

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

April 24

2022

Finish The Race

A group of men were once running together in a mini marathon when one of them had a sobering thought. “What would you do”, he asked, “if you were suddenly made known that today was going to be your last day on earth?” Now, there were several different answers to that question. One man said, “I would immediately rush home to spend the remainder of my time with my closest loved ones.” Another man said, “I would rush to those that I have wronged and make my wrongs right.” However, one of the men said, “I would just finish the race.”

Now, you see, the attitude of the last man depicted in the story above should be the attitude of every one who is a Christian. For, the Bible compares living the life of a Christian to that of running a foot race (1 Corinthians 9:24-25; Hebrews 12:1) and all Christians need to run the race set before them each and every day by being readily prepared to finish the race.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, may we all live each and every day as if it was our last day here on this earth. For the fact of the matter is, tomorrow is not guaranteed for any of us (James 4:13-14), and we all need to always be ever mindful of the fact that Jesus is coming, He is going to appear a second time (Hebrews 9:28). When? Well, we do not know when He will come (Matthew 25:13), but we do know that “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). Simply put, we need to always be prepared for our appointment with physical death (Hebrews 9:27), and we need to always be prepared for the return of our Lord and Savior, lest we are found unprepared when He does return (Matthew 25:1-13).

So knowing that, be one who makes the one thing that you do, that of pressing toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14). Always run the race in such a way that you may obtain the prize (1 Corinthians 9:24), run the race that is set before you with endurance (Hebrews 10:36, 12:1), always looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2-3), and be one who finishes the race (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

✍️ Brad Phillips

Control The Controllables

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit” - yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring (James 4:13-14a).

How true! We have no way of knowing with certainty what tomorrow (if it be) will bring. Changes surprises, unforeseen circumstances are a regular part of our life under the sun.

The war in Ukraine, heartbreaking. The rising gas prices, frustrating. The floods and winds that wreck havoc, tough to endure. All of these less than desirable realities bring suffering. So why do we allow them to happen? Real simple, they are beyond our control.

While there is much we cannot prevent, when it comes to the things that matter most, we DO have a say. We CAN control our attitude. We CAN control our determination to put God and His will first in our life.

We can like Joshua, put our foot down and declare, “...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

We CAN make good on our duty to “Fear God and keep His commandments” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

We CAN, with Paul, determine, “...one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14).

While various circumstances spiral out of control, we would do well to prioritize and emphasize. God help us learn to control the controllables.

David McPherson

You Can-But You Can't

You can ignore God's warnings; you can refuse his blessings; you can reject all his wondrous love, but you can't go to heaven doing so.

You can believe any doctrine you choose; you can belong to the church of your choice; you can worship God as you please, but you can't please God doing so (2 Jno. 9; Mt. 15:9,13; Rom. 10:1).

It seems that Satan has done a remarkable job of convincing the people that their religion is a matter of their choice, not God's; that it is a matter of their being pleased, not God.

Grover Stevens

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

Brad Phillips..... (765) 720-2816