

Too Late!

Joe Slater

Every one of us has been there. Maybe you were going to buy that table while the furniture store had the price marked down; but you put it off, and by the time you arrived, the sale was over. Or perhaps you wanted tickets to hear your favorite singer, but by the time you tried to purchase them, the concert was sold out. You can get by without the table and the tickets, but waiting until it's "too late" to prepare for eternity is tragic beyond measure!

The rich man (Luke 16:19) had the best that money could buy in this world, but he was unprepared for eternity. His behavior showed no concern for God, and no kindness toward Lazarus, the poor beggar who sat starving at his gate. When the rich man died and found himself in torments in Hades while Lazarus rested in the bosom of Abraham, he cried out for mercy (vv. 23-24). But, alas, it was too late! Not one drop of water to cool his parched tongue – no, not even this miniscule measure of comfort would be granted to him! He had shown no mercy in life, and he would receive none after death. How sad, that he waited until it was too late to seek mercy!

Since he could not change his own eternal fate, perhaps he could at least do something for his brothers who were still alive. He pleaded that Lazarus be sent back to warn them. But again, the answer was "no"! They had the word of God to warn them; if they would not heed it, neither would they listen to someone who returned from the dead. But again we wonder, where was his concern for his brothers while he was alive? Not until it was too late did he give serious consideration to their eternal welfare.

Dear reader, what about you? Are you prepared for eternity? Most of us spend a good deal more time and effort preparing for retirement than we do preparing to meet God in judgment. Like the rich man, however, our wealth cannot save us, but will condemn us if we misuse it. Now is the time to believe & obey the gospel! Salvation is too precious to risk waiting until it is too late.

Christian friend, what about your relatives, friends, and acquaintances? Are you reaching out to them with the gospel while time and opportunity are yours? They are depending on you to help them learn the Lord's way. If you wait until it is too late, how will you explain your neglect to them when they are lost on the day of judgment? Furthermore, how will you explain it to God?

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

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FAITHFUL?

Most of us trifle with the cost of Christianity. We slap our sins on the table and, for the price of Somebody Else's blood, happily walk away with an asbestos-lined soul and a title deed to Heaven. With "eternity taken care of, we get back to living life as usual, offering the obligatory gestures to God on Sundays and holidays.

But God doesn't let us get away with that. Jesus said, "Anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me . . ."

Ed Underwood (*When God Breaks Your Heart*)

Duped by Sin

The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

(1 John 2:17 NASU).

Just imagine that in the middle of the night someone entered a store and exchanged all the price tags. All the cheap items had the high prices, and the expensive items had the low prices. What havoc this would cause!

Today, in the real world, this very thing is happening all the time. Up is down and down is up, good is bad and bad is good. People spend their whole lives purchasing things to make them happy. They are pursuing pleasure rather than principle. It's like the person who has a strange compulsion to eat dirt! It neither can truly satisfy the body's needs, nor is it healthy. It is outright dangerous!

Paul speaks of those whose god is their belly (Philippians 3:19). He also says in another place that people are slaves to their appetites (Romans 16:18). But none of the things of the world truly satisfy. One man said, "I have toiled all my life for food and clothing, now the clothing won't fit and the food doesn't agree with me."

Someone changed all the price tags. We think we are getting something of value, but it's a cheap trick. We must "not look to the things that are seen but the things that are not seen" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

May we find the true treasures in Jesus!

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)