

Hebrews 9:26b-28. – Appointment 16<sup>th</sup> October 2011

***“but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. <sup>27</sup> And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.” Hebrews 9:26b-28***

Beloved in The Lord,

A wise man once said that there are two appointments that we will not miss – death and judgement.

In life, we can miss appointments, we can reschedule, or simply ignore them. The two aforementioned appointments are set and we will not miss them. We will not be able to excuse ourselves or re – schedule.

In Psalm 139 David writes in verse 16:

***“Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;  
And in Your book were all written  
The days that were ordained for me,  
When as yet there was not one of them.”***

The appointment is already written in God’s book. It was entered in there before we were even born. We do not know the day of our death, but God does, it is written in His book.

Death will catch up with us when and where God has ordained for each one of us.

Personally, I find this to be a very comforting thought. God knows, and He always acts in the right and perfect way. It is interesting to note the next verse in psalm 139. ***“How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!”***

Job said something similar when he had lost his sons and daughters and all his substance. He said: ***“The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, Blessed be the name of the Lord.”***

Job was able to praise and worship God, in the midst of his great loss, in the valley of the shadow of death, simply because his eyes were firmly fixed on the Lord God Almighty.

When our eyes are firmly fixed on the Lord, then our perspectives in life are correct and we are blessed. We understand that although the death of a loved one is always painful, the loss is always great, the thorn digs in deep, there is victory through The Lord Jesus Christ.

The opening words of our text today state: ***“but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”***

With His sacrificial death on the cross of Calvary, Jesus has broken the power of sin and death. He suffered the punishment of sin – death – on our behalf, in our place so that we may have victory over death.

Easter morning, Jesus rose from the dead, alive for evermore. If we believe on Him, then we too will one day rise to eternal life with Him in glory. We read in John 11:25-26:

***“<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,<sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?”***

Jesus was the first to rise from the dead. If we believe in Jesus, place our trust in Him, then at God’s appointed time we will experience the resurrection to new life.

The important question comes from the lips of Jesus: “Do you believe this?”

Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead in a new resurrected body? Do you believe that He has the power to raise you from the dead? This is the important question. If you do believe, then you are ready for your scheduled appointment with God. You are ready to stand before Him, when you do not rely upon yourself, on your own perceived goodness, but when you simply trust in Jesus believing that His blood is the only cure for sin, and He is the Door to God.

If you do not believe and trust in Jesus as your personal Saviour then you are not ready. It is time to get ready – now, today! Tomorrow it may just be too late.

I mentioned at the beginning that we do not know the day that is written in God’s book. The date next to your name could be today or tomorrow.

It is of vital importance that we are ready so that the day does not take us by surprise. Once we have died, we can do nothing to change our eternal destiny. It is extremely important that we grasp this fact.

Jesus illustrated this truth with the story of the rich man and Lazarus. In Luke 16 19-31 we read:

***“<sup>19</sup> Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendour every day.<sup>20</sup> And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,<sup>21</sup> and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.<sup>22</sup> Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.<sup>23</sup> In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and \*saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.<sup>24</sup> And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’<sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.<sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’<sup>27</sup> And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house—<sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’<sup>29</sup> But Abraham \*said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’<sup>30</sup> But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to***

***them from the dead, they will repent!’<sup>31</sup> But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”***

I quoted this whole passage as it so clearly shows us that after death we cannot change our destiny. Today’s Scripture clearly tells us: ***“it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.”***

Jesus warns us in love. He does not desire for any to find themselves in the place of torment and suffering – hell. He desires for us to inherit a place with Him in the Father’s House.

Please understand the gravity of this truth. These are not just stories, this is the truth of the Bible, the inerrant Word of God.

We shall all die. These graves around us, the names we read out today in memoriam clearly remind us of this stark truth and reality.

But we need not fear death, that is if we have come to Jesus, because He has conquered sin, death, the devil and the grave.

If we are in Jesus we can look death in the eye and say: “Death, you are defeated. You could not hold onto Jesus, you will not hold on to me!”

Without Jesus death is an awful and frightening reality. With Him, it is defeated, and that which was our greatest enemy becomes a vehicle to eternal life.

Lastly a word to those who still feel the sting of death. Jesus invites us to give it all to Him. he sees our pain, hears our sighs, counts our tears, knows the emptiness, the loneliness and He says I love you. Give it all to me. Let go. Come to Me and I will give you rest and peace.

Let each one of us come to Him today and in faith let us give everything to Him. May we receive peace and grace to live by, to die by and to stand before Him on our appointed day. Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible