life is Like the Morning Fog

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by James P. Shelly

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Jesus said in Matthew 10:28,

*Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell (grk. Gehenna).*

It should be apparent to all who profess a faith in Christ that the loss of our temporal earthly existence is of little consequence in comparison with the loss of the eternal life of the soul. In absence of any hope beyond the grave our life in this present world is reduced to having no more meaning and significance than that of any other living creature:

For people and animals share the same fate—both breathe and both must die. So people have no real advantage over the animals. How meaningless! Both go to the same place—they came from dust and they return to dust (Eccl. 3:19, 20).

If the grave is the finality of our existence then the rich and poor, the educated and ignorant, the healthy and sick, the young and the old, a man and a dog, will all have this in common; no recollection whatsoever of what their life consisted of and not the slightest sense that it was ever even a reality. Common expressions such as “make the most of your life” or “live life to the fullest” become nothing more than empty rhetoric when if at some point we have no remembrance that we ever existed. How can making the most of a life you have no recollection of ever having occurred have any real significance? Making the world a better place or improving the lives and well-being of others would be nothing more than chasing after the wind. For how can making a better world have any real value when, ultimately, everyone in that world will have no memory of ever having been there? If death is the end of our existence, then whether you married or not, had children, friends, the college you went to, the pleasures you enjoyed, your job promotion, the fame and prominence you may have obtained, the places you traveled to, the music you listened to, the books you read, etc., are nothing more than empty, worthless endeavors, all to no avail when at some point the cognitive and perceptual powers of the mind come to an abrupt end; Remaining forever lifeless and all that came before would be as though it never was. All our thoughts, deeds, experiences, and accomplishments, are then ultimately inconsequential and utterly futile.

In contrast, in light of the reality of a life that continues beyond the grave, all our thoughts, deeds, experiences, and accomplishments, will have eternal consequence and significance and directly affect, not only our own eternal existence, but that of others. Once the eternal is truly apprehended and grasped with the certainty of its reality, and such is the case with every believer (Rom. 4:20-24), it becomes entirely irrational to think that it would be possible to afterward be more concerned about our temporal existence with its limited number of years at the expense of life everlasting with an infinite number of years in the presence of God. Thus Jesus says in **Matthew 16:26**, “*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*”

We come to understand then that the truth of the Gospel is the single most critical issue in life, bringing the message of our only everlasting hope which is Christ “*the true God and eternal life*” (1 John 5:20); A truth apart from which we are left with nothing of lasting value and hence of no actual value at all. Success or failure in this present life is determined solely by faith or lack thereof in the doctrines of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul writes, “*So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.*” (Eph. 5:15-17). Be wise and make the most of every opportunity to the betterment of your eternal soul and that of others, growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord that we might do all for his good pleasure and delight in any given situation, living daily in agreement with the mind of Christ, “*I must be about My Father’s business.*” “*Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body*” (1 Cor. 6:19-20). “*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Cor. 10:31).

So then, the only wise response in light of the promise of eternal life is that anything in this present life that would affect our future life, whether positively or negatively, is to be our chief and primary concern. Making all of lives decisions based on our eternal comfort and well-being in the world to come, which Scripture calls our “home” (2 Cor. 5:6,8), irrespective of the extent to which we must forgo any fleshly and temporal comforts and pleasures in this present world. We would do well as Christians to continually ask ourselves, what will be the consequences of the actions and choices I make today a thousand years from now? Will the various activities I involve myself with, entertainments, pleasures, my occupation, various hobbies, what I say and do, what I eat or drink, how I spend my money, etc, add to or detract from my eternal well being? “*For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body*” (2 Cor. 5:10). Jesus said

in **Matthew 12:36**, “*And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak.*” And it is written in 1 Corinthians 4:5, “*For He will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due.*” Therefore Jesus exhorts us,

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matt. 6:19-21).

Therefore, it behooves us to diligently guard our hearts, our tongue, and to use our time wisely for that which has real and lasting value. To use our allotted time in pursuit of that which is but temporal and fleeting is not only exceedingly foolish but leaves us guilty before God of being poor stewards of a most precious commodity which He has so graciously bestowed. It is written in Colossians 3:1-17,

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from

Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

The Apostle James states,

Look here, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.” How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it’s here a little while, then it’s gone. What you ought to say is, “If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.” Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil. Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it (James 4:13-17).

Paul writes,

That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever. (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

Finally, Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:6-17,

So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

You love Him even though you have never seen Him. Though you do not see Him now, you trust Him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as *temporary residents*. (emphasis added)

Amen

**Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14,**

That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty. God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad.

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