

Mid-Week Devotion



Marking Time

Read Matthew 26:17-19

“...My time is near”

Last week I had the privilege to be with someone during their last hours here on this side of the grave. It was a touching time as family sat around the bed, speaking to their loved one in calm, loving, and reassuring words; she on the other hand was mostly non-responsive, her eyes open staring at the ceiling, her mouth open as her breathing became more and more labored. “It won’t be long now,” said one of the Hospice nurses; moments later the woman’s earthly body breathed its last breath. As I comforted the family, the nurse’s words, “it won’t be long now” seem to resonate in my mind. It made me think of my own immortality; life here is brief. I can still remember being told as I grew up, “it won’t be long now,” and you will be able to cross the street by yourself. “It won’t be long now,” and you will be starting school, we have heard; or “it won’t be long now” and you will be going off to college. “It won’t be long now” and you will be married and starting a family, or perhaps “it won’t be long now” and you will be retired. It seems that throughout all our lives the words, “it won’t be long now,” act as markers of time as it hurries by.

One day Jesus was asked by His disciples where they should prepare the Passover meal. Jesus told them to go to a certain man and tell Him “the time is near”; in reality, it was very near, for the next day Jesus would be crucified, die, and be buried. Evidently, death comes to everyone, even Jesus. The only difference is that Jesus knew the time of His death and we do not. This not knowing is for us a mixed blessing. On the one hand, not knowing allows us to spend our lives focusing on the present and the future. We make plans, enter into relationships, and raise families all in the backdrop of the inevitable. On the other hand, this freedom can keep us from ever thinking about death until it is too late. This accounts for many unspoken acts of love in our lives. Believing that we will always have tomorrow to say “I love you” or “I’m sorry” to our spouses, children and loved ones, only adds regret to the already painful grieving process when death finally does come. However, I suspect that for much of the world, even if we did know the time of our departure, it would make little difference. This is because life always seems to take precedence over death. Now I am not suggesting that our lives become morbid, constantly dwelling on death; that would be impractical, serving only to limit our future life possibilities. What I am suggesting however, is that how we face death be at least as important as how we face life.

Jesus chose to spend His final hours surrounded by those He loved; it was no different from the way He spent His entire life. And perhaps that’s the point; for in spending our days both giving and receiving love as Jesus did, when death does come to those we love or even ourselves, there will be much less regret and much more peace.

When we live our lives this way, the phrase “it won’t be long now” takes on a new meaning. It now means it won’t be long before we are at home with our Savior, and there is never anything to regret in that.

Pastor Ed