

## SOME THINGS I LEARNED TOO LATE

**TEXT:** **2 Tim.4:6-8** *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

**INTRO.:** A. Paul the Apostle looked back over his life since being saved & over all evaluated it as positive. I am sure if he had his life to live over he would have done some things differently, e.g., he would have gotten saved earlier, he would have avoided going up to Jerusalem against the Holy Spirit's leading, etc. But he looks back with joy for his service & ministry & expects a reward for his faithfulness.

B. As we read the Scriptures we can easily look at the lives of the men & women on its pages & see their successes & failures & hopefully learn from them. Tonite I want to look back with you over my life & ministry & help you to learn from my successes & failures as well. There are "**SOME THINGS I LEARNED TOO LATE**" that may help you to know about. Perhaps you can correct these things in your own life & never have to look back w/regret.

**ADDED NOTE:** In the text passage above I find myself: "**For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand...**" (At this writing I am now 87 years old...)

C. My job as Pastor is to prepare you for the Judgment Seat of Christ. If what I have learned (often the hard way) can help you to avoid my mistakes, praise the Lord. The purpose of this message is to edify you, i.e., build you up. *I can't change my mistakes or go back & erase the errors, but maybe I can save you some heartache & grief down the road & especially when you stand before the Savior.*

**TRANS.:** Curtis Hutson wrote a book titled: "Some Things I Have Learned." I want to preach a message from my experience titled: "**SOME THINGS I LEARNED TOO LATE**"...

### I. THINGS I WISH I HAD DONE:

**ILLUS.:** Of course I wish I had gotten saved earlier in life. That would have been wonderful. Kids, you need to praise the Lord that you are saved & that you have missed out on what the world offers & that you can fellowship only w/Christians, go to camp, attend a good church, have Christian friends, etc. But after getting saved there are some things I wish I had done.

A. More Family Time:

1. God called me to preach before I had a family, but my family should have taken precedence over my ministry.

**ILLUS.:** Phone calls, drop-ins, etc. would often interfere w/family plans, outings, etc.

2. In the early days of my ministry, I didn't take any time off & that was unfair to my wife & children.

**ILLUS.:** One night in a prayer meeting as I was teaching I simply collapsed and had to be carried to my car and driven home. When I saw a doctor he asked me about my schedule after learning I was the pastor of a growing church. He learned that I never took a day off and *began to preach to me!* He said don't you teach that the Bible speaks of one day in seven is a rest day? I sheepishly nodded in agreement. The Holy Spirit took this unsaved doctors words to convict me. That day I decided to begin the practice of taking Mondays off and have tried to be consistent in doing so over the years. That decision saved my ministry, my family and possibly my life.

B. More Time Building Relationships:

1. Relationships & friendships are both biblical & necessary.
2. David had Jonathan, Paul had Timothy, Barnabas, Silas, and even Jesus had His inner circle of Peter, James and John.

**Prov.27:17** *Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*

**Prov.17:17** *A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

**Prov.27:6** *Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*

**ILLUS.:** Some resent or believe that a Pastor cannot or should not have friends w/in the ministry, but the Bible & common sense refute that concept. Surely such friendships must be guarded & the lines must be clear, i.e. the Pastor must be Pastor first & friend second.

C. More Diligence Seeking Wisdom:

**Prov.4:7** *Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*

1. The pursuit of wisdom is more important than the pursuit of happiness.
2. The wise man will be able to have many other things but the fool will be a failure in everything!
3. Spiritual success is the greatest success & wisdom will secure that.
4. If there is one book I wish I had mastered, it is the book of Proverbs.

**II. THINGS I WISH I HAD NOT DONE:**

A. Postponed Obedience:

1. Every time I have put off obeying the Holy Spirit or the Bible, I have later regretted it.
2. We need to learn to be continually sensitive to both & obey ASAP!

**ILLUS.:** I got saved in July, went into the Army for 2 years beginning that January, got married that next year, served the Lord in the local church during that following year, yielded to full time service in the spring & went off to school in Sept. I took a part time church while in my second year in Seminary & have been pastoring ever since. But there have been times the Lord spoke to me when I DIDN'T respond as quickly as I should have, & I regret those times & will have to face Him at the J.S. of Christ over my procrastination.

B. Procrastinated When Convicted:

1. Whenever God has convicted me of sin or disobedience & I have put off dealing with it, I have paid an unnecessary price.
2. I have learned, somewhat too late, to respond quickly & not to hesitate when God speaks.

**III. THINGS I KNEW BUT DIDN'T DO:**

A. Invest Time More Wisely:

1. All the time we have is right now.
2. Our time is the greatest gift we have to give.
3. Our time must be invested wisely.

B. Involved In Other Ministries:

1. God spoke to me about a radio ministry years ago, & I failed to follow thru.

**ILLUS.:** I am thankful for the printing ministry, the school ministry & for the tape ministry. This multiplies my preaching & teaching ministries to many places. I am often preaching & teaching in several places in the world at one time! I believe I failed the Lord in not becoming involved in a radio outreach.

2. I should have become more involved in missions, i.e., personal involvement in visiting mission fields, serving on mission boards, starting our own board, etc.

**IV. THINGS I AM GLAD I DID:**

A. Married the Right Woman:

**ILLUS.:** (Shirley was my wife and the love of my life, and we were married for just months short of 60 years. I miss her every day and though she will no longer be my wife in Heaven I believe we will rejoice together forever over this correct choice. She followed me wherever the Lord led me after being called into the ministry and never second guessed me or drug her feet when I told her of the Lord's leading.)

1. This is where young people make their biggest mistake in life.
2. They date & marry the wrong person based upon looks, personality or popularity rather than on spirituality, character & dedication.
3. The world tries to attract and allure young people with these worldly qualities instead of God's choice.

B. Put Family Above Possessions:

1. Your family should be considered before your career, money & comfort.
2. The "American Dream" is not biblical when we place a home, car & career ahead of children.

**ILLUS.:** One of the things I am glad I did was to take family vacations & build memories. Because that was the “desire of my heart” & in line w/biblical priorities, God always gave us inexpensive (but nice!) places to go w/our family TOGETHER.

C. Yielded To Preach:

**ILLUS.:** The greatest thing in my life after my salvation, my family & my church is the ministry to which God called me. I often wonder what I would do or where I would be today if I had not yielded back then.

#### **V. THINGS I PLAN TO DO:**

- A. Work On Things I Should Have Done.
- B. Avoid The Things I Shouldn't Have Done.
- C. Do The Things I Should Do.
- D. Rejoice In the Things I Did Right!
- E. Try To Be a Blessing in The Remaining Time:

1. I want to “put something back” i.e., take opportunities to teach, preach, write. etc.
2. I want to go thru “open doors” of ministry in preaching, etc., if physically and mentally able.
3. I want to share what I have learned to help others.
4. I want to stay faithful in the time I have left.

**CONCL.:** These are “**SOME THINGS I LEARNED TOO LATE.**” My prayer is that the Lord will help you to learn from my mistakes & to be blessed by what I did right. My desire is that you will evaluate YOUR life & ministry & change anything God speaks to you about **NOW** before it is too late & your life & others are impacted negatively. **DO IT NOW!** It may be too late later.