



March 6, 2005

Going Nowhere ?

I was reading a book review this past week about a novel involving a character who developed a sense that her life was going nowhere... and so the story goes. This is a common thread in the lives of many and to see this worked into another story makes me wonder when folks will get more creative with their story telling. This is a reality for many however. One spends life in the seemingly endless motion of surviving and recreating and one day, from nowhere, there is the sudden realization that nothing has been accomplished, nothing achieved, no contribution made, and there may be the overwhelming feeling of despair. We call that a midlife crisis. One of the symptoms of this period is to feel as if one's life is going nowhere. This is a misconception about our lives.

It is impossible to go nowhere. Our lives, all of our lives, are going somewhere. As God told Adam and Eve, ***"...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."*** (Gen 3.19). As mortal beings this is where we are headed. There is no escaping this reality. One of the things that triggers a midlife crisis is the sudden realization that death is indeed a reality. Some never face death in their lives until they are older. Others face it but are able to bury themselves in the ample distractions of the world that soothe us and lull us into a state of suspended comprehension. Death as a reality is not the only thing to be concerned about. This past week a coworker was contacted and told to report immediately to a cancer treatment center due to a very aggressive and rapid form of leukemia. There was also an unexpected death in my wife's family, a young man, who many would have thought to have at least 30 more years of life. Yes, our lives are going somewhere, and they are doing so very rapidly.

As Job sought to deal with his sufferings, he reflected on the lives of those who were less righteous, describing them as living in comfort and pleasure. The end however is the same for them as it is for all mortals as Job observes when he states, ***"They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave."*** (Job 21.13). Solomon emphasizes the value of being conscious of the value of life and being productive. ***"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."*** (Eccl 9.10). The apostle Paul directs us in a way that will help us channel our life energies into that which will help us and those that we come into contact with. ***"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."*** (Col 3.17). To be aware of the brevity of life, to thank God for every thing that we have, including the ability to draw breath another day, reminds us that life is in motion, whether we consciously acknowledge it or not. It reminds us that there is a way to prepare for the end of this life, whether expected or not, and in that preparation we can have peace and become a blessing to others around us. This is pleasing to God.

In reflecting on the words of the apostle Peter, when he asks, ***"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"*** (2 Pet 3.11-12), we have to ask ourselves what it is that we think we are. Are we prepared. The most important question being, what is more important than doing what God wants us to do? What else could possibly compare or enrich our lives the way that God can? If you are planning a midlife crisis, plan around God and his will. If you're life is going nowhere then reframe that perspective to include the fact that you are just not going where you want to. The question then becomes, where do you want to be going?

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