

Remember to Keep Moving: Do Not Sleep (Go to Meeting)

Roy Assanti—February 12, 2022

We are fast approaching the Passover season. It's a season for self-examination, consideration and looking at serious, serious things. Our salvation is a serious life and death matter!

Focus and orientation is a serious matter! We need to be focused and oriented; we need to be on track!

Proverbs 29:18^[transcriber's correction]: "**Where there is no vision, the people perish**; but happy is he who keeps the Law."

- we need to have vision
- we need to know the purpose

During this message I don't mean to focus on bad news, negativity, but still we must consider the seriousness of our path. We must consider the seriousness of the path that you have chosen. We need to look at the future seriously.

Reward and finality is dramatically portrayed in this example that I saw of Indonesia. What was the scene there? It was actually an execution. These people were lined up on a wall and you could see the firing squad. You couldn't understand the language, but you could see that they were ready. Before the bullets were sent flying, you could see this poor individual totally out of control and wetting himself.

What's it like? What is life worth when you begin? When you're at that point? *You're going to lose it!* It was incredible! My point is, life is serious; it's a serious, serious matter.

Hebrews 10:26: "For if we willfully go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins."

We have a sacrifice for sins! What happens if we cross that path? *There is no sacrifice!* That execution was terrible! But there's even worse to come for some.

Verse 27: "But a terrifying expectation of inevitable judgment and of fierce fire, which will devour the adversaries *of God*."

To begin with, let's look at two potential outcomes for our individual lives. When we look at the end of the line, we'll either go one way or another way.

Revelation 21:3: "And I heard a great voice from heaven say, 'Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men; and **He shall dwell with them**, and they

shall be His people; and God Himself shall be with them *and be* their God.'"

These are the words that you and I desire to hear! Now, this is the hope that we all seek and long for:

Verse 4: And God shall... [what a wonderful, wonderful future] ...wipe away every tear from their eyes; and *there* shall not be anymore death, or sorrow, or crying... [it's all gone, past] ...neither shall *there* be any more pain, because the former things have passed away."

A personal experience: I remember when my dad died; it was quite emotional. He was in bed and he died in bed and I remember my mum crying over his chest. Just crying! And repeating continually, 'Speak to me! Why don't you speak to me! Speak to me!'

There's a finality in death that is tragic! The alternative that follows is in v 8 and it's one that no one wants to hear. I get the emotion of life and what it's worth!

Verse 8: "But *the* cowardly, and unbelieving and abominable ..."

First it's a mission: *cowardly, unbelieving, laziness!* But then there's the commission, those that determined:

"...and abominable and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars... [those are on purpose, moving away from God's way] ...**shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death**" (v 8).

We are admonished to examine ourselves and see whether we are in the faith, to prove ourselves. It's active passive.

There is an occasion where Christ encountered the impacting emotions and the reactions to a sudden violent and tragic death. It was a merciless swift public execution, blood and guts of several people in the street. It left a frightful, fearful impression, and probably accompanied by chants, screams, moaning and tears. Though nameless, the individuals who suffered were likely fathers, brothers, sons and friends.

Luke 13:1: "Now, at the same time, *there* were present some..."

These 'some' felt the need and urge to discuss this and to bring it to the Teacher, somebody

whom they saw had wisdom, understanding and so on.

“...who were telling Him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices” (v 1).

Who knows what caused it or what happened, but it was a swift run action with swords and it was a bloody mess. What does Christ say? How does God view things?

Verse 2: “And Jesus answered *and* said to them, ‘Do you suppose... [brings it down personally] ...that these Galileans were sinners above all Galileans, because they suffered such things? No, I tell you; but if **you** do not repent... [brings it down personally] ...**you** shall all likewise perish” (vs 2-3).

Not only them, that applies to us. The Scriptures are speaking to you and me. *Unless we repent!* There there’s another example:

Verse 4: “Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, do you suppose that these were debtors above all men who dwelt in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but **if you do not repent**... [not only to them, but us as well] ...**you shall all likewise perish**” (vs 4-5).

So, the seriousness of the lesson is for you and me. We’re included, even though we are millennia down the track. Serious business. We don’t always things about things in this way, but we are on a serious path, life and death, and we like life.

2-Corinthians 13:5: “Examine yourselves *to see* whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves....”

The onus is on us to make sure that we find favor. God instructs us to make sure:

Matthew 7:21: “Not everyone who says to Me... [this is the reality, the prophecy, what’s going to happen. Where do we want to be?] ... ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; **but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who is in heaven. Many**... [not a few] ...will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name?... [it’s the *many* will say this] ...And *did we not* perform **many** works of power through Your name?’” (vs 21-22).

It’s a wake up call for us! We cannot afford to read past that statement! What happens?

Verse 23: “And then I will confess to them... [the many] ... ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.’”

Let’s consider the final outcome of the things that we value today in our lives. Do I really

set my heart on the things of this physical world? I want to focus on what we value. We need security. I’m going to relate a personal experience, and I ask you to consider what is important in your life, *the focus!*

Some 7-8 years ago we sold this property. We were in this property for 40 years, which is a time of trial. I decided to go back to this property—a motel—that we used to run. We had an upstairs restaurant, we had weddings downstairs for some 200 people at times. There was a kitchen, storeroom, etc.

I went there this past week for the first time, and there were a few Vietnamese guys, and everything in this property was gutted! We left it nice, but it was gutted, every room, the dinning areas nothing was there. The carpet was ripped up! It was a mess, and I don’t know how long it’s been like that. But I decided to go and have a look.

We also saw a big area some 25 by 12 feet wide full of furniture just dumped there; it seemed like it had been there for a long, long time.

There were 36 rooms aside from public areas and so on that we had. It was quite a mess! All physical things in our lives ends up like that, regardless. Whatever we own, whatever we have has a use and then it’s going to be finished. Maybe not so fast, but the outcome will be the same.

James 5:1: “Come now, *you* rich men, weep! Howl over the miseries that *are* coming upon *you!* Your riches have rotted, and your garments have become moth-eaten.”

It was dramatic for me to see what we had at one time—what we looked after and treasured—it was junk.

Verse 3: “Your gold and *your* silver have been eaten away, and their corrosion will be a testimony against you, and will consume your flesh like fire....”

It’s truly not worth setting our heart on the things that pertain to the flesh. We need to get our orientation right.

It was 2014 when we got out. Funny thing, I had been there for 40 years. It really made me think: 40 years of trial. I couldn’t get out before. I finally was baptized while we were still there. It was quite a trial.

Luke 12:32—*good counsel for the elect*: “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father delights in giving you the Kingdom. Sell your possessions...” (vs 32-33)—*it’s not important!*

There are certain things we need to have, but

we are not—the admonishment is—to set our heart on these things.

“...and give alms. Make for yourselves purses *that* do not grow old... [this is the real treasure that never ends] ...an unending treasure in heaven, where no thief can come near, and no moth can destroy” (v 33).

There will be a time when there will be a new heaven and a new Earth. When the first heaven and the first Earth will have passed away. That included all the trinkets. What should we really focus on? We’re so close to this life, so close to stuff, so materialistic. What should we focus on? We need to get our priorities straight.

Luke 13:34: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Here’s the admonition from Jesus Christ; this is the state we need to be in:

Verse 35: “**Let your loins be girded about and your lamps burning**”—*burning hearts, hot for what’s right, hot and close to God!* We need to strive always for this state of mind and orientation.

Luke 13:24: ‘Strive with *your* whole being to enter in through the narrow gate...’

There’s another gate, a wide gate, that leads to destruction, but the one that leads to life is narrow and we have to strive for the things that pertain to life. We need to apply effort, we need to be focused, not be sidetracked, no downtime, careful not to be taken by surprise, trials and tests will come!

Psalms 34:19: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous... [the testing] ...but the LORD delivers him out of them all.”

Luke 12:36: “And you yourselves be like men who are waiting for their lord, whenever he shall return from the wedding feast; so that when he comes and knocks... [we need to be ready, not on civilian pursuits] ...they may immediately open to him. Blessed...” (vs 36-37).

I know this is an emotional ploy, but how would you feel if someone gave you a lottery ticket and suddenly you find out that you’ve won \$5-million?

“...*are* those servants whom the lord, when he comes when he comes shall find watching.... [look at the humility of Christ] ...Truly I say to you, he will gird himself, and will make them sit down, and will come *and* serve them” v 37). *Let’s not be sidetracked!*

It’s the little steps as we progress and grow. It’s the little steps that count. Maintaining a right focus is what counts. What is the Scriptures warning

about here in Eph. 6.

I’m going to quote Benjamin Franklin about ‘little things’ about taking care:

For the want of a nail the shoe was lost,
For the want of a shoe the horse was lost,
For the want of a horse the rider was lost,
For the want of a rider the battle was lost,
For the want of a battle the kingdom was lost,
And all for the want of a horseshoe-nail.

It all snowballs when one thing leads to another. We need to stay on track; no side issues. It is warfare. Our striving is warfare. We must strive:

- we’re admonished to defend
- we’re admonished to resist
- we’re admonished to overcome
- we’re admonished to stand

This is serious business! Sometimes, if you’re like me, I can read past things. But we need to stop and take it in!

- What is really being said?
- How serious is this?

Ephesians 6:11: “Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

Picture this mental exercise: Would you put yourself in a room with an insane maniac and not take any precautions? Not be aware that there’s danger?

We have a spiritual insane enemy of God who is against everything, all God’s plans. Do you think that he does not have his sights set on us? He may be just angling; he has wiles! This is real!

Verse 12: “Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood... [It’s not people] ...but against principalities... [followers in the angelic realm against the Father and Christ] ...*and* against powers, against the **world rulers** of the darkness of this age... [what is the spiritual power behind them] ...against the **spiritual power of wickedness** in high places.”

Spiritually, because we can’t see it, ‘we walk by faith, not by sight,’ the admonition of the Apostle Paul. He went through a lot!

Verse 13: “Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand.”

I’ve read quite a bit about on of the top, if not the top, general of WWII—Gen. George S. Patton—would say:

A pint of sweat [today] saves a gallon of

blood [tomorrow]

It's an allegory for spiritual sweat and spiritual blood!

Here's the enemy uncovered, shown, declared to us. Do we believe it?

1-Peter 5:8: "Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion..."

When does the lion roar? *When it's about to pounce to paralyze it's prey!*

"...seeking anyone he may devour" (v 8). *It's a very real spiritual enemy—not an imagined one—that we have!*

Verse 9: "Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in the world."

Sidebar about Gen. Patton: Nerves of steel! Calculating! Understanding! Apparently at one time he was in North Africa. Gen. Patton is reputed to have shot and killed, with his pistol, an attacking lion! He shot it in the head, probably between the eyes. It fell down dead at his feet!

War simulation! No fear! Keep the nerves! It's a good example for us to strive and draw close to God and not fear. *Stand! Having done all, stand!*

Historically, the Roman Legions were apparently kept in a state of constant battle readiness. That's why they were so powerful for so long. They could be deployed at once! They were drilled continually in battle simulation.

Here's a military quote, I don't know where I got it from: *Casualness leads to casualties*. There is a spiritual equivalent.

- we need to be alert
- we need to expect trouble
- we need to expect trials
- we need to be strong
- we need to be drawing close to God

Daily life for us just goes on. There's TV, activities, daily chores, we have to eat and work. Yet, spiritually speaking there is a need to be sharp! *God's Holy Spirit needs to be flowing through us! We need to be spiritually alive and continually strengthened!*

Christ as a human being, in the flesh, stated: *Of Myself I can do nothing!* How much less you and men. We need to regard diligence! We need to apply the admonitions to our personal spiritual state.

Proverbs 6:6: "Go to the ant... God has put

the instinct, the program in these little things] ...sluggard; consider her ways and be wise, who having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provides her food in the summer *and* gathers her food in the harvest" (vs 6-8).

As a young boy, I remember doing some naughty stuff! There were these ant nests and I took a stick and messed it all up. Pretty soon I had to vamoose, get out of there, because the ants would go crazy. I made a nest of their nest, not very nice.

But later on that day or the next day all the order would be restored. There would be no sign that there was a problem. For the little ants, business as usual. It's a visual portrayal of diligence!

Verse 9: "How long will you sleep, O sluggard?..."—*the opposite of the ant!*

God has put the programming in them, but this is a comparison.

"...When will you arise out of your sleep? Yet, a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest" (vs 9-10)—*inactivity!* 'I'll get to it!' What a comparison, and the result:

Verse 11: "So shall your poverty come as one who travels, and **your want like an armed man.**"

Back to my life in the motel business, what happened one day was that our manager came into the restaurant shaking, white and just beside herself and couldn't speak. What happened was that a fellow went to the office and looked at her and said, 'Can I have all the money? Then he put a double barrel sawn off shotgun in her face. That's what comes to mind. What would you do? *You'd freeze!* She was a mess!

If you're not diligent, you don't have power. You'll lose out! What's it worth? What's it going to be like when we qualify for life, *real unending life!*

Revelation 14:3: "And they were singing a new song before the Throne... [with voices in perfect pitch] ...and before the four living creatures and the elders. And no one was able to learn the song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand, who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women... [false churches, doctrine and not led astray] ...for they are virgins... [spiritual virgins] ...they are the ones who follow the Lamb... [what and honor] ...wherever He goes. They were purchased from among men *as* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb" (vs 3-4).

Acts 20:28: "**Take heed,** therefore, to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, **which He purchased with His own**

blood.” *An expensive purchase!*

- we need to be wary of the sidetracks
- we need to be wary of the wiles of the devil
- we need to be wary of deceptive lures contrived to derail our focus
- we need to have right priorities

It's more than just getting through the day; it's getting from the day!

2-Peter 1:10: “For this reason, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure; **because if you are doing these things, you will never fall at any time.**”

This is what kept the Apostle Peter on track. He did get off track to the point that he wept bitterly. What did he do? *He denied Christ three times* (Matt. 26:75; Luke 22:62).

What things did Peter learn? *In his personal life he made a commitment to never fall again!* He must have been haunted by what he did.

2-Peter 1:3: “According as His Divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and Godliness...”

It was ‘tough’ Peter who put his arm around Christ—the Word of God Who has always existed—and tells Him to come to His senses, that ‘It shall not be unto You, Lord....’ That must have haunted Peter for a while.

“...through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue” (v 3).

Peter learned to not take the Word of God for granted! He learned to not esteem the Word of God lightly!

Verse 4: “Through which He has given to us **the greatest and most precious promises**... [why we were born and what our destiny is] ...**that through these you may become partakers of the Divine nature**... [incredible reality] ...having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.”

As in Adam we all die; in Christ we shall be made alive! I remember my mum when dad died that she wanted to see him. She just fell on his chest and cried and cried until she just couldn't cry anymore.

It's an incredible reality. But we have hope, an incredible hope to value!

Verse 5: “And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control...” (vs 5-6).

These are things Peter learned! We need to

control the tongue James 3:5

“...and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, Godliness; and to Godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the love of God” (vs 6-7).

God inspired Peter to see his faults and thus pass on this counsel to us.

Verse 8: “For *if* these things exist and abound in you, they *will* cause *you to be* neither lacking effort nor lacking fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Years back in the Sydney Church there were a lot of people there. There was a great speaker, and I really looked up to this guy. He was really strong and inspiring. Everybody was quiet when he spoke. It was powerful and he was on the mark. He was motivated and respected. He commanded respect! As a matter of fact, he ended up baptizing me.

I said to him before I was baptized that I wanted to be baptized. He put me off and put me off. I said, ‘How many times would you like me to come back and talk to you about this? Once? Twice? A week? Two weeks? Two months? Six months? I don't think that I'm going to be any different.’

He said, ‘I think you're ready for baptism!’ I was baptized. Where is he now? *He's not there! He's gone!* Last I heard he was with a Baptist group or something. Things were going bad and he got out before the money ran out.

Matthew 25:1: “Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be compared to ten virgins, who took their lamps *and* went out to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish” (vs 1-2).

That always make me think about where are all those people? There were 450 and 350 in another Sydney Church. Where are they? The west church would have 140. Where are they?

Verse 3: “The ones who were foolish took their lamps, *but* they did not take oil with them.”

We need to be prepared; we need to have those habits that continue to bring the Spirit of God within us so that we're full and strong spiritually. We cannot neglect. We need to take with us the habits that bring God's power into us. That allow us and make us bear the fruit. To know in our mind and heart the sword of salvation and sword of the Spirit.

Verse 4: “But the wise took oil in their vessels *along* with their lamps.”

We need the oil and the habits that bring the strength and power that we continually need, regardless of what circumstances and situations we

are faced with.

Verse 5: “Now, when the bridegroom was gone a long time, **they all became drowsy and slept.**”

But if you have the power and the habits and the character that makes the difference.

Verse 6: “But in *the* middle of *the* night there was a cry: ‘Look, the bridegroom is coming! Go out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, because our lamps are going out’” (vs 6-8).

At the end it will take full focus! This is telling us to be on target! Have your lamps burning until you die or until Christ returns.

Verse 9: “But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest *there* not *be* enough for us and *for* you. But instead, go to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and **the door was shut**” (vs 9-10).

Do any of us want to see a shut door? No more access? *We need to be diligent!*

Verse 11: “And afterwards the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ But He answered *and* said, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you’” (vs 11-12). *They were all virgins!*

Matthew 7:22: Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name?... [this is diligence] ...And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?... [this is desperation] ...And then I will confess to them, **I never knew you....**” (vs 22-23). *He did at one time, but He says He never did!*

It’s not how you start the race, it’s how you finish!

“...Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness” (v 23).

We need to keep moving, even though we might fall asleep, we need to keep moving! Be ready so that we will hear those wonderful words that we all should long to hear: **Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of you Lord!**

- 5) 2 Corinthians 13:5
- 6) Matthew 7:21-23
- 7) James 5:1-3
- 8) Luke 12:32-35
- 9) Luke 13:24
- 10) Psalm 34:19
- 11) Luke 12:36
- 12) Ephesians 6:11-13
- 13) 1 Peter 5:8-9
- 14) Proverbs 6:6-11
- 15) Revelation 14:3-4
- 16) Acts 20:28
- 17) 2 Peter 1:10, 3-8
- 18) Matthew 25:1-12
- 19) Matthew 7:22-23

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 26:75
- James 3:5

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Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 29:18
- 2) Hebrews 10:26-27
- 3) Revelation 21:3-4, 8
- 4) Luke 13:1-5