



A PUBLICATION FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN MISSIONS, UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH INTERNATIONAL

No Cost is Too Great

I recently co-chaired the Executive Global Council with our general superintendent. Top level elected delegates from each of the seven regions of the world came together in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Brother Haney reminded us we need to pay the price for revival. He called us back to the preaching and way of the cross. Self-denial is the way to the heart of this world. He told a story of a communist boy, standing on a street corner, with tattered clothes, propagating communism. Someone walked by and said, "You're paying a big price for communism!" The boy responded, "When you're changing the world, no cost is too great."

Brother Haney later told us, "Don't live one more day without a dream." He asked that we adopt the attitude that each of us has ten years. Imagine that at the end of that time the trumpet will sound. He asked, "How would we live? What would be our vision? What would we do?" He ended with a solemn thought, "The reality is we may have less than ten years. Global impact is the least we can do!" Brother Haney's message surely gets us all thinking...and doing.

Examining his life Paul wrote, "As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful" (2 Timothy 4:6-7, *NLT*).

There is a lot one can learn about life and ministry from those two verses. I'll mention three.

Life is an Offering to God

Paul looked at life as a sacrifice to God. He did not think of success in terms of what one gains, but in what one gives.

"I have been a constant example of how you can help the poor by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20: 35, *NLT*).

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is" (Romans 12:1-2, *NLT*).

In ministry and the Christian walk, we have troubles. God never promised a problem-free life (Genesis 35:10; Psalms 18:32-34). Troubles are opportunities for growth. They purify our character; build our trust in God; work for our good (Romans 8:28); strengthen perseverance (Romans 5:3-5); and develop our sensitivity to others as they experience problems (2 Corinthians 1:3-7). Some turn to God thinking that they will escape troubles. God does not promise that but He gives power to go through suffering. The testing of

our faith develops endurance and makes us strong (James 1:2).

LIFE IS SHORT

Job asked, "Are not my days few?" (Job 10:20). He answers his own question, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." Life is described in several ways throughout Scripture: water spilled on the ground (2 Samuel 14:14); a pilgrimage (Genesis 47:9); but a step between life and death (1 Samuel 20:3); a shadow (1 Chronicles 29:15); swifter than a weaver's shuttle (Job 7:6); like the wind (Job 7:7); like grass that grows in the morning, and in the evening it is cut down and withers (Psalms 90:5-6); a morning fog—here a little while, and then gone (James 4:14).

"LORD, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered, and that my life is fleeing away. My life is no longer than the width of my hand. An entire lifetime is just a moment to you; human existence is but a breath." We are merely moving shadows, and all our busy rushing ends in nothing. We heap up wealth for someone else to spend" (Psalms 39:4-6, *NLT*).

LIFE HAS A PURPOSE

We are not here by accident. God has us here on purpose—for a purpose. He has a plan for our lives. We finish the course and win the prize when we run according to God's plan.

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails" (Proverbs 19:21, *NIV*).

The Bible resounds with stories of triumphant men and women who followed God's purpose.

Consider the testimony of King David. "For when David had served God's purpose in his

own generation, he fell asleep." (Acts 13:36, *NIV*).

Jesus came to earth for a purpose—with a plan. In Gethsemane He was able to say, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4-5, *NIV*). Hours later on the cross, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit" (John 19:30, *NIV*).

Paul made up his mind that he was going to press toward the mark, run the race, and win the prize (Philippians 3:14). Early in his ministry he proclaimed, "So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step" (1 Corinthians 9:26, *NLT*).

His life closed with this epitaph: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). Paul had settled his destiny years before, and defined his journey in light of it. Kenneth Boa in *Conformed to His Image* suggests that we ask two questions:

- What do I want my life to add up to, and why?
- At the end of my stopover on earth, what will I want to see when I look back?

He says, "From the biblical perspective, the real question is not what we will leave behind (the answer to this is always the same—we leave everything behind) but what will we send on ahead (Matthew 6:20)."

Today's decisions determine tomorrow's destiny. At the conclusion of my ministry I want my testimony to be, "I have fought long and hard for my Lord, and through it all I have kept true to him. And now the time has come for me to stop fighting and rest" (2 Timothy 4:7, *TLB*).

His words to me will be, "Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew 25:23, *NKJV*). No cost is too great to receive that eternal reward.