**SPEND AND BE SPENT**

As far as I know Moses only wrote one Psalm. But out of the 150 Psalms I think I benefit as much from Psalm 90 as any of them. It just seems to speak to my heart and my needs. As I am pressing tight upon living “*three score and ten*” years I read with greater clarity and appreciation Moses words:

*10 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.
11 Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath.
12 So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

In that prayer Moses asked God to “*teach us to number our days*” in order to gain wisdom. In other words, pray God helps me to use each of my days wisely so that I will die without regrets, having “*served God in his own generation*” (Acts 13:36).

If I “*number my days*” thus far on earth I would have as of today 24,622 since October 18, 1952. Suppose I was to follow Moses’ advice and assume I have 70, perhaps 80 years to live. And suppose also that in order to turn this into a visual I could use to put my life into perspective I was to convert my known days into marbles (I used to love collecting marbles as a boy). I take a huge transparent glass vase and put my 24,622 into them and write over the top: “SPENT.” Then right next to it I have another glass vase that has another set of marbles that has over the top: “SPEND.” Into this vase I put either 4,598 marbles (if I number my days as 80), or just 946 marbles (if I number my days as 70). Each night as I brush my teeth and get ready for bed, I say my prayers, then before closing my eyes I reach down and pull a “SPEND” marble from my jar and drop it into my “SPENT” jar.

Each day I see my SPEND jar shrink, and my SPENT jar grow.

Sobering?

Moses worried about that. He feared “*the power of Your anger*” – speaking of God (vs. 11). He feared not using all of his “marbles” wisely. He feared “losing his marbles” – not by dementia, but by idleness and neglect. Fortunately, his fears were unfounded. If the incredible story of Christ’s transfiguration is indicative of Moses’ fate, we believe he did “*gain a heart of wisdom*” and joined Elijah on that sacred mountain to happily talk with Jesus (Matt. 17:1-8). If we will “*redeem the time*” (Eph. 4:15) and “*number our days*” to gain a heart of wisdom, we will also join Moses and Elijah on that resurrection day.

But to transfer each marble without regret we must approach each day with a goal. Since I visualize the two jars as the numbering of my days and the passing of my life I use 2 Corinthians 12:15 as my motivation. It is a slogan to motivate me. Would you like to see it? Here it is:

*“And I will very gladly* ***spend*** *and be* ***spent*** *for your souls” – 2 Corinthians 12:15*

The context in which Paul gives that eloquent quote is in his willingness to preach the gospel to them without charge. He would work two full time jobs, one as a tentmaker to pay for his own expenses, and one as an apostle / evangelist without pay to save their soul. He had opened wide his heart to them (2 Cor. 6:11), allowing them to see him totally unfiltered, pouring out his soul day and night to save them. He was saying, “*To the Jew I will become a Jew. To the Greek I will become a Greek. I will become all things to all men that I might by all means save some*” (I Cor. 9:24-27).

In athletics my coaches in football, basketball and track would always tell us “Leave it all on the field / court / track.” Give it all you’ve got. Don’t live with regret that you held back and then lost the game. If you lose, lose with your head held high that you gave it your very best. That mindset works in every endeavor in life. But it is especially true as we “number our days” before God. Live so as to hear our Lord say, “*Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord*” (Matt. 25:21,23).

Can you not envision Paul as he sat in a prison and wrote to his beloved Philippians? Tears must have wet the parchment he was writing on when he penned these words:

“*Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all*.” – Phil. 2:17

Paul is my hero. I would dearly love to imitate him as He imitated Christ (I Cor. 11:1). He did indeed pour out his life as a drink offering. His final words were written to his beloved Timothy as he said, “*The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith*.” Paul left it all on the field. He died without regret. His last SPEND marble was dropped in the SPENT jar as he left that Mamertine prison in Rome and walked to the executioner’s cell. Like John the Baptist, Stephen and other martyrs before him, he had lived his life so as to leave as his legacy: “*I will gladly spend and be spent for your souls*.”

Susan Ertz has a quote I like: “Millions long for immortality who do not know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon.”

Do you know what to do on a rainy afternoon? When you reach down into your SPEND jar tonight to pick up that pretty marble, then drop into your SPENT jar, I pray you will pillow your head and sleep in peace.

Until next week… don’t lose your marbles. Spend and be spent for the Lord.

I love you.

Rick