




Lie #7: “I’ll Believe in Jesus When I’m Closer to Death”

Opening Prayer

Introduction

Procrastinator’s Creed



1. I believe that if anything is worth doing, it would have been done already.
2. I shall never move quickly, except to avoid more work or find excuses.
3. I will never rush into a job without a lifetime of consideration.
4. I shall meet all of my deadlines directly in proportion to the amount of bodily injury I could expect to receive from missing them.
5. I firmly believe that tomorrow holds the possibility for new technologies, astounding discoveries, and a reprieve from my obligations.
6. I truly believe that all deadlines are unreasonable regardless of the amount of time given.
7. I shall never forget that the probability of a miracle, though infinitesimally small, is not exactly zero.
8. If at first I don’t succeed, there is always next year.
9. I shall always decide not to decide, unless of course I decide to change my mind.
10. I shall always begin, start, initiate, take the first step, and/or write the first word, when I get around to it.
11. I obey the law of inverse excuses which demands that the greater the task to be done, the more insignificant the work that must be done prior to beginning the greater task.
12. I know that the work cycle is not plan/start/finish, but is wait/wait/plan.
13. I will never put off until tomorrow, what I can forget about forever.
14. I will become a member of the Ancient Order of Two-Headed Turtles (the Procrastinator’s Society) if they ever get it organized.

While much of our society is about immediate gratification—instant downloads, Amazon Prime, “buy now, pay later” and such—what are some responsibilities, preventative measures, and even some blessings that people may put off, assuming they will address or enjoy them later?

What can happen in all these cases?

You never know...

1. Modern medicine is a blessing in so many ways, but what false sense of security can it give us about life and death?
2. What truths do the following passages teach us about life and death?

James 4:13-15 Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” ¹⁴ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”

Ecclesiastes 7:15; 9:12 In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these: a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked man living long in his wickedness. [...] Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.

Deuteronomy 32:39 “See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.”

Job 14:5 “Man’s days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.”

2. What false assumptions about death does the lie, “I’ll believe in Jesus when I’m about to die” foolishly embrace?

I’ll believe...

1. These are several lies woven into the tiny phrase, “I’ll believe.” What do the following passages teach us about faith?

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

John 3:7-8 “You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

John 1:12-13 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

John 15:16 “You did not choose me, but I chose you.”

a.)

Romans 1:17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

Romans 10:17 Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. (NIV 2011)

b.)

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Romans 10:9-11 If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. ¹¹ As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

Hebrews 4:1-2 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ² For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

c.)

Luke 23:42-43 Then [they dying criminal] said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³ Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Matthew 20:8-10 “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’ ⁹ The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰ So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius.”

d.)

Matthew 25:10-13 “But while [the foolish virgins] were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. ¹¹ “Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ ¹² “But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’ ¹³ Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

Hebrews 12:16-17 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. ¹⁷ Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.

Romans 10: 18-19, 21; 11:5-10 But I ask: Did [Israel] not hear? Of course they did: “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.” ¹⁹ Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, “I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.” ...²¹ But concerning Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.” ...^{11:5} So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. ⁷ What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, ⁸ as it is written: “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.” ⁹ And David says: “May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. ¹⁰ May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.”

Hebrews 3:12-19 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵ As has just been said: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.” ¹⁶ Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? ¹⁷ And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? ¹⁸ And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? ¹⁹ So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

e.)

Don’t put off until tomorrow what God is giving you today!

Ecclesiastes 12:1,6-7 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, “I find no pleasure in them.” [...] ⁶ Remember him—before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well, ⁷ and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. ² For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

Group Discussion

1. How do the truths in today’s lesson serve as a warning and an encouragement...

...for yourself?

...for your nominally Christian family and friends?

...for your witnessing prospects?

2.) What diagnostic questions should be asked of the family member or friend who says, “I’ll believe in Jesus when I’m closer to death?”