

The Brevity of Life



"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.' But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil." (James 4:13-16)

The title of my message is "The Brevity of Life." I am sure most of you have heard in the news about the death of James Kim. James Kim was from San Francisco. He was the senior editor of CNET, an online internet site providing news and reviews for computers and other electronics and he also owned two stores in San Francisco – a clothing store and a pharmacy. James Kim, his wife and two children were up in Oregon for Thanksgiving. On the way back they took a wrong turn and got stuck in the snow. About a week later, James left his wife and children and went on foot to seek help about 7:30 in the morning and promised them that he would return to them by 1:00 P.M. if he found no help. Well, James never returned and was found dead a few days later.

His death had a major impact on me for I knew James Kim. James Kim was a client of my father. We used to do payroll for his two stores. I remember talking to him on the phone a few months ago and I would send him correspondence for his business on a quarterly basis. Today at work I was looking at the phone numbers that were stored in my phone and was surprised to see his name and phone number there.

I never imagined that he would die so soon. He was only 35 years old! That shows you how life is uncertain and death is for sure. The bible says that "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). We all have an appointment that we must keep. We are all going to die unless Christ comes back first.

Life is short. It is uncertain. We have no guarantee that we will live to see tomorrow. What is our life? The bible says that our life is but "a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14). Picture yourself on a cold day outside. If you take a deep breath and exhale you would see a small vapor appearing for a little while. Well that is how brief our life is. Scripture exhorts us to number our days. We read in Psalm 90:10-12: "The days of our

lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

We do not know what will happen tomorrow. The bible exhorts us in Proverbs 27:1-2: “Do not boast about tomorrow. For you do not know what a day may bring forth. Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.” I am sure James Kim had many plans. He wanted to do this and that. I read that he was planning to write an article on one of the latest MP3 players. Well the bible says: “Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that’” (James 4:14-15).

James Kim’s death had a big impact on me. It made me think of eternity. I do not know if James Kim was a believer or not. But it showed me how life is vain without God. Jesus said in Matthew 16:26: “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” James Kim, it seems, was a very wealthy man and held a very high position in CNET. He was highly respected among his peers and colleagues. My dad said of him on the day of his death that “he was very smart.” But what does it profit if he did not know God. What profit is it to him if he gained the whole world with all its money and prestige and honor and he did not gain the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ our Savior? He cannot take anything with him to the grave. The bible says in 1 Timothy 6:7: “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” “Only what is done for Christ will last,” like the well-known poem says.

The death of James Kim made me think of the meaning of life. What is the meaning of life? Why are we here? To what purpose were we born? What is the chief end of man? The Westminster Confession of Faith rightly states: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31), and to enjoy him forever (Psalm 73:25,26).” The bible says that we were created for the glory of God (Isaiah 43:7). True meaning and true joy is found when one knows and lives for His Creator.

In Conclusion, we saw how life is very brief and uncertain. I appeal to you if you do not know Christ, that now is the time to get right with God. Now is the time to seek the Lord. You have no guarantee of tomorrow. James Kim would not have imagined a month ago that he would die so soon. He most likely expected to live to see his children’s children. But scripture exhorts us that “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb. 4:7). I appeal to you unsaved soul that today is the day to put your faith in the Lord Jesus. “Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:6), is what scripture commands us. Do not be like the rich fool who thought he had many years and

said "And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" (Luke 12:19). But what did God say to him? "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'" (Luke 12:20). The bible says that today is the day of salvation. Today is the day to get right with God. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). Now then as an ambassador for Christ, I "implore you on Christ's behalf to be reconciled to God," (2 Cor. 5:20).

And I implore you believing saint to give your all to Christ. Now is the time to serve Him with all your might, soul, and heart. Now is the time to be used of Him. Now is the time to exercise your talents for Him. I urge you believer to give your love for Christ. Give Him your heart! Give Him your all! I beseech you therefore, my brother and sister, that you present your body "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service," (Rom. 12:1).

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