

Living Longer
Sunday July 10, 2022
by C Benjamin Dill

Good morning and welcome to Lighthouse Baptist Church! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?

20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Last week we saw the incredible importance of baptism and becoming a living, viable part of a real Church, which is the body of Christ.

Although baptism and being a Church member have nothing to do with being saved, it has everything to do with fulfilling the purpose for which God created us and for which He saved us...that is bringing the Lord glory with our lives.

Ephesians 3:20-21

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

There is one outstanding principle the Word of God consistently teaches us...our opportunity to bring God glory is now, on this side of the grave.

Typically, when we get a little older, we begin to think about perhaps trying to live a little longer than we otherwise might.

That is kind of sad seeing that it is when we are young that we might actually do more about it.

Thus the words made famous by the old cowboy, broken from being thrown one too many times who said, "If I had known I was going to live this long, I would have taken better care of myself".

Sometimes young people think that when they get old, they won't really care whether they live a long time or not.

That doesn't appear to be the case.

I am all for living (within limits) as long as I can. I want to keep doing what I enjoy, I want to spend time with the people I love, I want to see my grandchildren that are yet to be born; I want to see my work in the Lord passed on successfully to the next generation.

There are people everywhere who are trying to live longer. They are all about herbs and vitamins and anti-aging and staying stronger and active; and that is all well and good.

Yet, the vitamins and herbs and physical conditioning and all of the good healthy things we do about the quality of life are not entirely what determines how long we last in these bodies.

In my 45 years of ministry, I have conducted funerals for the very old, for little children and for many in between.

In all my years of studying God's Word and watching it be fulfilled in everyday life there are some things I've learned that are absolute:

No one, and I mean no one, leaves this world until God says so.

It is God that gave you your life:

Acts 17:24-25

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, **seeing he giveth to all life, and breath**, and all things;

And it is God who says when it is over:

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

We all have an appointed time to die. I understand that from God's perspective of perfect foreknowledge; He knows the day of my death.

Yet from our perspective down here on earth, there are things that make a difference in how long we live. You can make a difference.

For example:

I. God gives us advice that affects how long we live:

A. God tells children who honor their parents that they will live longer than they otherwise would.

1. Ephesians 6:1-3

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

2. Deuteronomy 5:16 Honor thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

B. Even Christians who defile their bodies and do not repent often have their lives shortened:

1. 1 Corinthians 3:9-17

9 For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. **But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.**

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

2. The consequences of sin shorten our lives; yes, God forgives us when we confess our sins, but the consequences of sin often remain.

3. Last month a dear brother and long-time member of this Church died, finally, at the end of years of suffering, literally dying by inches from years of smoking cigarettes.

C. There are hundreds of things that affect our longevity.

1. The sin of gluttony that leads to obesity.
2. Smoking, alcoholism, improper and illegal drug use.
3. Stress caused by living without the peace of God in our lives.
4. Guilt from living with past failures.
5. Depression from living in clutter because we lack discipline.
6. Poverty because we never learned to work hard or to work wisely.
7. We could list this stuff all day, but that's just going to get depressing.

II. Let's instead move on to the single-most thing we can do toward turning all these life-shortening mistakes around:

A. The truth is that I have done enough evil, made enough mistakes and failed in my God-ordained purpose to have long since deserved being removed from this life. (You will never catch me asking God for what I deserve).

1. By all rights, I should have been dead a long time ago.
2. I survived whooping cough as a baby and other childhood disease and circumstances that should have killed me.
3. I survived cancer that should have killed me.

4. I was exempted from the Vietnam War as a green kid who would never have survived the slaughter that took place over there.

5. I've been spared from storms at sea, automobile wrecks that should have been fatal and countless other events where God stepped in and literally spared my life.

6. I am now recovering from a quadruple bypass open heart surgery where God once again has stepped in and spared my life.

7. Once again I have a new lease on life.

B. I know of many others like this:

1. My friend, Dr. Lester Hutson, who was here preaching the Word of God just last week is one of those.

2. As a young preacher with a family, he was hit head-on by a drilling work-over rig and crushed like a beer can under a tire; he never should have survived.

3. But he did! And during the following months of recovery, he wrote the original Basic Bible Truth lessons that we teach in a condensed version right here at Lighthouse.

4. Thousands of people world-wide are being successfully taught how to be saved and then live for Jesus, because of the writing Brother Hutson did while laid up for months in the hospital.

C. The greatest key to living longer is found right there in today's text in I Corinthians chapter 12:

1. [1 Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.](#)

2. This text uses the human body to illustrate the body of Christ, which is a local church with its many differing members.

3. He goes on to tell us just how important each member is:

4. **[1 Corinthians 12:14-22](#)**

[14 For the body is not one member, but many.](#)

[15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?](#)

[16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?](#)

[17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?](#)

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?

20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, **are necessary:**

5. Verse 27 says to that local church and to this one:

6. **1 Corinthians 12:27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

*B. The greatest thing you can do to live longer is, from God's perspective, to be **NECESSARY!***

1. Think about it; as long as God considers you necessary, you are not leaving.

2. Let me tell you about Carolyn. Only a handful of you have been here long enough to remember Carolyn.

3. Carolyn was in her sixties and on her death bed; dying of advanced liver disease; given only days to live. I went to see her in the hospital; she was lost and knew it. I explained how we knew we could trust God's Word, I read to her what Jesus did on her behalf because he loved her; how He died in her place on a Roman cross, how He rose in victory over sin and hell and the grave.

4. Carolyn trusted Jesus to save her that day and then something else amazing happened that I had never seen before. Carolyn sat up in bed and said, "I feel good".

5. Carolyn was checked out by her doctors and released from the hospital a couple of days later.

6. Carolyn got up and walked out of the hospital; she was baptized and became a member of this Church that very next Sunday, and God gave her two more good productive years as a living testimony for Him.

7. Carolyn became **necessary!**

8. Every blood-bought member of this Church who is doing his or her part **IS NECESSARY!**

Conclusion:

If you are not saved, you are not necessary.

You are still here for one basic reason; God is extending your opportunity to be saved.

If you are saved but not a working, giving, loving, serving member of the church where God has desired to place you...

You are loved; you are on your way to heaven; you are way better off than the rest of the world;

But you are not necessary.

Want to live longer?

Trust Jesus and be saved from your sins.

Get baptized and become a member of the body.

Then BE a living, vibrant, serving part; not just a useless appendage!

You will not only live longer, you will have a life that is worth living longer for!

I don't know how long the Lord is going to keep me around...but however long that is, I intend to be NECESSARY!

Some of you may not feel very necessary, you may not think that you are of much value to the Kingdom...but you CAN be and you can start today.