

There's a story of an evangelist preaching in Chicago on the first day of a series of Gospel meetings. At the end of the sermon, he felt the prompting of the Holy Spirit to give people an opportunity to invite Jesus into their hearts. However, since the meetings were scheduled to go on for a few days, he decided to make that invitation the following day. That night, the great fire of Chicago swept through the town, causing much havoc, destruction and loss of lives. As a result, the evangelist decided that he would never again close a Gospel message without giving people an opportunity to invite Christ into their hearts and to receive His salvation and eternal life.

A lot can happen in one day!

Today's message shows what a great stress-buster we have for handling life in a stressful environment. Stress can be caused by unfounded or maybe even real fears and anxieties that grip our hearts. That's possibly why Jesus said in Matthew 6:34 "Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own". That scripture brings me to our main thought for today's message.

'Live one day at a time', trusting God.

I would like to share 4 thoughts around that simple, but meaningful topic of why we should 'Live one day at a time'.

1st thought... Because We Can't Control Tomorrow

Proverbs 27:1 says, "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring".

No one is assured of a tomorrow because we don't hold the times and seasons in our hands. Proverbs 16:9 tells us that "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps". That is why we need to commit our today and all our future plans into God's hands. In fact, tomorrow will not dawn for you and me... one day.

A sad day for me was working at the hospital and one of my favorite patients came in for bloodwork. He comes in once a week and I usually wait on him, sharing the events of the day or how his family is doing. This day, I decided that getting a drink at the cafeteria was more important than helping him. I would wait on him next week. He passed away in his sleep the next day. Thankfully, he was assured of his eternity since he had placed his faith in Jesus!

James warns us in chapter 4:13-17, that we should refrain from boasting or any form of arrogance when making plans for the future. It is significant that he is referring specifically to businessmen making plans for their targets and business expansion. He then draws the attention of readers to the uncertainty of life and the uncertainty of tomorrow. I guess that's something along the lines of what Jesus Himself was saying in the parable of 'The Rich Fool', found in Luke 12:16-20. The man in this parable was arrogantly planning for major expansion and savings, purely for selfish reasons. "Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry' He said, with not a thought for either God, or his fellow-man. He received one of the strongest rebukes in the Bible as God said, "You fool"! He didn't see tomorrow. Therefore, as James advises in chapter 4:15, let's bring God into all our plans and pray for His will to be fulfilled in our plans for tomorrow. What about your plans for tomorrow? Have you brought the Lord into them? Have you prayed for His will to prevail? Are you willing to let Him change your

plans if needed? Of course, if God changes our plans, it will always be for our best. Only He has complete control of tomorrow.

Then there is the 2nd thought... Because There Is Enough Trouble for Today

In Matthew 6:34, Jesus said. "Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, ... Each day has enough trouble of its own".

Not only can't we control tomorrow, but we don't know what may happen today. In fact, some of you going through severe crisis situations may dread the dawning of a new day. There are two possible ways people wake up in the morning. One group cheerfully says, 'Good morning, Lord', while the other group says, 'Good Lord, its morning'! Let's place our todays in God's hands for He is always in control. We are then assured of His providence, protection and provision. It's interesting that God identifies Himself in the scriptures in the present tense as, 'I am'. He is therefore a God of the present; a God of today. Jesus endorsed that thought further with His many declarations of 'I am'. Sadly, many people are either living with regret over the past or with anxiety over the future. For those living with regret over the past, Paul says in Philippians 3:13, 'But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind....I press on..', while for those worrying over their future he says, "Do not be anxious about anything" and then encourages us to trust in the power of praying to God, as quoted in Philippians 4:6. Yes, each day has troubles of its own, but in Psalm 68:19, God is revealed as the Lord "Who daily bears our burdens" and Jesus, in the Lord's Prayer, taught us to pray "Give us this day our DAILY bread" (Matthew 6:11).

What troubles are you facing today? What are you worrying about? Read through Matthew 6:25-34, where Jesus speaks against worry, it

will act as a powerful faith booster and a stress-buster! “Do not let the worries of tomorrow, affect your relationship with God today”.

Huge changes have happened in one day. In one day, Esau lost his birthright. In one day, a vicious persecutor named Saul was miraculously transformed and started his journey towards becoming the Apostle Paul. In one day, a young Hebrew beauty queen named Esther, became the first lady of a mighty empire, with a National holiday declared in her honor. In one day, a prisoner named Joseph, falsely accused and unjustly sentenced for attempted rape, became the second highest ruler of the Egyptian empire. In one day, the entire world was shaken by the events of 9/11, and in one day, the coastline of Sri Lanka was devastated by the Tsunami of 2004. And in one day, sadly thousands of people are dying from the Corona virus. But let's place each day in God's hands! Let him guide our worries and fears.

But Isn't it interesting that NOW is NOT the first case of social distancing, masks, & quarantine? You read it dusting the pages of the Old Testament and then resurfacing in the New Testament.

Listen to the words in Luke 17:11-19 “And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, notice that there were 10 men. Wasn't that the first limit imposed for gatherings by our Governor?

And as he entered into that certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers “which stood afar off:” (Social Distancing?) The recommendation & requirement at present is SIX FEET apart in public.

Did you know that in Bible times, the lepers were to stand at least, SIX FEET from others?”

In the book “The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah”, it reports the standard practice of those days. “No one was to salute a leper...no less than a distance of six feet must be kept from a leper or if the wind came from that direction, a hundred feet were scarcely sufficient.” WHY? Because of their illness being contagious and that sneezes carried germs into the air. Sound familiar?

Leprosy, or Hansen’s disease, is known from ancient writings from China, India, and Egypt, and from mummified remains from Egypt. It was common enough in Israel to warrant extensive regulation in the Mosaic Law of those suffering from it and related skin diseases as written in Leviticus. The disease is caused by a bacterium discovered by the Norwegian scientist G. H. Hansen in 1873 (it was the first bacterium to be identified as the cause of a human disease). The bacterium was communicable through touch and breath.

So, what did they do to keep from spreading the germs more than standing 6 FEET away? Let me read it to you. Leviticus 13:45 says, “And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.” What is the covering? It’s basically a MASK, to keep germs from spreading.

Back to the scripture: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down

on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? They are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.” Here’s a man, not only was he UNCLEAN by leprosy, but he was a Samaritan. And he returned to thank Jesus.

Those with leprosy, if suspected, would be quarantined. “But if the spot on the skin of his body is white and does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest must quarantine the infected person for seven days.” according to Leviticus. 13:4 And then in Verse. 5, “The priest will then reexamine him on the seventh day. If he sees that the infection remains unchanged and has not spread on the skin, the priest must quarantine him for another seven days, totaling 14 days.

The Lord saved us then as he will save us now

Now to the 3rd thought... Because Today Will Never Come Back

A day that ends can never be reclaimed.

I read in a Devotional as to how we might react if our bank credits \$86,400 to our account every day; the catch being that the money has to be used up the same day. If not, it’s taken away. The process is then renewed the next day and every other day with \$86,400 being credited to our account daily. I’m sure most people would have no hesitation in using the money every day! Similarly, God blesses us with 86,400

seconds credited every day, which can never be reclaimed if not used!
Let us use the time wisely.

Let's not live either with wasted or lost opportunities. Let us ask, "Lord, what will You have me do today"? Remember the quote, "Never put off for tomorrow what you can do today".

A few practical things I thought of while preparing this message that we could do daily:

- Spending quality time in God's presence
- Spending quality time with our friends and Family
- Vocally expressing and showing our love for them
- Making at least one person happy
- Not putting off giving a compliment or a helping hand to someone – Hebrews 3:13 says, "Encourage one another DAILY, as long as it is called TODAY..."
- Praying for each other
- Living each day as if it were your last. One day, you will be right!
When that day comes, whether it be through natural means, sickness, an accident or a disaster, we who live in Christ take courage from the words of the Apostle Paul who says, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain". (Philippians 1:21)

Quoting from the words of a Gospel song called 'We Have This Moment', recorded by the Gaither family:

Tender words, a gentle touch and a good cup of coffee,

And someone who loves me, and wants me to stay,
Hold them near, while they are here, don't wait for tomorrow,
To look back and wish for today.

We have this moment to hold in our hands,
And to touch as it slips through our fingers like sand,
Yesterday's gone and tomorrow may never come,
But we have this moment today.

Let's use our time today to glorify the Lord. It can never be reclaimed!

The 4th and final thought... Because God Will Meet Tomorrow's Needs

This is so true if we are willing to give Him the first place in our lives. Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well". Our future is totally secure in Jesus!

For some reason however, most of the time, God doesn't show us what tomorrow holds. Maybe it's simply because He wants us to trust Him for tomorrow. Another hymn says:

Many things about tomorrow, I don't seem to understand

But I know who holds tomorrow, and I know He holds my hand

If your life is in a mess, invite the Lord into your heart as your Savior. Only He can bring true meaning and purpose to your life! Only He can

cleanse and forgive you of sin, because He gave His precious life on a cross to bring salvation to all mankind. He can make your tomorrow secure!

In CLOSING – A successful country songwriter by the name of Marijohn Wilkin drifted away from her faith after finding success. At a time of crisis and personal desperation, as the story goes, she stopped at a church for some counselling and prayer. The young Minister who was on duty had apparently asked her during the conversation, whether she had ever considered being thankful to God for her problems. As she went home and pondered over that statement, she began to play her piano and the words of a song came to her. Needing some help to complete the lyrics that she had written down, she approached her friend Kris Kristofferson who helped her with some of the remaining words. The completed song goes like this.

One day at a time, sweet Jesus
That's all I'm asking of You
Just give me the strength to do every day
What I have to do
Yesterday's gone, sweet Jesus
And tomorrow may never be mine
Help me today
Show me the way
One day at a time

Bow your head with me in prayer:

Sweet Jesus, one day at a time. Help us to stop stressing and give it all to you. You know our tomorrows as we don't. Help us to trust in you as you have asked us to do. Amen