

# The End is Better Than The Beginning

Ecclesiastes 7:8

*Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. (KJV)*

## I. Keep the End in View

- C.H. Spurgeon on our text:
- “Look at our Lord and Master; see his beginning. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Would you see the end? He sits at his Father's right hand, expecting until his enemies be made his footstool.”
- The beginning of the Christian life is also vital:
- Jn.1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:*
- *13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (NKJV)*

- Is being a Christian always easy?
- Lk.9:23-25 *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself & take up his cross daily & follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, & yet lose or forfeit his very self?"*
- Spurgeon: "You must bear the cross, or you shall never wear the crown; you must wade through the mire, or you shall never walk the golden pavement."
- *"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof..."*
- *Consider the caterpillar – transformed into a butterfly*

- 1945 – three incredible, dynamic young evangelists prominent in USA
- Chuck Templeton; Bron Clifford; Billy Graham
- Leaders focussed on Templeton & Clifford!
- They packed stadiums; lectured in seminaries
- By 1950 Templeton denied Christ – career in Radio, TV & Newspaper commentator!
- 1954 Clifford lost ministry; family; health... died at 35yrs. cirrhosis of liver – alcohol!
- Ecc.7:8 *"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."*

## II. Which Way To Face?

- The Past; The Present or The Future?
- We learn from the past; make decisions for the present; which affect the future!
- THE PAST
- Isa 52:12 *But you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for the LORD will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard. (NIV)*
- “...will be your rear guard”
- Repentance, Confession takes the burden of our past - our sin - and places it on Jesus!
- 1Jn.1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (NKJV)*

- Mt.1:28 *"Come to Me, all you who labor & are heavy laden, & I will give you rest. (NKJV)*
- THE PRESENT?
- “*But you will not leave in haste or go in flight*”
- Hasty decisions made through fear or urgency
- Pray – Pray – Pray – Pray....
- Take wise counsel... !
- Pr.19:2 *It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.*
- Zec.8:21 *and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, 'Let us go at once to entreat the LORD and seek the LORD Almighty. I myself am going.' (NIV)*

### III. Now is The Right Time

- Keeping the end in view, act now!
- Consider Israelites facing Philistines...
- Goliath's challenges, insults struck fear...
- Yet they knew God was for them – the Philistines were pagans - heathens...
- Only the boy David was close enough to God
- 1Sa 17:46 *"This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel."* (NIV)

- Redeeming the Time
- Ps.90:12 *Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.* (NIV)
- Eph.5:15 *See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* (NKJV)
- "... not as fools" ???
- Ps.14:1 *"The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."* (Ps.53:1)
- When we act without prayer – acting foolishly!
- Like sheep we follow human wisdom!
- 2005 Istanbul 1500 sheep followed one who jumped off a cliff...! 450 died...!

- Lk.16:19ff Rich man living in luxury – poor beggar Lazarus sat at his gate...
- Both died - Lazarus with Abraham - rich man..
- Lk.16:23 *In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.*
- <sup>24</sup> *So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'* (NIV)
- v.23 “...he looked up”
- What a pity he didn't look up before he died!!!

- THE FUTURE?
- Isa 52:12 *But you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for the LORD will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard.* (NIV)
- “... for the LORD will go before you...”
- Even at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour...
- Lk.23:43 *Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."*
- Having committed our way to God - Trust Him
- Oswald Chambers: “He will keep watch so that we will not be tripped up again by the same failures, as would undoubtedly happen if He were not our ‘rear guard.’”

## Conclusion

- I. Keep The End In View
- II. Which Way To Face
- III. Now Is The Right Time
- *Ecc.7:8 Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. (KJV)*
- Stephen Covey: Top 10 Habits & Quotations
- Habit 2: “Begin with the end in mind!”
- Quote 2: “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.”

- What is the “End in Mind”?
- What is the “Main Thing”?
- The Ultimate “End” is: HEAVEN
- The Immediate “END”: CHRISTLIKENESS
- To be His Disciple – one of His Followers!
- AW Tozer on Personal Life: “Meditate Long and Often!” (Quotes king David Ps. 143)
- v.5 *“I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.*
- *6 I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched (thirsty) land.*  
<Selah> (NIV)