

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. Brown, Mrs. Carswell, Mr. Dowling, Mr. Hadley, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mrs. Owens, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.
Out of Town: James Law, Samuel Law.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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A Brighter Future

By Derek Long

Recently I overheard someone talking about their view of their future. He was expressing how he was 50 years old. He spoke of how he would need to work until he died because he would not make enough money to retire. He viewed his physical health as simply going to decline from this point on in his life. He spoke about possibly getting cancer at some point. He basically thought he might as well just have a heart attack right now and die because his life is not going to get any better in the future. Overhearing this conversation made me think about how some people view what lies ahead in their future and of how many people are without hope (Ephesians 2:12).

The person mentioned in the previous paragraph as far as I know was not a Christian. However, the Bible gives us glimpses of how sometimes even godly and righteous people can end up thinking they would be better off dead. Moses felt it would be better to die than continue to put up with the complaints of the Israelites (Numbers 11:15). Elijah felt this way as Jezebel was seeking to take his life. 1 Kings 19:4 tells us, "he prayed that he might die, and said, 'It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!'" (NKJV). Job would feel this way. In Job 7:15-16 says, "So that my soul chooses strangling and death rather than my body. I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone, for my days are but a breath" (NKJV). When life here seems hopeless, people may easily start to think death is preferable to life.

One of the things which caught my attention is the sort of things people think make life worth living. It seems a person might think life is worth living if they have plenty of money and yet the Bible warns us against thinking one's life consist in the abundance of things one possesses (Luke 12:15). If a person never makes enough money to retire, does that mean life was not worth living? I think not! It seems people think life is worth living as long as their health is at a certain level. The Bible does admit that as one grows older their health will naturally decline and days may come, "when you say, 'I have no pleasure in them'" (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7, NKJV). One's health can reach a point where one cannot enjoy the things they once enjoyed. A person may not be able to be as physically active, travel, enjoy the same types of food, etc. Yet does our life only have value if we can enjoy these things. Again, I think not! The person the man was conversing with mentioned she would hope you could at least have one more good vacation before dying. Yet do we live our life just so we can experience some sort of vacation. All of the things mentioned as reasons to live in the conversation were based upon earthly things without a consideration of eternal things (Matthew 6:19-21; Colossians 3:1-2).

Dying for a non-Christian is not an improvement upon even the worse living conditions one could have in this life. Think about the rich man in Luke 16. His living conditions while upon the earth were nice. The text says he, "was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day" (Luke 16:19, NKJV). Yet he dies in a lost condition. As a result, he experiences something worse than anything we experience in life. In Luke 16:24 he cries out for Lazarus to, "dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (NKJV). His condition is so bad after dying a small drip of water would be an improvement. Life here may be bad but for the lost person what awaits after death is far worse than what they are experiencing now.

In addition to hearing this conversation, I recently received an email reminding me of the fact the Christian has a bright future whether he continues to live or dies (Philippians 1:21-23). Here are some things which were said in that email which I would like to share with you: "I love Paul's attitude about life and death, clearly stated in Philippians 1:21-23. Death has the massive plus of finally reaching

the goal of being with the Lord, your Savior, and Creator ... Yet, to live has benefits, like fruitful and meaningful work, helping people, and saving more souls. Thus, the Christian finds themselves in a win-win situation. When the unbeliever faces the fear of death, judgment, and the frustrating scenario as they continue to live. They have traded their soul for what does not even give them peace or make them happy at the moment. For the unbeliever, life here is as good as it gets, and at times it isn't that good if all your marbles are in this basket. Don't get me wrong, I like life, and this world is filled with many incredible blessings. Yet, if this is all the reward I get, especially if I traded my soul and eternity with God for it, in that light, such is a really bad trade. 'I sold my soul,' and what I received in return was limited pleasure with Covid, droughts, wildfires, cancer, crime, high fuel prices, economic instability, and so on" (Dunagan). In addition, I thought when hearing the conversation mentioned in the beginning of the article how as a Christian if I live another ten years my physical health may decline, my economic situation may not be great, etc. Yet inwardly I can grow and I can become a better person more conformed to the image of God's Son (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:11).