

Occasion: Third Sunday after Epiphany [B]

Date: 01-22-2012

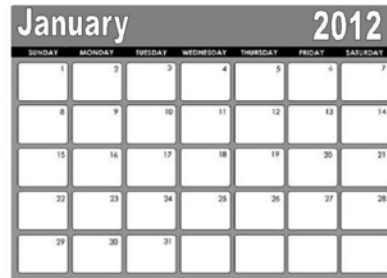
Text: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Title: "The 100 Years Test"

Introduction:

It's called "The 100 Years Test". No! It's not a test that last 100 years. Although I would image you've taken a few test that seem that long. No! It's a test that you can ask yourself about 100 years into the future. Imagine it's January 22, 2112. Who will be married to your spouse 100 years from now? Will the things that trouble you today be troubling 100 years from now? Who will be living in your house 100 years from now? – Wearing your clothes? – Driving your car? – Using your furniture? Who will using your computer? – Who will be using your phone, cell phone? All your daily concerns, all the appointments listed on your calendar, what will they mean 100 years from now? *"Well pastor, when you put it that way, in 100 years, none of those things will mean anything to me. 100 years from now, most of my possessions will be gone. They're perishable – food, clothes, furniture, electronics, vehicle. 100 years from today, January 22, 2112, I plan on being with Jesus, in His presence."*

"The 100 Years Test" is the most important test you will ever take in your life? Why's that? Because your answer to "The 100 Years Test", at least the answer that you're willing to accept and live with each day, should determine a lot about how you live your life today, and every day.



What is most important to you 100 years from now, 1,000 years from now, even 100,000 years from now is most important for you today!

"The 100 Years Test" is one you should take every day, perhaps many times a day. Whenever you would benefit from keeping your priorities straight about **WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE.**

I. "THE THINGS THAT ARE SEEN ARE TRANSIENT, BUT THE THINGS THAT ARE UNSEEN ARE ETERNAL":

As he was writing to the Corinthian Christians, the apostle Paul no doubt had some version of "The 100 Years Test" in his mind. Paul knew of the afflictions that faced Christians in a pagan culture adverse to the Christian faith. Paul had faced opposition from his own people, the Jews, for the faith he proclaimed. The intellectual elite of the Greek and Roman society thought that the Gospel he proclaimed of a crucified and risen Savior was foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:23). Paul had been imprisoned for his faith, stood before magistrates to answer for his faith, and been driven out of town because of his faith. And Paul knew that some of the Christians in Corinth faced the same opposition and ridicule. But, the apostle Paul would willingly endure all this, because he regularly applied "The 100 Years Test", or some similar test, to himself. Mindful of all that he had endured for the faith, and of what lie before him, that apostle Paul would later write to the Corinthians in his second letter to them:

¹⁶So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. **For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.** – 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

For the apostle Paul, "The 100 Years Test" taught him that all the things of this world **"are transient"**, that is, passing away, perishing, or as the old saying goes, *"Here today, gone tomorrow!"* (Even if tomorrow is 100 years from now).

With this in mind, we can understand what the apostle meant as he wrote these words:

²⁹This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, ³⁰and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, ³¹and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

– 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

When he wrote about wives, about our spouse, **“From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none,”** Paul wasn’t telling the Corinthians, or us for that matter, to ignore our spouse! No! He was merely saying that even something as important as marriage is still only temporary, transient. Those who have lost a spouse in death know that! In those circumstances, some have even remarried. No! The point is that relationships in our lives, even something as permanent as marriage, are only temporary.

Then there is also all those things in life that trouble us, that bring us sorrow, grief, anxiety, turmoil. Or, opposite those things, there’s what brings us joy, pleasure, happiness. For good, or for ill, they’re all transient, temporary, of this world. Thus, Paul also writes: **“³⁰and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing,...”** Whether you are troubled, in mourning, or, happy, rejoicing, it is only temporary, passing away.

Your property, your possessions, all those things you labor so hard for, all those matters that seem so important, – transient, temporary, passing away. **“those who buy as though they had no goods, ³¹and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it.”** Just how permanent are the material things you now possess? Just how significant are all the matters of this world that you are involved in? The answer: Take “The 100 Years Test” and you’ll have your answer. How important will they be to you 100 years from now, on January 22, 2112.

What matters most is your faith relationship with God! For your spouse, your children, your extended family, your friends, your neighbors, your co-workers, your classmates, for anyone you know and everyone you know the answer to “The 100 Years Test” is most important. For you, your family, and everyone one you know, it is imperative that you know and grow in your faith relationship with God.

II. **“SET YOUR HOPE FULLY ON THE GRACE THAT WILL BE BROUGHT TO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”:**

The apostle Paul was not the only one mindful of “The 100 Years Test”! The apostle Peter also lived by the same test. He wrote:

¹³Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. – *1 Peter 1:13*

Jesus is coming again! Jesus has established a Kingdom that will last forever! All those who have turned to Him in faith will enjoy the blessings of that everlasting kingdom! In His grace, God has sent His Son to redeem out of this age ruined by sin a people who will enjoy forever the love of God and His blessings!

In the Old Testament Reading, when God sent Jonah to proclaim the destruction of Nineveh in 40 days, “The 100 Years Test” was significantly shortened. It became “The 41 Days Test”! Where would the individuals of Nineveh be in 41 days? You heard their response:

⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.” – *Jonah 3:5*

Amazing, isn’t it, how that “41 Days Test” refocused the people of Nineveh on what was most important and what was not.

In the Gospel Reading, Jesus called the brothers Peter and Andrew, and their associate fishermen, the brothers James and John, to leave behind their work as fishermen to follow Him and become “fishers of men.” And what did those 4 men do? They left all to follow Jesus.

Conclusion:

I believe Jesus would have every person take “The 100 Years Test”. In His love for us, Jesus came into this world, bore the guilt of our sin Himself and took the judgment we deserve. Why did He do this? So, that we could have the answer to “The 100 Years Test”. Whenever we ask ourselves “Where am I going to be in 100 years?” – the answer could always be the same for everyone, “With Jesus!” The alternative answer? Do you really want to consider that? Remember:

What is most important to you 100 years from now, 1,000 years from now, even 100,000 years from now is most important for you today!

Believe it! Live it! AMEN