

**Subject: *What is Your Life?***

**Scripture: *James 4:13-17***

The Book of James tells us about some boastful businessmen who planned to go into a city and do business there for a year. They planned the time, the place, and the profit, but they forgot something very important—they forgot to ask God. There's nothing wrong with planning. In fact, the Bible encourages us to plan our work and then work our plan. But in all our planning we should first ask God what He wants us to do and then rely on Him to help us do it. In this story the boastful businessmen made one big mistake—they left God out of their plans.

In this passage we see three things: 1) what we do know about life; 2) what we don't know about life; and 3) what we should do with life. Using this as a guide we will study the text with a simple outline, as we answer the all-important question found in verse 14, "what is your life?"

### **1. The brevity of life**

That is a well-established fact. Life is like a vapor, like a fog or a mist that appears for just a little while, and then it's gone. An unknown writer expressed the brevity of life like this:

*When as a child, I laughed and wept—time crept.  
When as a youth, I dreamed and talked—time walked.  
When I became a full-grown man—time ran.  
When older still I grew—time flew.  
Soon I shall find in passing on—time gone.*

The Bible reminds us about the brevity of life in these ways.

***1 Chronicles 29:15*** *Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.*

***Job 7:6*** *My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.*

***Job 14:1*** *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

A man said to a dear Christian friend on his deathbed, "So long brother, I'll never see you again in the land of the living." The man said, "Yes, I'll see you again in the land of the living. That's where I'll be. This is the land of the dying."

Life is very short. On a tombstone you will find the date of birth and the date of death and little dash in between. Your life is like that dash.

#### ***The Dash***

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.

He referred to the dates on her tombstone from the beginning...to the end.

He noted that first came the date of her birth and spoke of the following date with tears, But he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time that she spent alive on earth...

And now only those who loved her know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own; the cars...the house...the cash.  
What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard...are there things you'd like to change?  
For you never know how much time is left. You could be at "dash mid-range."

If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real,  
And always try to understand the way other people feel.  
And be less quick to anger, and show appreciation more  
And love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect, and more often wear a smile...  
Remembering that this special dash might only last a while.

So, when your eulogy's being read with your life's actions to rehash...  
Would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent your dash?

## **2. The uncertainty of life**

In our text James tells us about some businessmen who made some very foolish plans. They planned the place, the period of time, and the profit. There is nothing wrong with planning, but they left God out of their plans. How could they make plans for a whole year when they couldn't see ahead even one day? Someone said, if you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans.

*Proverbs 27:1 Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

### ***Luke 12:16-21***

Jesus told the story about a rich farmer. There is nothing wrong with being a farmer and nothing wrong with being rich. This man was not wrong for what he did, but for what he failed to do. He left God out of his plans.

## **3. The priority of life**

If something is a priority, it is the most important thing. What is the most important thing in life? It is to know the will of God and do it.

*Ephesians 5:15-17 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

We can know God's will only if we read and study His Word. Then once we know it we must choose to do it. If we know His will and don't do it, it is sin. It's the sin of omission, failing to do what we ought to do.

The greatest privilege in life is to know and do God's will. If we fail to know God's will and do it we are wasting our life, and life is too valuable to waste. Someone said: The greatest tragedy in life is not what we suffer, but what we miss.

One reason why people fail to do God's will is that they don't take it seriously. In some cases they don't think about it. In some cases they don't make it a priority and just put it off till later. Some people are very good at putting things off. I read about a man who cleaned out a drawer and found a shoe repair claim ticket—that was 10 years old! Figuring he had nothing to lose, he went to the shop and gave the man the ticket. The man went to look and came back with a smile, "Yes, I found your shoes. They will be ready next Friday."

It's amazing what you can do in just 30 minutes a day. In 30 minutes a day, you can read the Bible through this year. In 30 minutes a day, you can strengthen your marriage. In 30 minutes a day, you can get in better shape. In 30 minutes a day you can reach out to needy people by phone, card, or social media.

Take time to work—it is the price of success.

Take time to think—it is the source of power.

Take time to play—it is the secret of youth.

Take time to read—it is the foundation of wisdom.

Take time to love and be loved—it is the reason for life.

Take time to laugh—it is medicine for the heart.

Take time to worship—it brings life into focus.

Take time to pray—it brings God near and washes the dust of earth from our eyes.

Take time to be holy—for without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

As we start the New Year let's take a little time to reflect on these three things: the brevity of life; the uncertainty of life, and the priority of life.