



August 23, 2024

Life is Fragile

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here in Spanish Fort, AL. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

A scripture came to the forefront of my mind again recently. (James 4:14)
Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.

How often do we as God's children ponder, muse, cogitate, meditate, and truly think on this scripture?

If you are like most of us, situations in our physical life bring this to the forefront of our minds generally in times of duress, or as we so often call it "trials".

As many of you know, back in mid-June, I had an e-bike accident. It was something I literally never saw coming. To avoid being hit, (T Boned as they say) by a truck that ran a stop sign I opted to crash into a curb, sidewalk, and street. Thankfully I had a MIPS helmet on, or things could have been much worse!

Over the last couple of months I have had more doctor appointments, MRI's, and clinical discussions about my injuries with health professionals than I would have ever dreamed of.

As age would have it, subsequent surgeries, physical therapy, and patience have eaten a big chunk out of my normal day to day life.

Over the years, I've, along with my wife of forty years, been very physically active and enjoyed many activities than I simply now know I took for granted. Most of

that has now changed.

What's my point you might ask? Well as of recent, many of our close friends have had similar situations, involving much worse issues, cancer, and ailments too numerous to mention.

In our discussions what do we all have in common that is discussed? You guessed it, "how very fragile this physical life is".

I remember our first assignment to serve God's brethren and family in the "field" as we called it back then, was in South Central Florida in 1984. One of our goals early on was to visit as many of the brethren in that larger congregation as quickly as possible to really get to know them. I remember being told "65% of this congregation are age 65 or older, this will be a learning curve for you!"

So, I often reflect back to the visits, the dear brethren we became to know well, and what was often talked about. Sometimes each visit reminded me of the 1993 movie Ground Hog Day. In the movie every day a very self-centered weatherman finds himself in a time loop with each day a repeat of the day before. Day after day after day, the same repeat. In our visits with many of the brethren, most all of them decades older than me and my new bride, a common discussion of doctor appointments, health issues, and a statement was made that all too often I simply sort of ignored. "Life is fragile".

When we are younger, we look at things differently than when we become aged, or closer to the end of our physical lives, than we are to the beginning.

That being said, what strikes me is that regardless of how old we are, age doesn't change this statement. "Life is fragile".

Do you wonder if life has any purpose or meaning? Welcome to the book of Ecclesiastes, where artists, scientists, philosophers, monarchs, and theologians in every generation find answers to their questions about the ultimate meaning in

life. Apart from God, Solomon concludes with what some would consider circular reasoning, *“The meaning of life is to give life meaning.”* The humanist says, “The meaning of life is that which we choose to give it.” The agnostic asks with a twinge of skepticism, “Can anybody really know if life has meaning?” Even the British comedy ensemble Monty Python tried but failed to answer the question in their movie called *The Meaning of Life*.

Perhaps the wisest man who ever lived could be of help. Three thousand years ago, Solomon wrote this about his life: *“Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity”* (1:2). Vanity! Meaningless! Utterly useless! We would not expect to hear a preacher describe life that way. But Solomon, the son of David, did. Why was King Solomon so pessimistic about life? Or was he?

Another way we might say what Solomon did is “Life is Fragile”.

The Old Testament wisdom books are places to rest and fuel our soul. However, the book of Ecclesiastes at times seems like a dark detour on the ultimate road trip through the Bible. Solomon takes his readers on a rhetorical road trip through agnosticism (1:13), hedonism (2:24), materialism (3:19-21), pessimism (4:2), and fatalism (7:13). A journey like that would wear out the best of us.

Ultimately though he makes a statement for us all to consider. (Ecclesiastes 12:13) *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all.* (I rephrased it years ago to this: Fear God and do His will, it’s all that matters and ever will).

Our lives can change dramatically, in a split second, or an instant. We can go from being healthy, vibrant, financially secure, and happy, with no real worries, to facing just the opposite.

We have to die, before we live. That is a truism that our Father in heaven has asked humans to consider since time began. It’s important to consider daily, and often this statement in conjunction. “Life is fragile”.

It will keep things in perspective from God's point of view. And, no matter what the future holds physically for each of us, knowing God's will for all of us, well to speak frankly, will strengthen and encourage us to simply, keep going, don't give up, and realize this physical life is not the end...for most it is just the beginning to a future that is bright and glorious that God Himself reminds us we simply don't fathom what it truly holds!

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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