

Thoughts on Threescore and Ten

Joe Slater

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10, KJV).

I reached my threescore and ten a few days ago. That milestone gives me pause to reflect a bit. By God's grace I'm in fairly decent health, so look out, fourscore, here I come!

When Moses wrote that Psalm, he was already well above eighty years old. He would survive to 120! But he had lived through some frightfully difficult times as he led the Israelites through the wilderness. Their persistent rebellion had brought God's wrath down upon them again and again! Multitudes had died before their time. The average human life span would continue to plummet for a good while.

My own life has been far less turbulent, though not without its trials. I've been blessed to do the work I love for over 46 years. I'm not naïve enough to think I have 46 more to continue working! If I'm to accomplish anything for the Lord, the time is now. Then again, that has always been the case.

Only one life

Twill soon be past

Only what's done

For Christ will last (C. T. Studd)

Faith, family, and friends surpass all else in importance. I've always "known" that, but every passing year makes it clearer. I hope that's true for you as well.

If Tomorrow Never Comes

"How do you know what will happen tomorrow? For your life is like the morning fog -- it's here a little while, then it's gone" (James 4:14 NLT).

A couple's oldest son kills his brother in a fit of jealousy; a mother sends her son away for his own protection but dies never seeing him again; a woman gives her husband a beautiful son, but she dies in childbirth; a father receives word that his son fell in battle; a mother watches her innocent son executed for crimes he did not commit. A man stands up for what he believes and is murdered by a mob. A storm demolishes a house and kills a decent couple's grown children who had gathered to celebrate a birthday - seven sons and three daughters.

Sounds like the evening news? Maybe, but these tragedies come from the pages of the Bible. The Bible does not sidestep the stark reality of living and dying. It does not sugar coat the raw edge of human existence as we know it.

Why do you suppose God wanted a book that sounds like the evening news in its record of humanity? First, God wants us to know He knows fully well our plight and understands that life is unpredictable from our perspective. Second, God wants us to be aware of our fragile nature. The common concept of youth is that "nothing bad can happen to me." Sorry. That's a foolish concept. Third, God wants us to use our days wisely. "What should it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Mt. 16:26). Nothing matters as much as the value of the soul. If we realize we may have no more tomorrows, wouldn't we plan for eternity? Fourth, God wants us to realize we are "sojourners" here, not permanent dwellers. "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing thru" are words not only to be sung but lived – each day!

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)

**Don't strive to be well known;
strive to be worth knowing**

The Greatest Story I Hesitate to Share

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

I can tell a joke, a childhood memory, something that happened to me, something I did, something someone said to me, a joyous occasion, something I read on the internet – all with comfort. But when it comes to the gospel of Christ, I always figured people were watching me, and my actions spoke louder than my words. However, that is not entirely accurate. It does make a difference in others' lives when you share the Gospel of Christ.

I believe we can create opportunities to bring Christ into a conversation. I also believe that a lot of people long to talk about faith, but it's out of their comfort zone because no one talks about religion as an everyday topic. I've always been told you just don't bring up religion and politics. But how is a person going to know what you believe unless you tell them? Sure, they watch your actions, for whatever is in your heart translates into actions; but we have a mouth for a reason.

Can you image marrying a person who never tells you that they love you? It's like the old story of a man being married for over 50 years. The wife comes to him and says, "I have always regretted that you never tell me that you love me." He responds, "Well, I said it when we married; if I change my mind, I'll let you know."

People need constant input. Some get it from television, radio, movies, and the internet. And people have a deep-seated longing for faith in something greater than themselves. God put that into every human being. There is an aching, a longing to be wanted, needed, useful. Words tell others what is on our minds, and in our hearts.

--Linda Gragg (Oceano, CA) adapted