

Boasting About Tomorrow

Today, James take us to examine one of the most important issues we must all come to terms with: Our Mortality—the fact that our lives on this earth don't go on forever, our time is limited. There are two Latin phrases that, pretty well sum up our situation: *'tempis fugit'* means 'time flies' and *'carpe diem'* means 'seize the day'. Putting it together: we understand that our lives pass quickly so we need to make the most of every day.

There's a song that Alaine and I love by **Josh Groban** called '**Granted**'. **Play video clip.**

The chorus of the song goes: *"If you have a dream, go chase it. If you feel hope, don't waste it. If you find love, embrace it. And never take a single breath for granted. The story is yours, go write it. Tomorrow's undecided. Our days are counted on this planet. Never take a single breath, take a single breath for granted."*

Time flies, so seize the day. Sounds so simple and easy doesn't it. But James wants to add one important proviso: Remember to include seeking and obeying the Lord in all your plans!

James 4:13-17

We remember James was writing to a largely Jewish Christian audience. Jewish people are known to be highly motivated and usually very successful, especially in business and making money. High motivation and success can lead to overconfidence in our own abilities. James' audience were obviously boasting about their independence and prowess. He cautions his audience that ultimately God is the one who determines our destiny, we couldn't succeed without Him.

James is simply reinforcing what Jesus taught about accumulating wealth. We should not be boastful of our accomplishments or neglect consulting how God wants us to use the wealth we've been given. One of Jesus' Parables, about the Rich Fool, stands out as timely.

Luke 12:13-21

We really need to remember Jesus words in verse 21 at the end of this Parable, *"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."*

Have you ever stopped to think about what it means to be rich toward God? Would you believe me if I told you that God keeps records of our bank account in heaven? Each of us has a ledger entry beside our names, written in the Lamb's Book of Life. We read of the Book of Life in **Revelation 20:11-15** at an event called the Great White Throne Judgment.

"Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Another book was

opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up its dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

I believe I need to explain this event in more detail. The resurrection of the dead takes place in two stages: the first is when the spirits of all who are in Christ go immediately to be with the Lord after their physical death. Remember when Jesus said to the thief that hung beside him on the cross, *"Today, you will be with me in paradise."* If we are in Christ, when we die our spirit leaves the body and goes immediately to be with the Lord.

The second stage of the resurrection takes place when those who are in Christ receive their full glorified spiritual bodies, just as Jesus received following His resurrection. According to Revelation there appears to be two different groups who will receive new, glorified spiritual bodies. The first are those who died for their faith, the martyrs, who had been beheaded or their bodies mutilated in some way. Revelation 20:5 tells us that, *"(The rest of the dead did not come to life (receive their new spiritual bodies) until the thousand years were ended."*

The thousand years, or Millenium, as it is called, refers to a long, but undetermined period of time between Jesus earthly resurrection and His second coming at the final judgment. During this time, some saints will be martyred and other saints will die of disease or natural causes. The saints who are martyred will be given the privilege of reigning with Christ before other saints who have died. (Cf. Rev 20:4 'They came to life and reigned for 1000 years').

The White Throne Judgement mentioned, I believe, is a judgment of believers who lived the course of their lives but were not martyred. They are the ones whose names are written in the Book of Life, and according to Revelation 20:12, *"Will be judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books."* This judgement is not a judgement of life or death, but of their faithfulness and obedience as Christians during their earthly lives. This will determine our role in 'reigning with Christ', when death and Hades are finally destroyed.

Back to my original point, because all believers will someday have to give an account of our words and deeds, we need to heed James' final advice in verse 4:17, *"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins."*

Back to our original thought, time flies and the years pass by quickly, especially the older we get. Therefore, we need to 'seize the day', never take a single day for granted. But we must always remember, someday, for each of us, even though we are saved and 'in Christ', we will be called to give account for every word and action. We must be ever mindful to include God and what He wants in our plans. I leave you with the best advice I can find in Scripture on how you can assure your future in eternity.

I Peter 1:3-11 Making One's Calling and Election Sure