

Life's Journey (Quality: Good)

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- [0 : 0 0] words upon the mind to bring before you as the Lord enables, are to be found in the book of Nehemiah, chapter 2, and part of verse 6.
- Nehemiah, chapter 2, verse 6. Especially the middle part.
- For how long shall thy journey be? And when wilt thou return?
- The whole verse reads, And the king said unto me, the queen also sitting by him, For how long shall thy journey be?
- And when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me, and I set him a tie.
- [1 : 1 2] It is upon my mind, as the Lord enables, to speak especially to the children and younger friends this evening.
- I mentioned to your dear pastor in the Vestrian occasion years ago, when after a morning service I apologized to the deacon, saying I felt I had spoken almost exclusively to the children that morning.
- He said it doesn't matter. Sheep won't starve on lamb's food. Lambs can starve on sheep's food, but sheep won't starve on lamb's food.
- Now, I had no thought whatever of speaking from these words when I left home this morning. Words that I had been meditating upon at intervals in the night were in a different part of the word of God.
- But as I journeyed along, this verse came to the mind. Now, the journey, you dear children, I want to speak about is not a journey that is measured in miles, but a journey that is measured in days, weeks, months, and years.
- [2 : 4 3] In other words, life's journey. Each of us is in a journey of life. We commenced this journey when we were born, and the journey will end when we die, or if we are spared to the Lord's second coming, it ends then.
- This is the journey upon which we are all embarked. Those of you that are younger are in the early part of this journey.
- Some of us must of necessity be getting very near the end. And it is concerning that journey, especially its destination, but also concerning the need of guidance, the things of which we should beware and be warned that we desire to speak this evening.
- But I feel we cannot ever take a portion of God's word without saying at least a few things concerning the setting.
- We heard this afternoon of King Solomon. And sadly, after the death of Solomon and many other kings, various kings arose that, as we read, did evil in the sight of God.
- [4 : 3 7] There were some good kings, Josiah, Hezekiah, and one or two others, but it reached, as it were, a peak when Manasseh, the grandson of Hezekiah, did worse than all the kings that had reigned in Judah.
- We don't read he was worse than Ahab, who reigned in Israel, but worse than all the kings that reigned in Judah. And God said that the people of Judah would be taken captive, and Jerusalem would be destroyed.

And all these things came to pass. And many of the children of Judah were taken captive. And after about 70 years, the Lord, according to the prophecy that had already been given, caused Jerusalem to be rebuilt.

And it was the Lord's intention and appointment for Nehemiah to build the walls, especially, and Ezra the priest to build the temple.

But without dwelling at length upon that, Nehemiah, in the king's palace, he was the king's cupbearer.

[6 : 07] That meant he had to taste the wine before the king tasted it, to make sure it wasn't poisoned by anyone trying to kill the king.

He heard how Jerusalem was desolate. The wall was broken down, and the gates were burned with fire.

Now this saddened him. And if we have a love to the Lord, we shall have a love to his people, and to his house, to his word, and to his dying.

And when these things are set at naught by the wicked, when the congregations get small, and so on, be distressed.

And we read that Nehemiah was sad. And the king said unto me, in the second verse of the second chapter, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick?

[7 : 21] This is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid. In those days the king could say to one of his servants, Take him away, cut off his head.

There would be no trial. The king could do these things of his own power. He was very sore afraid. But he gave the king the truth.

Let the king live forever, a long time. Why should not my countenance be sad when the city, the place of my father's sepulchers, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire.

Now we heard this afternoon how the Lord said to Solomon, What is your request? So the king said to Nehemiah, for what dost thou make request?

Now notice, before he replied, he prayed. He prayed.

[8 : 39] And sometimes when you dear children are at school, you may be asked something by your teacher, or someone else in authority.

Do like Nehemiah, pray in your heart before you answer. The poet gave us a good definition of prayer.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed. The motion of the hidden fire that trembles in the breast.

And then, after he had prayed, he answered the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my father's sepulchers, that I may build it.

And so the king asked him this question. But just a thought before we come to the journeys that we want to mention.

[9 : 57] Nehemiah mentions how the walls were broken down. Now reference was made this afternoon that David, though he was the sweet psalmist of Israel, yet he sinned.

He had fools. And the 51st Psalm is the psalm of David's repentance. He mentions many other things, and I hope and pray this 51st Psalm will be your prayer.

I can think of the time when I was 14 years of age, and it was indeed the prayer of my heart. But in that psalm, he goes on, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem. What had the walls of Jerusalem to do with David's psalm of repentance?

repentance. Just this. I thought of it last year, and perhaps when you children are on holiday in a city that has walls, we were in Chester, and walking round the walls of the city, and we thought of that 51st Psalm.

[11 : 44] The walls that used to be round cities made a clear distinction between those that were in the city and the enemies that dwelt outside.

But now David, by his great sin, as Nathan said to him, you have brought a reproach upon the name of Israel.

David, by his sin, had broken down the walls of Jerusalem, metaphorically speaking. there was not that distinction now in David's life between himself and the world.

And so he prays in his psalm of repentance, build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Let there again be a distinction in my life from the wicked that are about me.

people but we must come to this question of journeys. Now I said this journey of life is measured as it were in various things.

[13 : 06] We measure it especially when we have a birthday. we sometimes say it is a milestone in our life's journey.

But I think we do well if we measure it this journey in smaller measures than a year.

in the 90th psalm Moses there prayed and he prayed to be taught something.

I hope it will be your prayer. Teach us to number our days that with this object that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

that is the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. Some years ago I was having tea with a deacon and his young family before preaching at their chapel in the evening and I was told it was the tenth birthday of one of the children and I quoted Moses words in the 90th psalm and said how many days old are you?

[14 : 34] One of her brothers soon said 3650 but he wasn't right he wasn't right he'd forgotten there must have been at least two leap years and possibly three teach us to number our days years when I was in the army in Germany just after the war and longing to be demobilized and return to this country and especially was my desire to return to the house of the Lord and the preaching of the gospel we were told the date that we could expect to be released and like many others I wrote a series of numbers on a card and hung it at the foot of my bed 100 99 98 97 and so on down to zero each night as I got in bed

I crossed off one more next night another one and the time seemed to go slowly while we were in the 90s and 80s but when we got down to the teens and the units it went very quickly in there now as you and I get into bed this evening if we're spared we cross off another day in life's journey it is indeed one more day that we are older that is very true but it is also one day less that remains so remember that pray that you may spiritually lay these things to heart and number your days to apply your heart to that wisdom which comes from above but now some

I want to speak of natural journeys for they are like a parable you know when the Lord was on earth he spake by parables to the multitude but afterwards expounded to his disciples how often you find the disciples came to him after the multitude had gone away and said tell us the meaning of this tale of the tares and of others and he explained the meaning of it now we in our generation are surrounded by parables some journeys are long and some are sure some live to a great age even we think the record is 115 years in our country but some journeys are very sure we read of some that were of a great age in the word of

God but one thinks especially of a dear young child who died early in life he had a wicked father Jeroboam the son of Nebat but he had a son in whose heart we read some good thing was found toward the Lord God of Israel and he died young in life but he went to heaven his wicked father went to heaven you see the Lord's sovereignty choosing even one dear child the son of that wicked king now as we journey along a road naturally we may perhaps think we have another hundred miles still to go but suddenly we are stopped the car breaks down the road is closed there is a so called accident and we stop far short of what we thought we would have go to so it is in many lives in many lives we read of

Felix a ruler in the Acts of the Apostles to whom Paul spoke Paul spoke to Felix of righteousness the need for Christ righteousness of temperance and judgment to come and we read Felix tremble he felt the solemnity of the Apostles words but what was his reply go thy way for this time when I have a convenient season I will call for thee in other words he said in substance when I'm very ill or when I'm an old man then I'll think about these things but I don't want to hear about them now and so we would all be by nature and only the mercy of God can bring us to consider these things early in our lives we read from the book of

[20 : 50] Ecclesiastes and I emphasize to you then that we are to remember God our creator while we are still young time does not permit us to dwell at length but just very briefly for you younger ones may have been puzzled by the figures that are used the keepers of the house shall tremble the hands how often you see the elderly have hands that shake the strong men the legs which are the strongest limbs of our grinders cease teeth cease because they are few they that look out of windows be dark and sight becomes indistinct and we cannot see the doors are shut in the street we cannot go out and about when we are old as we did when we were young we wake up early in the morning nearly always

I wake up four or five o'clock in the morning rise up at the voice of the bird all the daughters of music brought low music especially cannot be heard and so it goes on and then it comes to this point then shall the dust return to the earth as it was for how long shall thy journey be and when shalt thou return then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit return unto God who gave it but I want to draw your attention to the last verse there for God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil now there may be some journeys you may perhaps be in the middle of a wood or on the

Yorkshire moors and no one you think can see you but God can let me just tell you a conversation one of my dear daughters in law heard taking place between two of her daughters jenny was then five years old and rebecca was three and evidently rebecca was doing something she ought not to have been doing and my daughter in law heard jenny say to rebecca don't do that it's naughty rebecca said no one can see me jenny said yes they can god can see you no he can't said rebecca yes he can said jenny god's got very strong eyes remember that god's got very strong eyes that from a mouth of a five year old child it was a lesson to me think of dear think of that woman hager when she was in the desert she said thou god seest me god shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil but now another aspect in the matter of journeys your dear pastor very kindly gave us very precise accurate details of how to find our way to his home for lunch but and we easily found our way but out of interest we also looked at the map but the map that

I had got in this car was not very up to date it didn't show all the new roads around Asheville now in life's journey we need a map here is a perfect up to date map those of us who journey have to change our maps new roads are made and old roads are stopped up or renumbered and the map gets out of date but this map is perfectly up to date it shows us the way wherein we should walk but also I draw your attention to this aspect I might be in my car and might have a perfect map if such existed but if it was night time it would not profit me if

I could not see it I would need a light a map reading light to shine upon the page now when you take up the word of God and to read a portion if only a verse every day before you open the book pray in your heart for light to shine upon the page that the Lord would show you the way in which you should walk the path that you should tread the things that you should not do as well as the things that you should do now in that ninth chapter of numbers we read how the children of

[27 : 41] Israel were led by the Lord by a cloud a cloud that covered the tabernacle by day and the pillar of fire by night and they always followed the leadings of that cloud the children of Israel sinned in many ways in the wilderness they made a golden car they wanted to go back to Egypt and so on but they always followed the leading of the cloud now the world if there had been if the Egyptians or others had seen them at this time they would have mocked they would have said follow some wise man yes but fancy following a cloud what foolishness is this they would say following a cloud but let me ask you what makes a cloud move is it not the wind and does not the wind in the word of

God set forth the work of the Holy Spirit and so as we go on in life's journey whether at the beginning or near the end may it be the spirit of truth who the Lord said will teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you may he be our God now in that chapter in Matthew we read of two ways a narrow way and a broad way that there are few people in this narrow way and many in the broad way way the narrow way leads to heaven above everlasting life the broad way leads to destruction now which way are we in when we are on a natural journey especially of course a journey that we are unfamiliar with you children do not you know the way to school you have been that journey many times before but when it is a strange way then you especially feel your need of guidance and as

Joshua commanded the people ye have not passed this way heretofore every day of our life journey is different from the previous one we may be going to the same school to the same occupation and so on but it is a different day in life journey and we need that guidance and keeping and that confirmation that we are in the right way now often when we have passed through a town or perhaps some complicated motorway junction how encouraging it is to see upon the sign by the side of the road the destination to which we are hastening to walk it encourages us that we are in the right road now the word of God gives us signs to show us that we are in the right way or warns us if we are in the wrong and especially do we need keeping as we journey along life's journey we can so easily turn as we say to the left hand of worldliness or we can turn to the right hand of a pharisaical religious life and each take us out of that narrow way in our experience worldliness

I hope you dear younger ones read or will read the pilgrim's progress there you find dear Christian in the narrow way set forth the pilgrimage path to the celestial city but he and his companion came to a part of the pathway where the road was very rough and they saw a stile that led over into a meadow called by-path meadow and they thought we will go over there and then rejoin the narrow way when it is not so rough but that way led them farther and farther from the way in which they should have been and a giant called giant despair seized them and took them to doubting castle and there they remained until the key of promise was revealed to Christian which opened all the doors and they came back to the narrow way so let us look well to the way in which we are but I want to come especially to this aspect if is

Jesus with us in the way I've often felt reproved in my heart when I have read in the second chapter of Luke of that occasion when the Lord and his parents or rather his mother Mary and his supposed father Joseph went up to Jerusalem and we read when they had fulfilled the days they returned and the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem and Joseph and his mother knew not of it now you older friends know something of this I suspect but they supposing him to have been in the company went a day's journey ah sadly how many days journey have you and I gone supposing

[35 : 28] Jesus was with us when we've not heard his voice we've not have held his touch we've not seen him by faith we have supposed he was with us in the journey but like them they were so taken up with the friends and the conversation the gossip or the things they had seen they didn't miss the Lord Jesus being with them for a day's journey how sad if we get in that condition but then they sought him first of all among their kinsfolk and acquaintance and couldn't find him there turned back to Jerusalem seeking him and after three days they found him where they should have looked first of all in the temple in the temple that is where he was to be found we know the

Lord can be found in our homes in our schools in our office in our cars but it is especially that we find him in his house that is where as it were we should look for him first of all they found him in the temple but then I want to mention another occasion of two men in a journey we are only told the name of one of them whose name was Cleopas and they were going on a journey of sixty furlongs that is about eight miles and they were walking from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus and they were very sad because of the events that had taken place that Jesus had been crucified they did not at that time know he had risen from the dead they knew he had been crucified now two words explain why they were sad they reasoned they reasoned and you and I will get sad if we bring the works of

God providence potentially in our lives or spiritually to the measurement of human reason some of you dear children may be interested in making things whether clothes for your dolls or toys and things and you have a pattern before you you must use the right measurement if the measurement is in centimeters it's no use measuring in inches or the result will be disastrous and the things of God must be measured as it were by faith and not by sight they reasoned and they were cast down and sad but Jesus drew near to them in this journey they did not immediately know who he was this stranger he reproved them and told them they were fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken as if they believed some of the things that there would be a promised

Messiah but they didn't believe or understand he was to be put to death they thought he would deliver them from the Romans and he began at Moses and expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself and they drew nigh to the village where they went and it was towards evening they'd walked as I say nearly eight miles and they said abide with us for the day is far spent and he went in to tarry with them and while he broke the bread their eyes were opened and they knew him they recognised him he had been with them in the journey and now as they considered it they knew it was the Lord because their hearts had burned as it were within them by the way did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the scriptures they rose up the same hour and walked all that way back again why because they got such wonderful tidings to impart to others and they heard the other disciples say that the Lord had risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon and they told what things were done in the way in their journey and how he was known of them in breaking of bread well what a great mercy an infinite mercy if at times in our journeys whether they be long or short whether we come as it were slowly through old age to our journey's end or whether we are cut off suddenly as it were in the midst of life may we have the

Lord's presence with us in that journey may we seek to be found in the right way and at this thought in conclusion some in religion say it doesn't really matter what you believe so long as you're sincere I say it matters a great deal a great deal you might be on the M20 thinking you're heading towards Folkestone you might sincerely think you are but if you're on the other carriage way you'll finish up in London or on the M25 no matter how sincerely you thought you were going to Folkestone I say we need more than sincerity that is essential but we need more than that we need to pray Lord that thou will direct my paths like dear

[42 : 54] Moses in the 33rd chapter of Exodus show me thy way that with this object that I may know thee well may that be your desire Lord and mine we leave it there may the Lord bless these simple things and pardon anything his eyes have seen amiss amen it it often used to be the practice amongst chapels to conclude an anniversary service with this hymn which is on the board but sadly it is a hymn that perhaps has been neglected in recent years it was apparently often the done at this anniversary in years gone by and so we felt that we would venture to give it out on this occasion hymn 730 to the tune

Mars line 178 730 all hail the power of Jesus name let angels prostrate fall bring forth the royal diadem and crown him lord of all hymn 730 730 bat Language Fnte Glor Video bottom and with them ha

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[49 : 35] Amen The End Thank you.