



REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

Not Knowing Tomorrow

By Pastor Brian De Jong

On our recent trip to Reno, I had an opportunity to serve the good brethren at Mt. Rose OPC. As I learned, their pastor was gone on vacation, and one of their elders was going to lead the service and read a sermon in the absence of their pastor. It is difficult for them to find Pulpit Supply, given the distance of Reno from the other churches in the Presbytery. For that reason, I offered to preach, and their Session was glad to have me do so.

The sermon which I delivered was the same I preached on Sunday night, July 18, at Grace Church –

Arthur Perkins
sermon on James 4:14
– What is Your Life.

That text, which I read and expounded, is James 4:14 *Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.* It is a clear and strong verse, and easy to proclaim to God’s people.

Little did I realize how directly applicable that would be to our own lives in just one day.

Monday was our last day in Reno, so I check in with American Airlines and had our boarding passes ready to go. We would get up early, be at the airport on time, fly to Chicago and be home by late afternoon. I was looking forward to being home again. It was all going as planned.

Then, without explanation, American Airlines notified me that our flight had been canceled. I was not happy. This was not my plan. I called and spoke at length with one of their agents, trying to find an alternate route to Chicago on Tuesday.

Though the agent tried diligently, their “system” decided that it would be best for us to stay in Reno until Thursday. They booked us on a flight to Chicago for Thursday morning, and nothing else was possible.

Did I mention that this was not my plan? Did I indicate that I was not happy with these developments? How dare they change the arrangements that I had so carefully made? Didn’t they realize that they were scrambling my schedule? Who do they think they are?

Those were the kinds of questions running through my mind as I finally resigned myself to the fact that we would not be able to fly home until Thursday.

Even after accepting that reality, I was still exceedingly grumpy.

After much grouching, the Lord brought to my mind again the verse from James.

Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow... That was true, though I was not applying it to myself. I thought I knew what my life would be like – TSA, Boarding, Flying, Deplaning... The truth is this: preaching God’s word is much easier than living God’s word. Applying this verse to myself was not happening when my case. It was not that I didn’t know what to do – I did. There was just a disconnect between knowing the truth and doing the truth.

The same thing can happen for us when we hear God’s word preached. We understand it, we agree with it, we

Volume 16, Issue 8
August 2021

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Mnemonics...

- **8/5 Church Picnic**
- **8/14 Bike Ride**

Chapter 16: Spending

TO EARN money is easy compared with spending it well; anybody may dig up potatoes, but it is not one woman in ten that can cook them. Men do not become rich by what they get but by what they save. Many men who have money are as short of wit as a hog is of wool; they are under the years of discretion though they have turned forty, and make ducks and drakes of hundreds as boys do of stones. What their fathers got with the rake, they throw away with the shovel. After the miser comes the prodigal. Often men say of the spendthrift that his old father was no man's friend but his own, and now his son is no man's enemy but his own: the fact is, the old gentleman went to hell by the lean road, and his son has made up his mind to go there by the fat. As soon as the spendthrift gets his estate, it goes like a lump of butter in a greyhound's mouth. All his days are the first of April; he would buy an elephant at a bargain or thatch his house with pancakes. nothing is too foolish to tickle his fancy; his money burns holes in his pocket, and he must squander it, all the while boasting that his motto is, "Spend, and God will send." He will not stay till he has his sheep before he shears them; he forestalls his income, draws upon his capital, and so kills the goose which lays the golden eggs, and then cries out, who would have thought it?" He never spares at the brim, but he means to save at the bottom. He borrows at high interest of Rob Them, Cheat Them, and Sell Them-up, and when he gets cleaned out, he lays it all either upon the lawyers or else on the bad times. Times never were good for lazy prodigals; and if they were good to them, they would be bad for all the world besides. Why men should be in such a hurry to make themselves beggars is a mystery; but nowadays, what with betting at horse races, laziness, and speculating, there seems to be a regular four-horse coach running to Needham every day. Ready money must be quite a curiosity to some men, and yet they spend like lords. They are gentlemen without means, which is much the same as plum puddings without plums.

Spending your money with many a guest,
Empties the larder, the cellar, and chest.

If a little gambling is thrown in with the fast living, money melts like a snowball in an oven. A young gambler is sure to be an old beggar if he lives long enough.

The devil leads him by the nose,
Who the dice so often throws.

There are more asses than those with four legs. I am sorry to say they are found among working men as well as fine gentlemen. Fellows who have no estate but their labor, and no family arms except those they work with, will spend their little hard earnings at the bar or in waste. No sooner are their wages paid than away they go to the "Spotted Dog," or the "Marquis of Granby," to contribute their share of fools' pence towards keeping up the landlord's red face and round potbelly. Drinking water neither makes a man sick nor in debt, nor does it make his wife a widow, and yet some men hardly know the flavor of it; but beer guzzled down as it is by many a working man is nothing better than brown ruin. Dull droning blockheads sit on the ale bench and wash out what little sense they ever had. However, I believe that farming people are a deal better managers with their money than Londoners are, for though their money is very little, their families look nice and tidy on Sundays. True, the rent isn't so bad in a village as in the town, and there's a bit of garden; still, those Londoners earn a good deal of money, and they have many chances of buying in a cheap market which the poor countryman has not. On the whole, I think it's very good management which keeps a family going on ten shillings a week in the country, and bad management that can't pay its way on five-and- twenty in London. Why, some families are as merry as mice in malt on very small wages, and others are as wretched as rats in a trap on double the amount. Those who wear the shoe know best where it pinches, but economy is a fine thing, and makes ninepence go further than a shilling. Some make Soup out of a flint, and others can't get nourishment out of gravy beef. Some go to shop with as much wit as Samson had in both his shoulders, but no more. They do not buy well; they have not sense to lay out their money to advantage. Buyers ought to have a hundred eyes, but these have not even half a one, and they do not open that. Well was it said that if fools did not go to market, bad wares would never be sold.

Continued on next page...

They never get a pennyworth for their penny, and this is often because they are on the hunt for cheap things and forget that generally the cheapest is the dearest; one cannot buy a good shilling's worth of a bad article. When there's five eggs for a penny, four of them are rotten. Poor men often buy in very small quantities and so pay through the nose; for a man who buys by the pennyworth keeps his own house and another man's. Why not get two or three weeks' supply at once, and so get it cheaper? Store is no sore. People are saving at the wrong place and spoil the ship for a half penny's worth of tar. Others look after small savings and forget greater things; they are penny wise and pound foolish; they spare at the spigot, and let all run away at the bung-hole. Some buy things they don't want because they are great bargains; let me tell them that what they do not want is dear at a farthing. Fine dressing makes a great hole in poor people's means. Whatever does John Ploughman and others as work hard for their daily bread want with silks and satins? It's like a blacksmith wearing a white silk apron. I hate to see a servant girl or a laborer's daughter decked out as if she thought people would take her for a lady. Why, everybody knows a tadpole from a fish; nobody mistakes a poppy for a rose. Give me a woman in a nice neat dress, clean and suitable, and for beauty she will beat the flashy young hussies all to pieces. If a girl has got a few shillings to spare, let her buy a good bit of flannel for the winter, before she is tempted with bright looking but useless finery. Buy what suits yourself to wear, and if it does not suit other people to look at, let them shut their eyes. All women are good either for something or for nothing, and their dress will generally tell you which.

I suppose we all find the money goes quite fast enough, but after all it was made to circulate, and there's no use in hoarding it. It is bad to see our money become a runaway servant and leave us, but it would be worse to have it stop with us and become our master. We should try, as our minister says, "to find the golden mean," and neither be lavish nor stingy. He has his money best spent who has the best wife. The husband may earn money, but only the wife can save it. "A wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands." The wife it seems, according to Solomon, is the builder or the real puller down. A man cannot prosper till he gets his wife's leave. A thrifty housewife is better than a great income. A good wife and health are a man's best wealth. Bless their hearts, what should we do without them? It is said they like to have their own way, but then the proverb says, "A wife ought to have her will during life, because she cannot make one when she dies." The weather is so melting that I cannot keep up this talk any longer, and therefore I shall close with an old fashioned rhyme:

"Heaven bless the wives,
they fill our hives—
With little bees and honey!
They soothe life's shocks,
they mend our socks,
But don't they spend the money!"

Church Picnic

Mark your calendars for our annual church picnic which will take place on **Thursday, August 5th** at **6:00 pm.**

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. The Church will be serving grilled brats and hamburgers.



In the same way the sun never grows weary of shining, nor a stream of flowing, it is God's nature to keep His promises. Therefore, go immediately to His throne and say, 'Do as You promised.'

- Charles Spurgeon



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Jonathan Arndt	3 rd
Evelyn Mamazza	10 th
Wendy Froh	15 th
Ellen McNeese	20 th
Sandy Baatz	29 th



August Anniversaries

Brian & De Lou De Jong
August 9th 35 Years

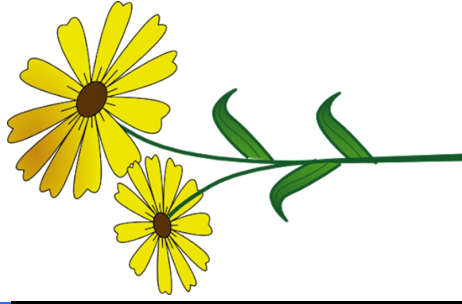




Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

August 2021

Grace OPC



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	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1		2	3	4	5 Church Picnic	6	7
8		9	10	11	12	13	14 Bike Ride
15		16	17	18	19	20	21
22		23	24	25	26	27	28
29	Lord's Supper	30	31				

By: Nancy Harmelink

SENTENCING The orthopedist came into my hospital room and said, “Tomorrow morning you will have a four hour surgery and overnight hospital stay. In the morning you will be taken by handicap van to Pine Haven Rehab where you will stay for three months, no weight bearing”. They put me in a wheelchair, rolled me to the hospital entrance where a stranger put me in his van and drove me to Pine Haven Rehab, room 112, June 18, 2020.

DESOLATION I was taken to room 112 and put in my bed while a very kind and sympathetic nurse took my vitals and welcomed me. Before she shut my door, Satan slipped inside and never left me alone for 30 days! Satan, in his sly and devious ways, started his work on me! He brought me down, down, down to depths I had never been before. He put doubts and fears in my head to the point I was in a very bad place mentally. When nurses would come in and do their thing, I would put on a happy face and, after shutting my door, tears, desolation and the pity party would start. All this time, my Bible was lying on my tray table, untouched. After thirty days, I was doing my daily sobbing to my physical therapist and she quietly said, “do you think you need medication and to see someone?” I proudly said “no” and slowly and angrily wheeled myself to 112, slammed the door, but not before shouting “GET OUT”. In my on-going pity party I suddenly realized what was happening: Satan had a hold on me and I was oblivious.

FORGIVENESS From that day forward I began to keep my eyes on my Savior and Lord, gradually starting to heal physically and mentally. Yes, I continued to have bad times, with Harlan and myself crying together over the phone, but I continued to fervently pray when I felt myself slipping into the ‘pity me’ mode. There is a song we used to sing in church many years ago with the title being: “Moment By Moment” and that is exactly what I did, sometimes getting back on track by praying every few minutes. I kept on remembering my parents saying quite often, “God is faithful”. I also knew, without a doubt, my family and church family were offering up prayers on my behalf. Also, the many cards delivered to room 112 meant so much to me! The majority of these cards had Bible verses as well as hand written personal notes which made them so special. I cherish these cards and often get them out of the box and read them again. The pictures sent from the little people were hung on the wall across from my bed. When my three month incarceration ended, I was able to go home. The sight of my loving family in the driveway brought me to tears (again). I was finally able to hug my husband and everyone else. Since I still was not allowed to ‘bear weight’, my fantastic son-in-law Chris and loveable grandson Eyob got me out of the handicap van and into the wheelchair. For one month a physical therapist came to the house to teach me to walk again. There were many tears along this journey and it was very easy to slip back into the pity party but I always tried to remember this whole experience was in God’s timing not mine; I wanted to be able to get back on my feet NOW! Finally the big day came for me and I was able to get out of the wheelchair [now in the closet] and use a walker. I will never be able to walk on my own but, one thing I know is that God has a plan for me and it is a perfect plan made by a perfect God.

ALL TO JESUS I SURRENDER So now, June 18,2021, I know despite my previous doubts and fears, God will never leave me, forsake me or stop loving me. Even when I lose it, He always forgives and gives me another chance to get it right. I still have a problem with forgiving myself for my desolation but Jesus knows my heart. After being away from my church family nine months I was finally able to go to church! I saw all these people with new eyes, forgetting their kindnesses, never gossiping and always offering anything and everything if there were an occasion that warranted it. I saw my pastor in a different light, maybe taken for granted? After attending church in my lazy boy for so long, I all of a sudden remembered how much I enjoyed his sermons and all the time he put into them [do know ministers do not just put a sermon together Saturday night!]. I left church that first time rejuvenated, loving this church more than I ever had!

‘My only comfort in life is that I belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ’. Heidelberg Catechism

‘He is my God though dark my road, He holds me that I shall not fall. Wherefore to Him I leave it all.’ [Whate’er My God Ordains Is Right].

Nancy [Romans 8:18]



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Spurgeon Corner

“The people that do know their God shall be strong”
Daniel 11:32

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Every believer understands that to know God is the highest and best form of knowledge; and this spiritual knowledge is a source of strength to the Christian. It strengthens his *faith*. Believers are constantly spoken of in the Scriptures as being persons who are enlightened and taught of the Lord; they are said to “have an unction from the Holy One,” and it is the Spirit’s peculiar office to lead them into all truth, and all this for the increase and the fostering of their faith. Knowledge strengthens *love*, as well as faith. Knowledge opens the door, and then through that door we see our Saviour. Or, to use another similitude, knowledge paints the portrait of Jesus, and when we see that portrait then we love him, we cannot love a Christ whom we do not know, at least, in some degree. If we know but little of the excellences of Jesus, what he has done for us, and what he is doing now, we cannot love him much; but the more we know him, the more we shall love him. Knowledge also strengthens *hope*. How can we hope for a thing if we do not know of its existence? Hope may be the telescope, but till we receive instruction, our ignorance stands in the front of the glass, and we can see nothing whatever; knowledge removes the interposing object, and when we look through the bright optic glass we discern the glory to be revealed, and anticipate it with joyous confidence. Knowledge supplies us reasons for *patience*. How shall we have patience unless we know something of the sympathy of Christ, and understand the good which is to come out of the correction which our heavenly Father sends us? Nor is there one single grace of the Christian which, under God, will not be fostered and brought to perfection by holy knowledge. How important, then, is it that we should grow not only in grace, but in the “knowledge” of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Morning, August 4th, C.H. Spurgeon

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appreciate it, but we don’t apply it. We are not “effectual doers of the word”. We tend to be forgetful hearers, who look at ourselves in the mirror and then walk away and immediately forget what we look like.

If that were not enough, the Lord also reminded me of the context of that verse. If we say, “Today we will go to this town, do business, make a profit...” then we are arrogantly boasting, as if we do know what tomorrow will bring. I realized that my assumptions about our flight on Tuesday, and my reactions to the cancelation, were simply manifestations of my own pride. (yes, preachers struggle with pride too) I needed to not be arrogant, but to say, “If the Lord wills...”

We are so accustomed to getting our way, and seeing our plans work out as anticipated, that we don’t easily see our pride. But when we see it, we must mortify that pride – put it to death! And then, in its place, we ought to humbly submit to whatever our wise and holy God has in store for us! With rejoicing! And no grumping!