

THINGS WE CANNOT AVOID

Introduction

1. Unavoidable things:
 - a. Physical **pain** is not pleasant but it is necessary, and it cannot be avoided.
 - b. Whatever one's station and circumstances in life, we have to face the **trials and tribulations** of life that are common to all mankind; there is no avoiding such. It may be that the poor have more than their fair share of troubles, but even the wealthy have their problems.
 - c. Another thing we can't avoid is **change!** Look back over your life thus far and consider how many things have changed – some are changes for the better, some for the worst. Change, though, is inevitable.
2. There are many things in life that we cannot avoid, and there are three basic things we cannot avoid that have eternal consequences:
 - Personal responsibility.
 - Influencing others.
 - The consequences of sin.
 - ☞ Death.
 - ☞ Judgment.
 - ☞ God's eternal verdict.
3. Many scorn at the thought of personal responsibility, they don't give a thought to how they might be influencing others for good or ill, and they ridicule the concept of sin and its consequences. But there are some that do take these things seriously and we here today are among them. We understand that how we conduct ourselves in this life is a preparation for the next life after death and resurrection.

1. WE CANNOT AVOID PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

a. Our responsibility to God.

- 1) God has always held people responsible for hearing and obeying His will.

“And Yahweh Elohim commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (**Genesis 2:16-17**).

“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known” (**Deuteronomy 11:26-28**).

- 2) Of course, God still expects all people to live a life of obedience in accordance with His will (**Acts 17:30-31**), and such a life begins with one's obedience to the gospel:

“And He [Jesus] said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (**Mark 16:15-16**).

- 3) Each person is responsible to obey the gospel; no one can do this for us (**Acts 2:40**). A person might decide to disobey the gospel – judging themselves unworthy of eternal life (**Acts 13:46**) – but they will be held responsible. Indeed, they do not harm God but only themselves (**1 Peter 4:17**).

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (**2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**).

b. Our responsibility for our own faithfulness.

- 1) Having obeyed the gospel and resolved to live a life of obedience, each one is then responsible for maintaining his own faithfulness.

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12).

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Hebrews 10:38-39).

- 2) Being faithful means: (i) Being doers of the word and not hearers only (James 1:25), (ii) Doing all things by the Lord’s authority (Colossians 3:17), (iii) Not forsaking the assemblies (Hebrews 10:25), (iv) Abiding in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 1:9), (v) Making God’s kingdom our greatest priority (Matthew 6:33), etc.
- 3) Those who are not faithful will be lost (Hebrews 10:38-39). One thing we must be clear about: we cannot blame God, the Devil, people, or circumstances if we fall away. This is why we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

c. Our responsibility to others.

- 1) God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9), but desires everyone to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4). This is why He sent His Son to die for us (Romans 5:8). Do we have the same love and desire of our heavenly Father?
- 2) In order to excuse themselves from their responsibility, some claim that only evangelists have the responsibility of preaching the gospel. If this is so, then why is it said of the believers that were persecuted and scattered that they “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:1-4)?
- 3) Every Christian ought to be active in preaching the gospel to the lost: family, friends, neighbors, work colleagues, and others we come across in our daily lives. Those who fail in this responsibility are either cowards or simply have no love for lost souls.

“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30).

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Hebrews 5:12).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15).

d. Our responsibility to our children.

- 1) Solomon wrote, “Lo, children are an heritage of Yahweh: and the fruit of the womb is His reward” (Psalms 127:3). If we believe this, then it will be reflected in the way we raise our children; we are responsible to provide for all their physical needs (1 Timothy 5:8) and to administer proper discipline (Proverbs 29:15). Older, experienced women, are to teach younger women how to love their children: “That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children” (Titus 2:4).
- 2) Solomon wrote, “... a child left to himself brings his mother to shame” (Proverbs 29:15). This happens when parents fail in their responsibility (though they rarely take the blame). The scriptures are very clear: parents have the responsibility of educating their children. The consequences are clearly seen in those who reject this responsibility; yet parents all too often seek to blame others, their children, or circumstances... anything or anyone but themselves.

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (**Ephesians 6:4**).

- 3) Examples of those that raised their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Think about what this included?!

“For I know him [Abraham], that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (**Genesis 18:19**).

“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (**2 Timothy 1:5**).

The reason we cannot avoid these things: God is omnipresent:

“The eyes of Yahweh are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (**Proverbs 15:3**).

“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (**Hebrews 4:13**).

“Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee” (**Psalms 139:7-12**).

2. WE CAN'T AVOID INFLUENCING THOSE AROUND US

- a. We all know that we can influence others, but perhaps we have a tendency to think that we only influence another person when it is intentional. If we think clearly, though, we come to realize that we are always influencing those around – whether positively or negatively. Indeed, others too are influencing us!
- b. As Christians we must ensure we are having a positive influence on everyone around us:

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (**Matthew 5:13-16**).

- c. Abraham was a good influence on his children (**Genesis 18:19**), Eli was a bad influence on his children (**1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-36; 3:13**). David had a bad influence on the enemies of God (**2 Samuel 12:1-14**), the town clerk had a positive influence on the rioters at Ephesus (**Acts 19:35-41**).

The most influential voices in your child's life and with whom they keep company the majority of the time are the two main factors that explain their current attitudes, speech, and behavior.

3. WE CANNOT AVOID THE CONSEQUENCE OF SIN

- a. The consequences of sin in general:

- 1) The law of God is this: “... whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (**Galatians 6:7**). Why? God ensures it because He is just (**Psalms 7:11**).

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (**Galatians 6:8**).

- 2) While we can certainly see good people reaping from the good they have sown, and wicked people reaping from the evil they have sown, some will argue that this is not always the case: we see good people that reap nothing and wicked people who prosper and live a life of ease (**Psalms 37:1-40; 73:1-28**).

- 3) The scales may not always be equally balanced in this life, but they will be perfectly balanced at the judgment:

“Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid” (1 Timothy 5:24-25).

- b. Three specific consequences of sin that we cannot avoid:

1) Death:

- a) God warned Adam that the consequence of sin would be death (Genesis 2:15-17). Nevertheless he sinned and death entered the world through him (Romans 5:12). Indeed, every human being suffers death because all sin (Romans 3:23; 6:23). The exception will be when the Lord returns:

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

- b) We may not like to dwell on the fact too much, and we might attempt to put it off with healthy living, but each one of us has an appointment with death:

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die...” (Hebrews 9:27).

- c) Remembering the fact that we will die one day is a sobering thought:

“Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am. Behold, Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee” (Psalms 39:4-7).

Death will end all opportunities for the unfaithful and disobedient to repent. In contrast, death will end the saint's conflict with flesh and end afflictions and trials.

2) Judgment:

- a) The Hebrew writer says, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, **but after this the judgment**” (Hebrews 9:27). God has given us assurance of this:

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Jesus] whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31).

- b) The Lord will “judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:31), and each one of us will be judged:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

- c) We cannot avoid the judgment, but we can prepare for it! Preparation begins by believing the gospel (Mark 16:16) and continues in the working out of our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

3) The verdict:

- a) There will only be two verdicts on the Day of Judgment:

“Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34).

“Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

- b) Noah spent many years preaching to his generation but they gave no heed to his warning (2 Peter 2:5). People were given ample opportunity to repent, but when God Himself closed the door of the ark, their fate was sealed – it was then too late to repent (Genesis 7:13-16).
- c) In human courts we sometimes see criminals avoid justice due to a technicality (e.g., officer did not read him his rights) or they might receive a lighter sentence because of plea bargain. God, though, is all knowing and so His judgment will be righteous and just for each person – God does not make mistakes. Please don't delude yourself into believing that you will be able to repent or ask for a second chance on that Day. Your death will be like the door of the ark being shut – your fate will be sealed. The time to repent is now:

“For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Conclusion

We cannot avoid our personal responsibilities, influencing others, or the consequences of sin. Knowing these things can motivate us to lead more mature responsible lives, walk worthily of the gospel; knowing that others are watching us, and prepare ourselves for the Day of Judgment by working out our salvation with fear and trembling.

This lesson was inspired by an outline by David J. Riggs titled “Things We Cannot Escape”. You can see his outline here:
<https://oakridgechurch.com/riggs/escape.htm>

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